

Photographed by Cathedral Warden Daniel Hall with a 5D SLSR camera on July 27, 2017 Essay by Jean Libby, member of the congregation, for The Dean and Rector, Officers and Members of the Vestry of Trinity Cathedral in San Jose. Originally published in *The Carillon*, the monthly online journal of Trinity Cathedral, November 2017.

The Lowe Family Window

Walking the south perimeter of the nave (where the congregation sits), the second window is dedicated to Mary A. Lowe, wife of the Master Gardner James R. Lowe, Sr. Mary passed away at age 52 on October 1, 1862, before the wooden Trinity Church building—the same in use today—was completed.

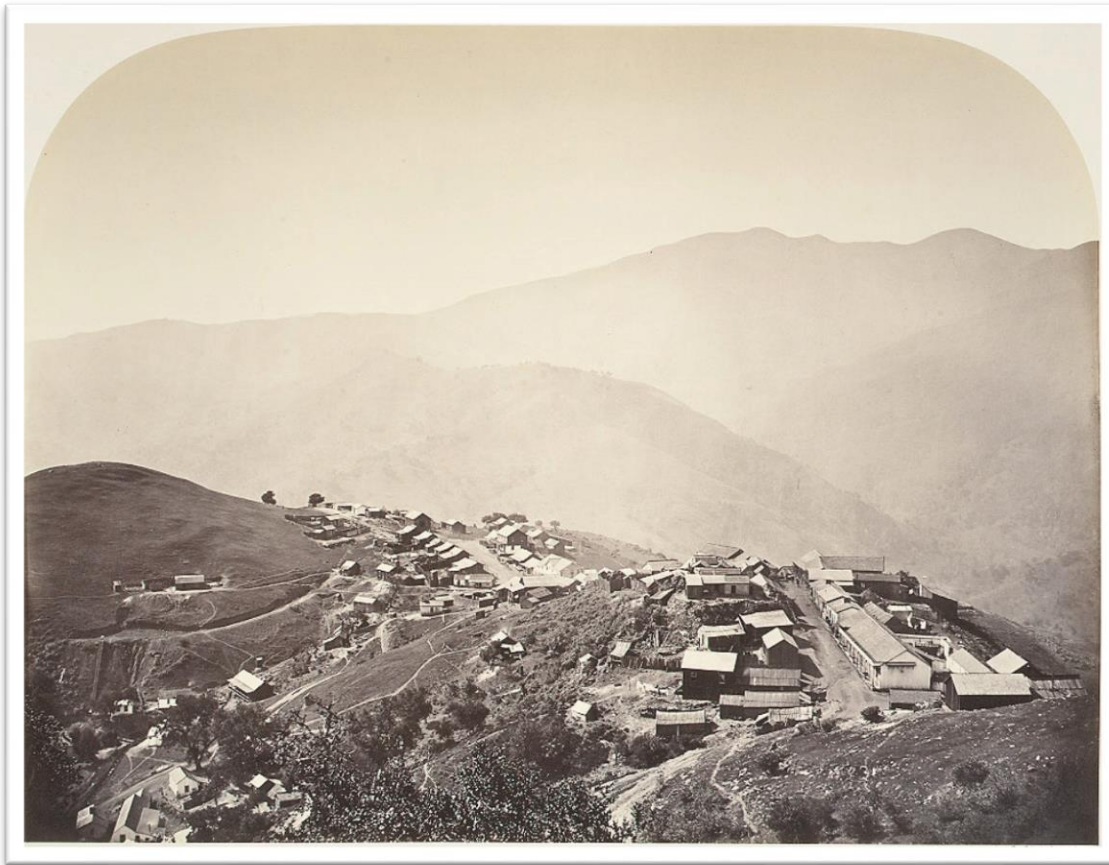
The top element design of Adam and Eve in heaven evoking the Garden of Eden was evidently chosen by James Lowe, an original vestryman. The central element of a Greek cross within a diamond suggests mankind, nature and humanity with four equal arms. Both windows differ only by the top and bottom elements, encircled with glass beads, a notable characteristic of Doremus. The exquisite detail of the open flower in sumptuous red with cobalt blue (color of Mary mother of Jesus) is variable with the seasons of the sun through the open door of the side entry. The artificial light behind is seldom turned on, which is a blessing.

The Garden of Eden of San Jose began in Newburyport, Massachusetts in the 1830s. The young Englishman James R. Lowe learned landscape gardening at Chatsworth Hall, the estate of the Duke of Devonshire. Emigrating to Massachusetts in 1828, he laid out several gardens, including that of James Arnold in New Bedford, whose Boston grounds designed by Olmstead is now a research arboretum at Harvard University.¹

Mary Tuckwell, college-educated, married James R. Lowe about 1836. In 1852, with three adolescent sons, they followed Charles E. Allen of Newburyport, who had distinguished himself in the Mexican War and settled in San Jose in 1849. Allen recommended Lowe to Major Samuel J. Hensley, a pathfinding pioneer who married Mary Helen Crosby of New York after her uncle Elijah O. Crosby participated in the California Constitutional Convention. The Lowes, Charles Allen, and the Hensleys were founding members of the early congregation of Trinity Episcopal parish.

The Lowe gardens flourished with the commission by General Henry M. Naglee, another Mexican War veteran, whose 140-acre property was located from South 11th Street east to Coyote Creek and Santa Clara Street south to William Street. His estate is now developed as Naglee Park. Lowe was one of the first landscape gardeners in Menlo Park (north in San Mateo County), at the Flood estate. He started the grounds at San Jose University with bulbs and specimens that were shipped from around the world to the Post Office in San Jose managed by General C. E. Allen (Brigadier General of the California State militia) who was appointed by President Buchanan.

Ralph Lowe, the oldest son of James and Mary, was employed as a clerk in the office of New Almaden Quicksilver mines from 1865. Samuel F. Butterworth was superintendent when the Quicksilver Mining Company took charge following the attempted seizure of the mines by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863.² Lowe formed a partnership with Thomas Derby, the original Butterworth agent, for the merchandising store that supplied the miners and their families. Rigidly enforced company rules included employment termination if they were caught shopping anywhere else.



New Almaden Quicksilver Mine

photo by Carlton Watkins, 1863

Waldo, the youngest son of James and Mary, married another California pioneer Eliza Whiteman. Their son Samuel Butterworth Lowe was born in 1872, when his uncle Ralph Lowe was an agent to Butterworth. Waldo Lowe died young (1879). Sam Lowe opened the first general merchandise store in Agnew and later was financial clerk for Board of Supervisors of Santa Clara County.

The wedding of James R. Lowe, Jr. and Ines Juana Pacheco that Mary and James Lowe attended on May 22, 1861, united their California pioneer son with the Spanish soldier settlers in San Jose pueblo.³ The marriage was performed first at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, now a basilica, on Market Street.

President Andrew Johnson appointed James R. Lowe, Jr. as consul to the Mexican port of Tehuantepec in 1867. The assassination of President Benito Juarez cut short the diplomatic path. James and Ines and their small children returned to San Jose, where he became the Commissioner of Deeds for Santa Clara County with an office at 289 Santa Clara Street.

Ines passed away in 1872. Mercifully she did not share in the tragedy of the deaths of all but one of their children—beautiful Mary (named for her grandmother) thrown from a horse-carriage she was driving (1887); her brother Waldo, a promising mover and shaker of the City of San Jose of abruptly mysterious cause, likely food poisoning (1892); and James A. Lowe, who murdered his lover when his wife threatened high alimony, then killed himself in jail in Sacramento (1896).

The singular exception was Ralph A. Lowe (named for his uncle) who became an official of the State Reform School advocating “the more modern policy of placing the pupils somewhat upon their honor and giving them certain liberties with restrictions, rather than to place them behind bars and high fences.”⁴

James R. Lowe, Jr. married twice after Ines passed away and his own death in 1904. Emma Forsyth, president of the San Jose School Board, was the mother of three children before dying of consumption in November 1887. The grieving husband eulogized to the *San Jose Evening News*: “Everything that wealth, affection and medical skill could do was done for her, but all to no purpose.”

Ellen McDermott of San Francisco became James R. Lowe, Jr.’s third wife in 1889, a society event taking place at St. Mary’s Cathedral. They are listed in the census of 1900 with Ralph, the only surviving child of Ines, age 31, the three children of Emma, ages 24, 20, and 16, and her son Edmund, born in 1890 (she was 24 years younger than her husband James). It was remarked at James R. Lowe’s funeral that “a touching personal tribute was offered by Rev. Father Walshe of St. Joseph’s Church.”

Buried in the family plot at Oak Hill Memorial Park: Master Gardener James R. Lowe, Sr. and Mary A. Lowe (memorialized in the stained glass window); James Jr. and his first two wives Ines and Emma, with all Ines’s children and one of Emma; Waldo H. Lowe, Eliza (d. 1919) and their sons Sam Butterworth Lowe and Sherbourne W. Lowe; Ralph Lowe “born in NEWBURYPORT MASSACHUSETTS” proclaimed on the large granite monument died in 1919 at age 80 the St. Claire Hotel where he lived as a bachelor.

Edmund Lowe studied to become a priest at the Jesuit seminary at Santa Clara, but left to pursue a career in motion pictures in the 1920s.

⁵ His debonair persona changed to a rough and ready World War I hero, Sergeant Harry Quirk in a film written by Maxwell Anderson, *What Price Glory?*

In his film biography Edmund Lowe remembers his father James R. Lowe, Jr. as a judge in San Jose.

According to church historian Janice Paull “One of Mr. Lowe’s gifts to Trinity was ivy from Melrose Abbey in Scotland. The ivy was planted beside the church, grew rapidly and festooned the windows and porch and even found its way inside the church.... Today the ivy resides in a communicant’s garden waiting to be replanted in the church garden again.” The communicant is indeed Jan Paull.



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Endnotes

¹ Julie Pifer, Trinity member and historical associate at History San Jose, researched the Arnold connection to confirm in her Tour of Trinity at the 150th anniversary commemoration in 2013. Mary Lowe is especially beloved by Trinity historians Janice Paull and the late Joan C. deLisle. See *The Trinity Windows* (1977), the base for these monthly articles for *The Carillon*.

² The best historical synthesis of Abraham Lincoln and the New Almaden Mine is by the late R. Larry Comstock, South Bay Civil War Round Table. After the U. S. Supreme Court declared the Mexican grant of ownership was fraudulent, Lincoln was unable to enforce nationalizing the mine due to rough protests from miners. Mercury is used for the hydraulic extraction of gold and silver from solid rock. Comstock wrote that Lincoln "recognized his mistake and corrected it; did not seek to blame others and was re-elected by a majority of Californians in 1864." Photographer Carlton Watkins was working in San Jose, producing images of the New Almaden Mine. His large plates of Yosemite Valley inspired President Lincoln to declare the Yosemite Valley "inviolable" at the same time (1863) as the mine controversy.

³ Ines's mother, Rafaela Soto de Pacheco (1816-1902) was "one of the few women left of the old Spanish aristocracy" according to her obituary in the *San Jose Mercury News*. The Pachecos had been Recorder of Deeds as well as *alcalde* (judge) in the San Jose pueblo. After the death of Ines in 1872 Rafaela had significant responsibility in raising her grandchildren. She lived on W. St. James Street in a home that was provided by her son-in-law.

⁴ "Whittier: a very interesting letter from Ralph A. Lowe." *The Evening News*, September 26, 1904 The letter was concurrent with the death of his father James R. Lowe, Jr.

⁵ Thanks to Trinity choir member Elizabeth Finkler Hanasaki for finding Edmund Lowe in a restored version of *What Price Glory?* (1925) in a recent retrospective of the films of Dolores del Rio, who plays Charmaine de la Cognac.