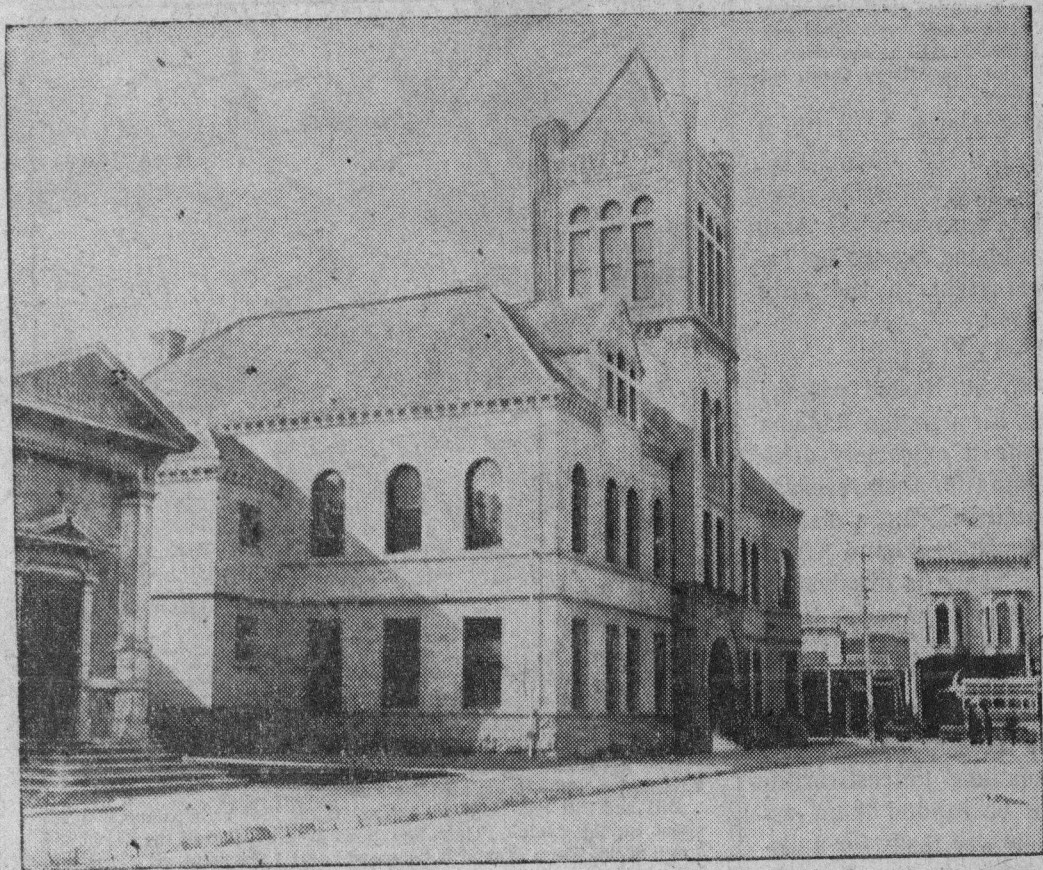


SANTA CRUZ YESTERDAYS



WHEN THE COURT HOUSE WAS NEW

(From the Preston Sawyer Collection)

The dignified, 60-year-old Santa Cruz County Court House was quite new when, in the Gay Nineties, the above photo was made. View is westward from Front street toward Pacific avenue where one of the early electric cars is passing.

At the extreme left is the original 1882 Hall of Records which survived the 1894 fire, and still is in use. The present court house is second on the site.

Built on land originally owned by the Coopers, an early Santa Cruz family, for whom the street was named, the present court house was formally turned over to the county in December of 1896.

R. H. McCabe was the contractor on the job, working on plans prepared by an architect named Comstock, but afterwards modified by Supervising Architect

Thomas Beck, of Watsonville. It is built of light buff brick with facings of Plumas county blue-stone.

Lofty Tower

The main entrance on Cooper street was originally distinguished by a somewhat lofty tower. Ten years later, the central California earthquake which devastated San Francisco, caused considerable damage to the structure. Although the tower did not fall, there was damage to it which contributed to the decision to remove it, about twenty years later.

Chairman James A. Linscott and Joseph D. Enright, S. H. Rambo, A. G. Lay and A. P. Stanton composed the 1895-96 Board of Supervisors under whose guidance the building was constructed. The greater part of the brick was burned in Santa Cruz county.

The cement for foundation floors was furnished by I. L. Thurber & Co., and was made in the county. The work was done by county mechanics under the supervision of county builders. The completed structure was regarded as second to none in the state for the purpose for which it was designed. Also, with careful and worthy construction, the county was freely congratulated as having completed one of the best public buildings for the amount of money involved.

Fine Law Library

The Board of Supervisors early established a fine law library within the structure. The new

quarters of the county officials were described at the time as "commodious, high-ceiled, well-ventilated rooms."

Of New England type architecture, the first court house on the site, only building south of Cooper street to fall a prey to the flames of the great fire in April, 1894, was the second building used for the purpose that was owned by the county.

Tom Fallon's story and a half wooden building on the east side of the upper plaza, bought by the county in 1852, had served until Hugo Hihn built his "flatiron" building at the lower plaza, prior to 1860. Its upper floor was leased for a court and county office. The building still stands today at the junction of Front and Pacific, near the post office.