

# Second Watsonville High School was both modern and decorative

On November 8, 1901, Watsonville's High School building, built in 1895, burned to the ground leaving just the chimneys still standing. Built at a cost of \$18,000 and designed by William Weeks, the building was insured for \$15,000. A bond issue was ultimately placed before the voters and passed on February 15, 1902 for an additional \$15,000 to build a new school. Three plans had been submitted to the school trustees — two by architect William Weeks and one by the Honorable Thomas Beck. The Mission style of architecture submitted by Weeks was accepted by the trustees to be



**Betty  
Lewis**

**That was  
Watsonville**

built at a cost of \$26,000.

Completed in early 1903, the two-story, with basement, building with its concrete foundation, featured a cream-colored cementine exterior, green painted window trimmings

and a Spanish tile roof. Circular towers flanked a prominent gable and in the interior of the new building a fan system of ventilation gave each pupil 30 cubic feet of fresh air per minute without opening windows or doors.

At the dedication ceremonies on April 10, 1903, planned by the Alumni Association, hundreds of people gathered in front of the new school to hear the Watsonville Band play some stirring numbers; listened to attorney H. C. Wyckoff give the dedication speech and then were off to tour the new educational facility.

The upper story contained two large rooms for the commercial department plus smaller rooms for storage. The first floor consisted of five large classrooms, a physical laboratory and a library while the large basement gave ample room for a well-equipped chemical laboratory, a boys' and girls' playroom and the heating furnaces. Principal Irving Townsend occupied the tower room at the west end on the first floor and the room in the eastern tower was used as an assembly room for teachers. Tower rooms on the second floor housed the lunch room and conference room. The ceiling was tinted in cream color and the interior walls were painted a light green.

"The new High School building cost complete about \$26,000. It is one of the most handsome and expensive High School buildings in the state and in point of arrangement it is unsurpassed." - the Pajaronian, March 19, 1903

In February of 1905, the first issue of the Manzanita made its appearance and on the editorial staff



S1212 The High School, Watsonville, California.

**The second Watsonville High School cost \$26,000 to build, and was completed in 1903.**

were: Ray Campbell, Jerome Porter, Clara Clem, Pearl Stow, Carol Hopkins, Floyd Rodgers, Ivory Rodda, Fred Wilson, Clifford Palmtag, Zelda Ireland and Louise Watters. Now the school's yearbook — this early edition — was published every month. In the fall of this year the high school program was changed from three to four years while the commercial department was a two-year program.

The following appeared in the Watsonville Register's Progress Edition, January 1916: "The education of

their children is the interest nearest the hearts of the taxpayers and every just demand of the schools has been ungrudgingly complied with. Then, too, Watsonville does not carp at its teachers over every trivial matter, but demands results and efficient operation. Thus puts the teaching force on its mettle and inspires its members to the putting forth of their best efforts."

A new high school was built in 1917 and the old school was still used and later became the first home of Cabrillo College but was to be torn

down in 1964. The school library was built on the site in 1966 and named after Ida A. Fuller who had served as the school librarian for 36 years. The 1917 school, also designed by Weeks, was torn down after the 1989 earthquake and the present school constructed.

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence." - Robert Frost

Betty Lewis, a local historian, is a contributing columnist to the Register-Pajaronian.

## REFERENCE

WATSONVILLE  
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