

The early years of Watsonville Hospital

This column was written in 1938
by Sam Hawkins, columnist for the
Register-Pajaronian.

"Mrs. Carrie Linscott Jenkins who has lived in Watsonville most of her life says this town's first hospital really was in a small building adjoining the home of her father at 13 E. Third and Alexander streets. Mrs. Jenkins' father was the late well-known James A. Linscott, who was mayor of Watsonville and also county supervisor, and for years a leader in community affairs. Jim Linscott has the Studebaker agency for Watsonville in the early '90s. This doesn't mean that he sold Studebaker automobiles. For there were no automobiles owned in Watsonville those days.

"He handled the original Studebaker products, such as wagons and buggies, and he also carried harness ropes, whips and the like. He conducted his business in a big store building on Third Street where the Metropolitan Shoe Shop is located today. Originally, Mr. Linscott was to the lumber business here as manager of the old Eureka sawmill in the Eureka canyon above Corralitos. The sawmill was owned by the Watsonville Mill and Lumber Company, a retail lumber with Lucius Sanborn.

"In an accident at the lumber mill, Mr. Linscott lost his right hand and he had a hook fitted to the stump of his arm. He became very clever with this hook and could drive a four-horse team with it. Mr. Linscott's wife was Dora Linscott, who was a very capable practical nurse. She was the only white woman living at the mill and the men from the woods and the mill came to her with their hurts and ailments. She was a natural nurse.

When the Linscotts left the Eureka mill and moved to Watsonville she carried on her work of nursing. The original Linscott home was a house at Third and Alexander and she used this home frequently for patients.

"Mrs. Jenkins says the original public hospital in Watsonville was



That Was
Watsonville

Betty Lewis

a small four-room building adjoining the Linscott home. There were three rooms and a kitchen, which was the operating room. There was no bathroom and the bathtub was on wheels so it could be moved from one room to another.

"Dr. P. K. Watters used to send his patients to Mrs. Linscott's hospital and he preformed many operations in the hospital kitchen. Dr. Nat Green also performed operations and S.C. Rodgers brought babies into world there.

"Food for the patients would be cooked in the kitchen of the adjoining home and taken on a tray to the hospital through a gate in a high picket fence. Dr. Watters used to pay Mrs. Linscott \$10 a week for each patient she cared for— but out of this sum she had to pay for the food.

In recognition of Mrs. Linscott's early work as a pioneernurse in the Pajaro Valley, she was presented with a Red Cross pin at the graduation exercises of the nurses from the doctors first Watsonville hospital.

"Mrs. Jenkins has this pin in her possession today. In 1896 Perry Andrews built for Jim Linscott the big home at Third and Alexander streets and this then was considered one of the finest homes in the Pajaro Valley. This house is still there today and the name of Linscott is carried on in 'Linscott Course' in the rear of this home.

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Betty Lewis, a local historian and Watsonville resident, is a regular columnist for the Register-Pajaronian.