



# THE BOARD AND BATTEN

*Newsletter of the Pacific Grove Heritage Society*

December 1993 / January 1994

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*Dreams Of Progress*

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Customers in every  
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and many foreign  
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*Rensselaer Luther (R. L.) Holman  
Founder of Holman's Department Store*

## Holman's Department Store

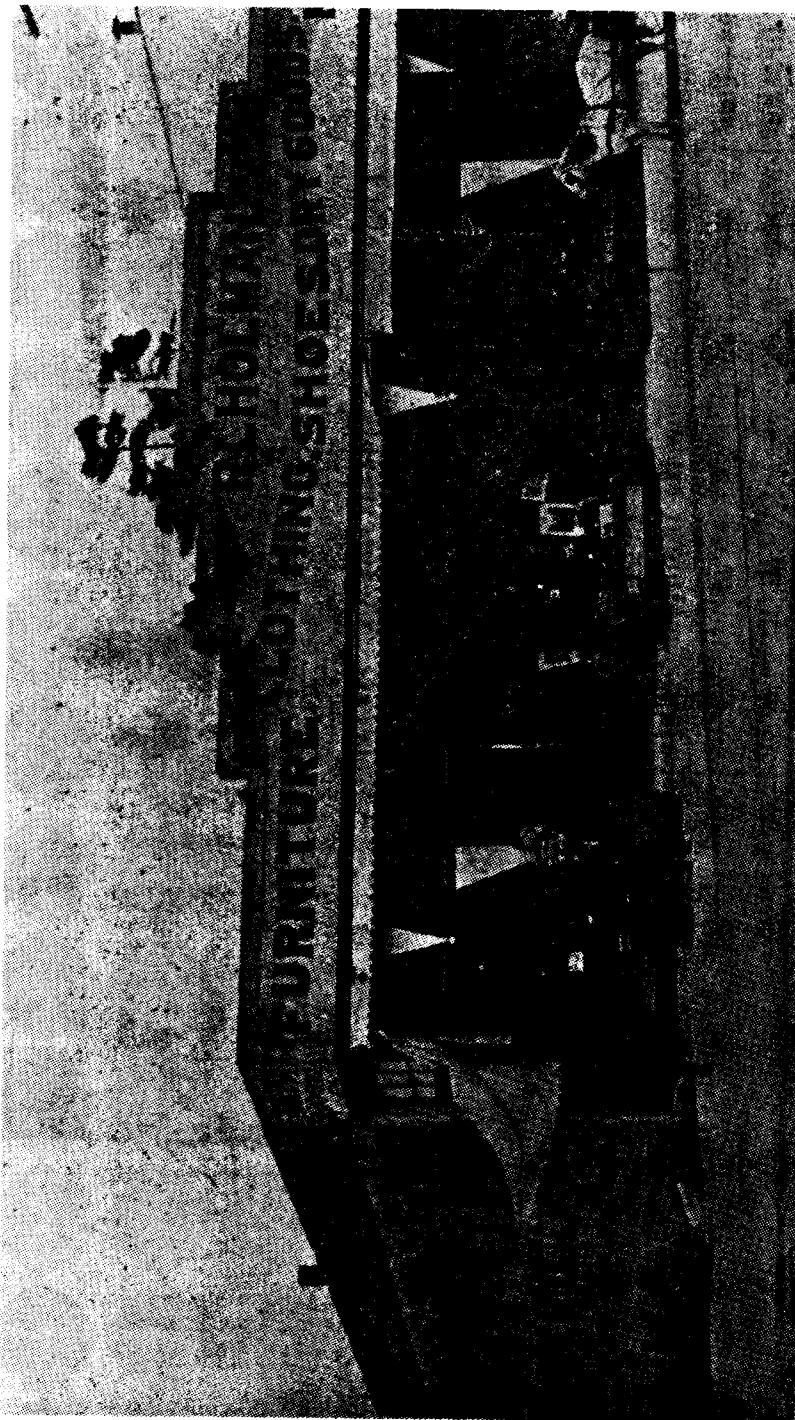
Holman's Department Store was founded by R. L. Holman in 1891. Mr. Holman came to the Grove from Sacramento where he had engaged in the wholesale hardware and implement business. Under the name of Towle & Holman, the first store in 1891 occupied a site at the corner of Lighthouse & Forest avenues, where the Grove Pharmacy is now located. In those days the buildings were quite a bit above the street level and it was necessary to mount a flight of stairs to enter the store from the street. Carefully watching the needs of the people of the Grove, Holman soon became a popular merchant, and up the long flight of wooden stairs leading to the shop, passed most of the men and women of the town.

With dreams of progress and plans for expansion, Holman started the long march of location changes. The first move was to the Lloyd Building (south side of Lighthouse between Forest and 16th), at that time one of the most imposing structures in the Grove. After a short stay there, the store moved across the street in 1897 to the old Robinson Block, on the north side of Lighthouse between Forest and 16th. All the buildings in the old Robinson Block were demolished in 1930 when the First National Bank building was built.

In 1903 a major step in expansion was taken when the main store was moved to 17th & Lighthouse, to the building now housing Ron's Liquors. Holman retained the Robinson Block store, however, as a furniture store. Two years later, in 1905, R.L. Holman handed over the store management to his sons W.R. Holman and C.E. Holman and the store moved again to quarters which it occupied for the next 19 years on the site of the Grove Theater building. Please see photo on next page. At this time it became a real department store. Prior to that it had been simply a general store. In 1913, the need for additional space resulted in the acquisition of the old Winston Building, giving the store frontage for a full block on Lighthouse Avenue. At that time they built a galvanized iron wing in the rear to house the new grocery department.

In 1924 came the biggest event in the store's history when the present building was erected on Lighthouse between Fountain and Grand. When built, it was only three floors. The fourth and fifth floors were added seven years later in 1931, along with the elevators. W. R. Holman added the floors during the depression to give work to the men in town and to demonstrate his confidence in Pacific Grove as a business location.

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1906 Photo

Holman's as it looked in 1906 at the corner of 17th & Lighthouse, where it stood for almost 20 years. The original Grove Theater was built here when Holman's new store was built in 1924.

## Holman's Store Attains World Wide Reputation

*(From the March 8, 1935 issue of the Tide)*

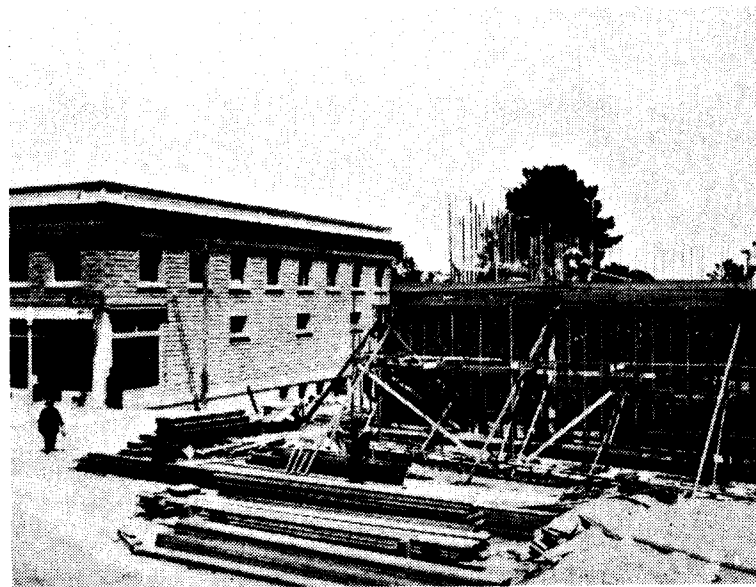
Linking Pacific Grove with every state in the Union and practically every country in the world is a merchandising institution which holds a unique position in the commercial world - Holman's. Probably no where else in the world is a store of its scope to be found in a community with as small a population as Pacific Grove.

Records of its shipping department indicate customers in most towns of California, in every one of the 48 states and in many foreign countries, including Morocco, Scotland, England, Russia, Australia, China, Norway and Belgium. Letters from past or prospective patrons arrive daily, some of them vaguely addressed but all indicating Holman's has impressed them. For example, in the correspondence file can be found a letter addressed to: "The Big Dry Goods Store at Pacific Grove."

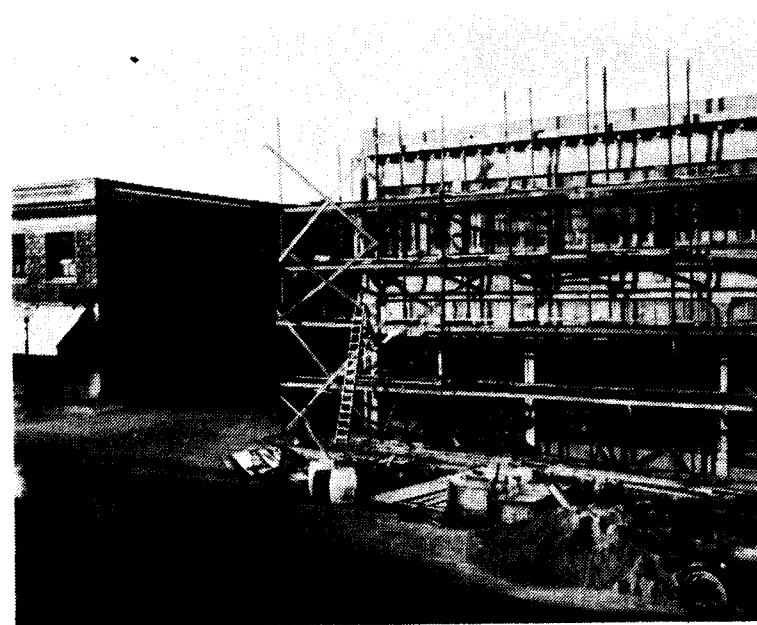
Many facts concerning the store's dimensions and the extent of its merchandising are regarded by businessmen everywhere as little short of miraculous. For example, it is one of the largest dealers of Catalina pottery anywhere in the United States, shipping this currently popular product to patrons throughout the east and middle west. Its floor space is the largest between San Francisco and Los Angeles. It consumes 100 tons of wrapping paper annually and has on its year-round payroll 120 people. This number is greatly increased in the pre-Christmas season.

### **Top Two Floors Added in 1931**

When the top two floors were added in 1931, the fourth floor was dedicated to furniture, featuring ten departments and 22 completely furnished rooms. From the fourth floor there is a winding staircase leading to the fifth floor (the roof). There you will find two lounge rooms, each 25 by 40. One is for the general public and the other for store employees. The employee's lounge will be for use as a lounge, a lecture room, meeting room and for parties. Eleven bids were made for the concession rights to the public lounge. It seemed to many people an ideal place for a restaurant or tea room. None of these offers was considered by Mr. Holman. "I want," he said, "to have that room for the comfort of my customers. Its view and setting are beautiful. It will be a comfortable place to meet your friends, to rest, to enjoy the sunshine. I hope people will use it and like it."

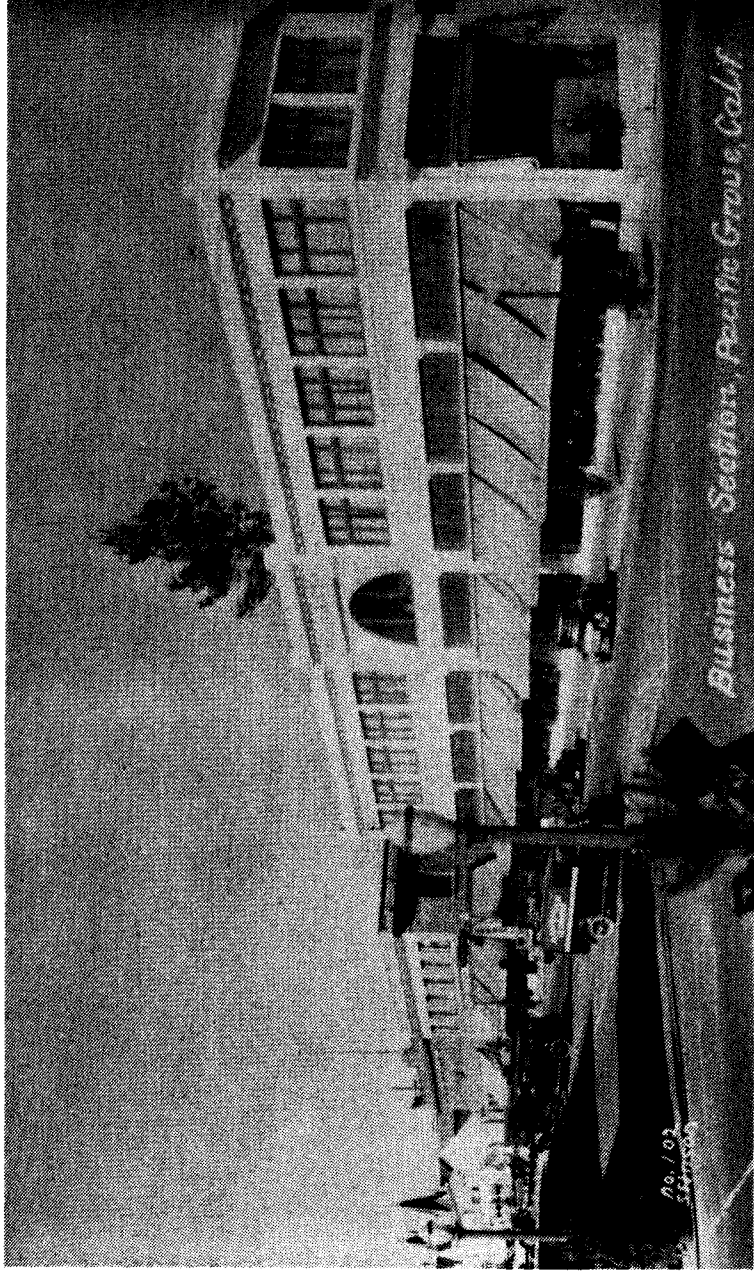


*Holman's under construction in 1924.*

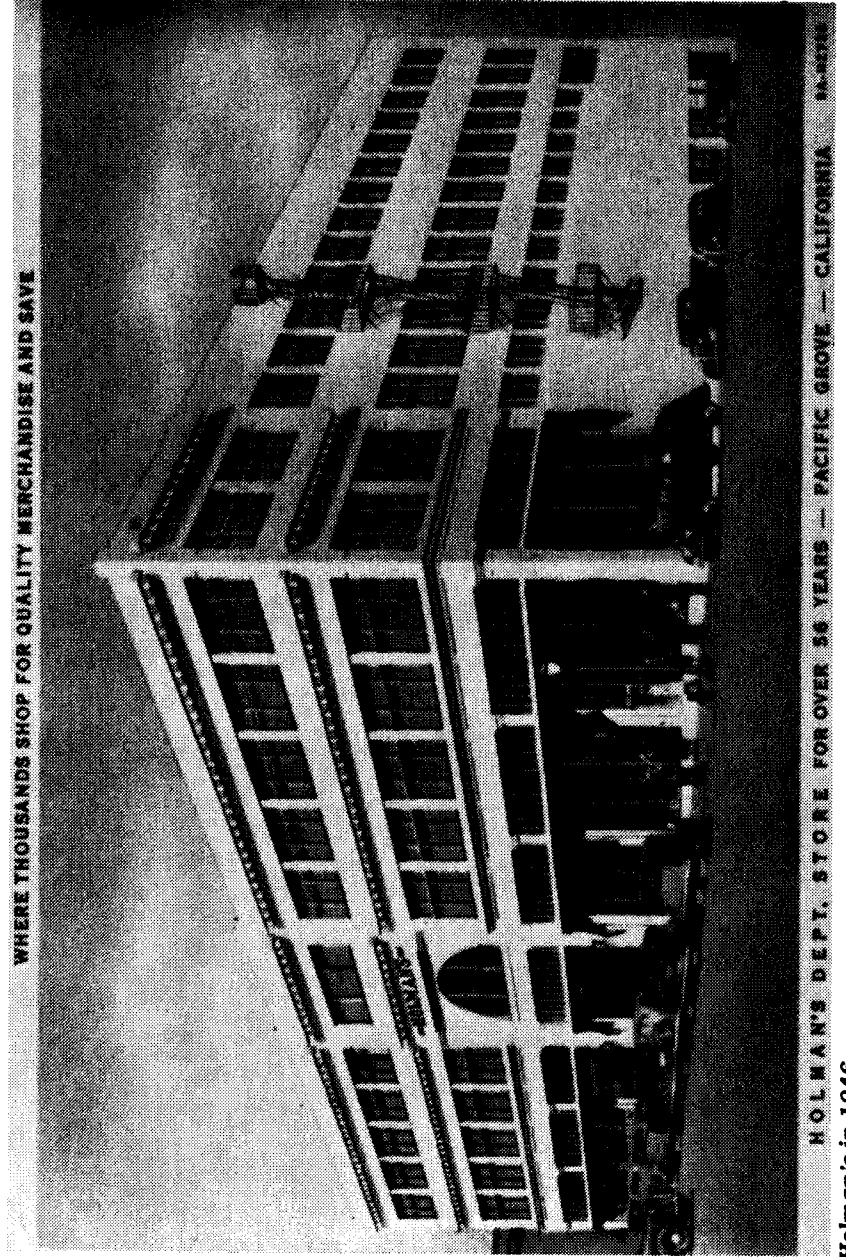


# Others Saw Us Through Postcards

Courtesy of Steve Honegger (and his Mom)



Holman's and the business section in the early 1930s.



Holman's in 1946.

# MIR-O-KLEER

*Reflection of Easter Perfection*

"Mir-O-Kleer," Kayser's flawless sheer, will reflect your Easter costume perfection. This beautiful hose is clearer, sheerer and no dearer. Made in the gay, new spring colors—Bolero, Rhumba, Tango.



**\$1.00**

and up  
Hosiery Dept., Main Floor, Right

We Give  
S & H  
Green  
Stamps

**Holman's**  
DEPARTMENT STORE  
Pacific Grove

Open 8  
to 6 Daily  
and 'Till  
9 Sat.  
Nights

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In May of 1930, the local paper reported that a branch of the Sprouse-Reitz store in Monterey was established in Pacific Grove in the store vacated by Safeway in the 200 block of Forest Avenue next to the post office. Later, they moved to the Lighthouse location shown in the above photo of the First National Bank Building.

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## Down The Piney Path

*News of old Pacific Grove from the Monterey Argus (January - February 1886)*

❖ by E. C. Davis

- + The New Year was seen in at the Parlor. At 12 midnight there was a jubilee of plates, teaspoons and fish horns.
- + Mr. Berwick and family, of Carmel Valley, took New Year's dinner at their cottage in Pacific Grove.
- + The ladies of the Chinese Mission tender their sincere thanks to the kind ladies of Pacific Grove for their generous Christmas donations. (Signed) Mrs. E.L.Wilson; Miss North; Miss Schaefer.
- + 250,000 feet of lumber has arrived by schooner for David Jacks.
- + There are now between fifty and sixty families residing permanently in the Grove.
- + The P.I. Co. and many citizens are slaying our giant pines since the storm. "Spare the axe" for without these beautiful trees Pacific Grove would be non est.
- + The P.I. Co. will soon erect a handsome octagonal edifice on Grand Avenue to be used by the Chautauqua Lecture Series as a museum, where a fine collection of historical and scientific objects will soon be gathered.
- + The wild waves are doing a lot of loud talking the last few days.

## New Facts From Past Issues

- Oct/Nov '93; Pg 10: Dixie Lee Ray, who left Pacific Grove and later became Governor of Washington, died recently. Her obituary was in the Herald.
- April/May '93; Pg 6,7: 110 10th Street was moved from 264 Lighthouse in 1923.
- Oct/Nov '93; Pg 9: 112 Fountain was turned around and moved on the lot in 1908 and is now called 115 Grand.
- Aug/Sept '93; Pg 9: Bodfish House at 126 (128) Forest was demolished in 1947.

## Calendar of Events—1994

February 9: Annual membership meeting & election  
April 15: Quilt Show Preview Party  
April 16,17: Quilt Show  
April 16,17: Good Old Days Celebration downtown  
May 12: Preservation Week Home Awards  
July 25-31: Feast of Lanterns  
October 8: Butterfly Parade  
October 9: 25th Annual Victorian Home Tour  
December 6: Christmas At The Inns.

## New Members

Ada Crossman	Wendy & Tom Ryan
Kevin & Linda Smith	Cathie & Bill Peck
Peggy & Gary Drach	Beverly & John Ryan
Donald & Willa Jean Scott	Phyllis Jorgensen Koch
Carl & Donna Stewart	Tim Patterson
Christine Beard & David Goldblatt	Kirste Wilde & Paul Miller

## **Share The Heritage With A Friend Annual Family Membership \$10.00**

Members receive *The Board and Batten* newsletter of the Heritage Society of Pacific Grove.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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