



**MC HENRY
MUSEUM**

& Historical Society



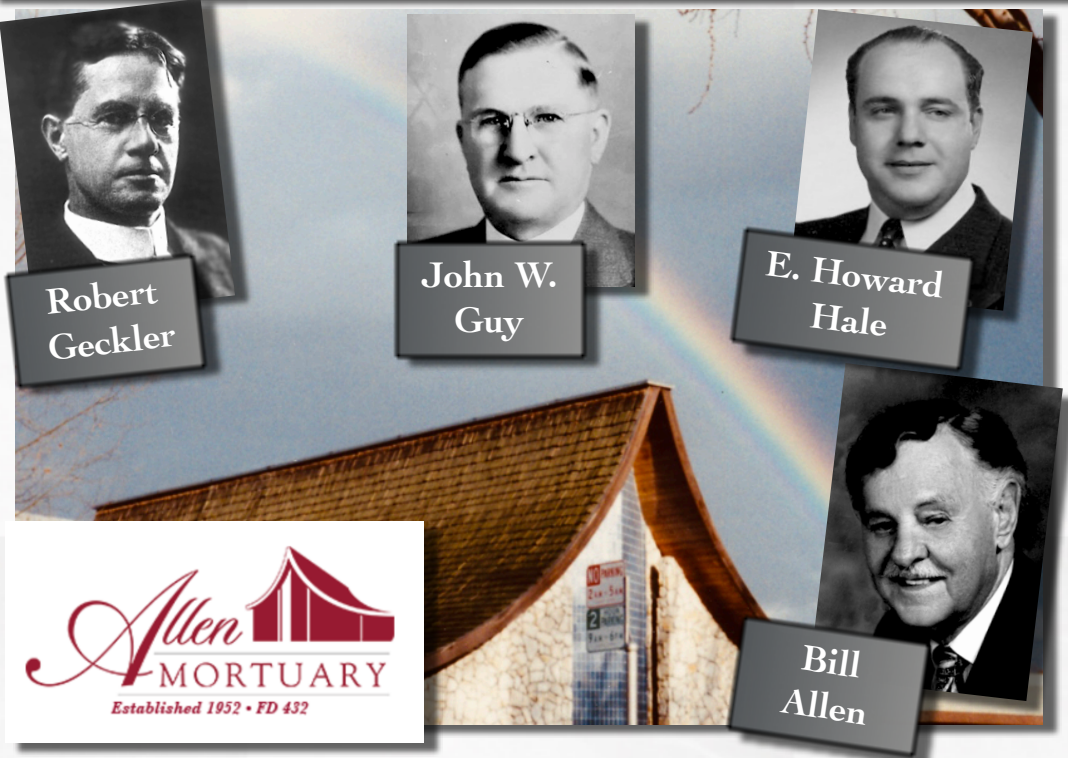
**History
Lesson**

Newsletter

October 2022

Please call us at:
(209) 618-5387

It is October, and as the McHenry Mansion plans its "Morbid Obsession," we at the MM&HS want to highlight the seventy years of a Turlock business who deals in the funeral profession. For this newsletter, MM&HS President Ben Sivils has contributed a history on his place of work, Allen Mortuary in Turlock. We know you all are dying to know the details of the history of Allen Mortuary. The story begins with Robert Geckler (1882-1924), a businessman and undertaker from the bay area, came to Turlock and bought out the G.S Wright Undertaking Company and the Claypool Undertaking Company. In 1919, Geckler built a modern (for the time) funeral home at 247-253 Broadway, in Turlock. After Geckler's death in 1924, his widow Anna (1875-1951), sold the funeral home to John W. Guy (1883-1948) and operated it as "Guy Funeral Chapel" until the late-1940's, when it changed hands to E. Howard Hale (1916-1985), becoming Hale Funeral Chapel.



In November of 1952, William E. "Bill" Allen (1922-2005) purchased the company from the Hale family and established "Allen Mortuary". Bill was a graduate of the California College of Mortuary Science and worked as a trade embalmer in Southern California. Bill's father, the late Reverend William E. Allen (1881-1941), was raised with a Quaker background and was founding pastor of the Denair Nazarene Church. Bill's brother Everett was the owner of the former Turlock Hardware on West Main Street, which later became Allen's Home Furnishings. Bill, his wife Irene (1922-2009) and son Gary made their home in Turlock where they became established members of the community. Bill belonged to many local organizations over the years including the Turlock Masonic Lodge, Shriners, and Methodist Church. He served in leadership roles with the Prison Industry Board, Stanislaus Grand Jury, and Boy Scouts of America.

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In 1974, Bill expanded Allen Mortuary's building with a new chapel, offices, preparation facility and showroom at the cost of \$150,000. A short time later, a modern crematorium was added to the building. The addition to the crematorium made it easier for Allen Mortuary to serve the community as cremation was being chosen more often. Additionally, a family whose faith required a cremation ceremony, could be served conveniently in one location.

Overseeing all aspects of the company, often seven days a week, Bill Allen endeavored to provide a service rich in family tradition of supporting his community. Since then, thousands of families have turned to Allen Mortuary in their time of need.

Bill died in 2005 and the mortuary was passed down to Bill's grandson Michael Allen, and his wife, Alison (Kleiber) Allen. Together with a compassionate team, the Allen family continues the tradition of serving families with dignity and respect while upholding the company's core values of excellence, integrity, and affordability. Allen Mortuary is committed to supporting families in their time of need with the care and empathy one can only receive from a family run business with generations of experience.

INCLUDING NEW CHAPEL
\$150,000 Expansion Project Scheduled By Allen's Mortuary

The Allen Mortuary will old construction together, stone ready for use by Aug. 1. The existing chapel has a large 1971 Grand Jury, and three other Turlock residents were named. Superior Judge Frank S. Pier, who started his career as a lawyer in Turlock, named Allen to the post. The new fore- sides being active in numerous civic, fraternal and church projects, he has served on the state-wide California Veterans Board.

Other Turlock members of the Grand Jury are Jim Dw, owner of National Market; Harvey Ligo; and Mrs. Rosamary DeVito Schaller, realtor.

Other grand jurors include Mish Clippert of Oakdale; Raymond Robde and Mrs. Callie Simpson, both of Ceres; Fred

Plans for the building feature gray stone facing on the walls, blue tile accents and a natural shake roof. To tie the new and

Designers of the project are Cliff Casney & Associates. Construction, said Allen, should start next week. He hopes the new chapel will be added.

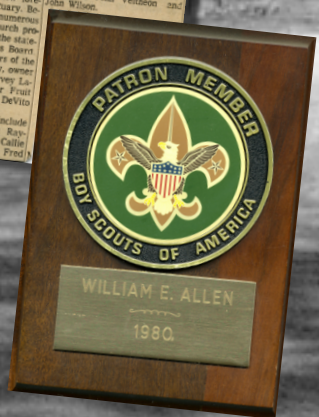
Original Geckler Parlor



Irene & Bill Allen



Bill Allen



Completely remodeled in 2008, Allen Mortuary offers a warm and flexible environment where family and friends can gather to celebrate their loved ones. In 2022, an additional crematory was added allowing for the increased demand for cremation services. It's interesting to note that in addition to the seventieth anniversary of Allen Mortuary in 2022, November would have marked Bill Allen's one hundredth birthday. Whether brought together by celebration or tragedy, we look first to those closest to us to mark life's most important events. Family owned and operated since its inception, seventy years ago, the familiar faces at Allen Mortuary provide the support and compassion you can only expect from neighbors and friends.



Michael Allen



Alison Allen

Updates



Docent Martha assuring Security Guard Ron, she has matters well in hand.

- The MM&HS has hired security guards to ensure the safety of our volunteers and the public.
- The City of Modesto Parks, Recreations, and Neighborhoods are working with the Modesto Police Department on security training for our volunteers.
- Our Dickens Faire is back and scheduled December 3, 2022, from 12-3pm prior to the Christmas Parade.
- Our Annual Soup Supper will return Sunday, December 11, 2022.
- The MM&HS are partnering with the City of Modesto to begin scanning the archives, we hope to begin in 2023.
- The Tuolumne River Woodworkers Association is back and will be displaying their crafts in the changing exhibit room until October 8, 2022.
- On September 10, 2022, Dr. Talitha Agan gave her Second Saturday presentation *California Grizzly Bear & the Gold Rush* to a packed house. Her book, "Grizzlies & Gold" is now available in the Museum Store.
- The Board of the MM&HS met on September 27, 2022.
- On October 8, 2022, at 2pm, Museum Docent Rob Gleeson presents our Second Saturday talk *Negro Baseball Leagues* with an emphasis on previous Modesto resident Lou Dials.



Tuolumne River Woodworkers



It Happened in October



1922



1962

- In October 1922, the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) installed their new officers with a parade known as the Grand Encampment down "J" and Tenth Streets in Modesto.
- On Sunday October 14, 1962, the Baseball Gods shined down on Modesto when the Giants and Yankees practiced in Modesto when Game Six of the World Series at Candlestick Park was rained out by a tropical storm.
- In October 2012, John F. Kennedy School opened in South Modesto near Hatch Road. The school opened with one goal, to give its seventy-five special needs students a safe environment for their education.



2012

*Photos from 1962 taken from openSFhistory.org.