

**Notes on the building at 901 W Congress (NW corner of N Melwood)
long known as Jeff's Market.**



“Buck” Sam Chu was the original builder and owner of the Standard Market in 1949. Dorothy Lew’s grandparents and parents ran Jeff’s Market starting in 1959. It became Danny’s Hobby Stand after the Buck Market closed approximately in 1985. In recent years Dorothy had run her printing service here, Sterling Cards. In July 2022 investors purchased 901 and plan to preserve its historic value as part of a cafe and bicycle shop.

“Tze-Shar Chu, known affectionately “May” was born in Ngoot San Kwagtung, China. She was educated in Canton and Nanking, China. She was the personal secretary for Mrs. Chang Fat Kwei, wife of a Chinese general. She emigrated to San Francisco living there briefly before settling in Tucson in 1948. She and her husband Buck Sam Chu operated Standard Market at 901 W Congress before moving to Marana in 1954 where they operated Village Market and started Sam Chu Farms.”

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“William Bon Sam Tom, owner of Jeff’s Market for nearly 26 years died at St Mary’s October 15, 1984. He was 58. Tom was born in Canton, China. He came to Tucson in 1940 to join his father, Yeow Heen Tom, who owned the Washington Market at Washington Street and Meyer Ave. (Possibly the current El Rapido Molino Grocery Store.) In 1944 Tom joined the Army Air Force, serving in Burma and India. He left the Army with the rank of sergeant. He returned to China and married Sun Fon before returning to Tucson. In the late 1950’s the elder Tom opened Jeff’s Market and his son took over as owner in November 1959. Tom was survived by his wife, mother, and a sister and two daughters.”

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905 and 901 W Congress (Jeff's Market) in the 1950's
photo provided by Dorothy Lew

The owner of the house just north of 901 W Congress, Glenn Forchione has shared:

“I met Dan Tom in 1994 when he had the hobby shop which was mostly for flying model planes. Dan had an engineering degree and was working in California when his father died. He moved back to Tucson and took over the store and converted it to a hobby shop at some point. Dan lived next door at 905 W Congress. He was a kind person. Dan helped those less fortunate. He took in a friend with his elderly mother letting them stay in his house for an extended period. Dan was a good golfer as well. When Dan's health was failing the family extended their printing business to 901 W Congress and Dan continued living next door at 905. Dan passed away in 2020.”

Later it is believed that the gas engines for the model planes sold here were found in a shed, but had lost their value as newer models, and drones have electric engines.

Notes on the building at 905 W Congress adjacent to “Jeff’s Market”



905 W Congress St today

901 W Congress St today

Glenn knew Frank and Fred Casanova whose mother lived in this 905 home. Frank reached out to the community and the new owners with the hope that we would honor the history of this house. Frank has shared his fascinating family tree that led to the building of this early Menlo Park home in 1922, only 10 years after Arizona statehood. Unfortunately, we lost Frank last year. Fred has provided additional memories that he recalls about his mother’s home.

From Frank’s earlier letter’s:

“The Peyron family were early pioneers at the turn of the century Tucson... Sadly, not much of their history has been known. The patriarch of the family was Pierre Peyron, who stowed away on a ship from France, in the 1860s... eventually ending up in the Ruby area with a mining dig in the 1880s. He had more than 8 children with his wife Petronilla Nido. The two older sons (Raphael and Ricardo) soon started a cattle ranch in the Sierrita mountains south of San Xavier mission. One can find the remnants of the Peyron Ranch and Peyron Tank (water hole) on the maps today. At its peak, the Peyron’s owned thousands of acres of range land. Raphael’s cattle brand is on display with the Arizona Historical Society. The cattle operation fed the Peyron Meat market on Meyer Street which began in the early 1920s.”

“Ricardo Peyron who built the house at 905 W. Congress about 1922... Over a hundred years ago. My mother, (Mary) Christine Peyron was born in that house in 1926. There were two other surviving siblings also born there... Richard and Elsie. My grandmother, Carman Sparks Peyron (DuPont) lived in the house until the early 1960s, before she died in 1965.”



Left to right – in front of 905 W Congress St
Mary and Ruth Sparks - relatives of Carmen Peyron
Ricardo Peyron - Pierre's son who built the house in 1922 to raise a family
Mac Sparks
"Tomas" a Tohono O'odham native who sold the Peyron Brothers cattle for the
Peyron cattle ranch and meat market.



The children of Ricardo and Carmen
at their home, 905 W Congress in 1926
Left to Right:
Richard
Mary Christine Peyron (Frank's mother)
Elsie



Ricardo and Carmen Peyron

Notice in the photo above that the market at 901 W Congress (corner of S Melwood and W Congress) did not exist yet. 901 W Congress wasn't built until 1949.

From Frank Casanova's letter:

"I remember playing with the two little girls who lived with their parents at the market. I must have been 4 or 5, making it 1951 or 52... So, this would be when May and Buck Sam Chu owned the "Standard Market", before moving in 1954.

We played in the back yards of both buildings. My most striking memory is when it was time for an afternoon nap, we would go inside the store and climb what seemed to be a mountain of sacks of rice, piled almost to the ceiling of the building. Actually, this is where the family lived much of the time. We would climb to the top and snuggle into the rice sacks and doze off. It was such an adventure to a very young me."

Peyron Family lineage (Bold means lived in 905 W Congress)

Pierre Peyron + Petronilla Nido



Ricardo Peyron + Carma Sparks Peyron (DuPont)



Elsie , Richard, Mary Christine Peyron



Frank, Fred, and Patrick Casanova

Fred Casanova shared these recollections:

My earliest memories are probably from around 1955 and later. This was a time when Tucson seemed to have a lot of water and the front yard of 905 was a garden. My grandma (Carman) loved roses and had a bunch in front. But what struck me the most was the pathway between the house and the store at 901. This was planted with large leafed tropical type plants and, to a little kid, was like a jungle. There were times when I couldn't even walk through there because of the thick growth.

I also recall the wood floors inside. Somehow it really impressed me. I guess I grew up on linoleum. Would be nice if they can salvage that. And the little blue flame of the below floor heater in the hallway. Funny how I remember that one.

My cousin Cheryl, daughter of my Mom's sister Elsie, was a frequent visitor to Grandma and would take Frank and I to the movies at the Fox Tucson and Fox Lyric theatres on Congress St. The Lyric was closer to us, but I always loved looking at the ceiling of the Fox-Tucson. There was also a theatre along the way on Congress that just showed Spanish language films. We never went there, but I remember how busy that whole area just east of the river. Lots of shops all along Congress and lots of people too.

The store at 901 was a constant source of popsicles and ice cream for me. Frank and I would go there almost every time we visited Grandma.

The backyard was mostly dirt as I recall. There might have been a garden area. But the little apartments behind the house were there and housed my Grandma's housekeeper and caregiver, Gorgi. I recently found a picture of her, and my Mom wrote her full name on the back....Gorgonia Hidalgo de Flores. I think she died before my grandmother.