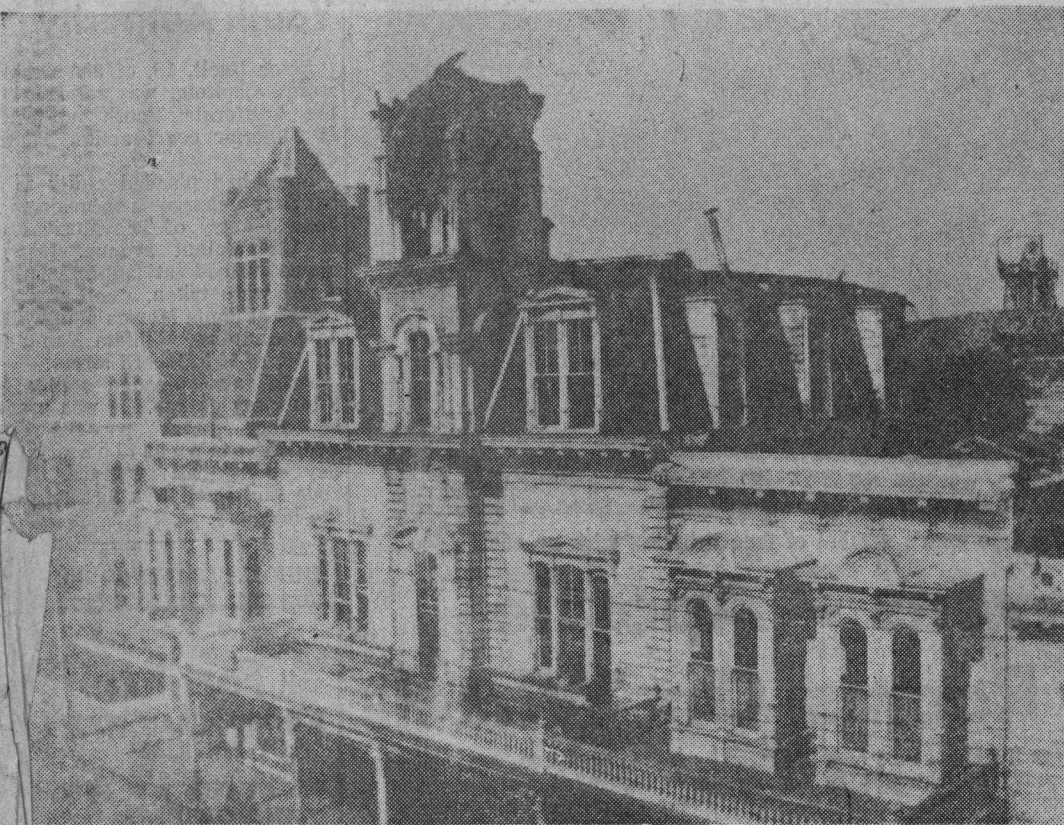


# Time Runs Out For SC's Best-Known Landmark



By Margaret Koch  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruz is about to lose one of its best-known landmarks, the town clock.

The old timepiece on Pacific avenue is fated to be removed in the building remodeling which is planned by Odd Fellows lodge. It will not be put back up.

Every tick these days shortens the life span of the clock—which has marked the hours for Santa Cruzans since 1899. This actually is the second town clock.

The first, which sang out the hours with a bell, was built in 1873-74, about the time the first IOOF lodge hall was put up. The first clock escaped the great fire of 1894 when the courthouse burned. And it played a star role on the night of June 15, 1896, when it and its tower were outlined in 600 electric lights—Santa Cruz' first electric lights. This display marked the completion of a power project by which electricity was generated at Big Creek, above Davenport, and brought to Santa Cruz over 18 miles of wires. It also was the occasion of the second Venetian Water Carnival on the San Lorenzo river.

But both the first clock and its tower were destroyed in the fire of May, 1899, which started in Fleisig's Clothing store downstairs. The fire announced its presence with great billows of black smoke about 11:30 on a Saturday night.

Firemen got busy at once. But the fire ate its way hungrily through the ceiling, second floor and finally through the roof. By 1 a.m. the flames were attacking the tower which contained the great timepiece, but it still rang the hour, loud and clear. Water was poured on the tower but the fire's momentum was too great.

At 1:30 a.m. the old metal hands of the clock stopped, and about 4 a.m. the flagpole on top of the clock tower collapsed. Only the burnt-out shell of the building and the melted-looking ruins of the tower remained. And always after that time the fire of 1899 was known as the "town clock fire."

The present clock and building were built that same year to replace the burned structures. And during its 65-year career of keeping minutes and hours the second clock has had its adventures.

It has looked down on streets that once saw more horse and buggy traffic than cars; it has told the sad and happy hours through two declarations of world wars and two proclamations of armistice.

In 1929 a fuss was raised by patrons of the Palomar hotel and

and clock, Williams notified the Santa Cruz city council that the clock was badly in need of an overhaul. It would cost about \$250.

The city fathers exploded in a storm of "nos" and that was that. Things ran smoothly until October, 1948, when the clock stopped at 4:40 p.m. one Saturday. Shoppers complained . . . phones rang . . . people were confused.

Stanley Williams, Del's son, had taken over clock duties following the death of his father in January, 1948. And according to The Sentinel story, he now informed city fathers that the clock was old, tired and desperately in need of that overhaul job on its internal mechanism. Due to inflation the cost was now about \$800.

In January, 1951, the old clock stopped on two consecu-

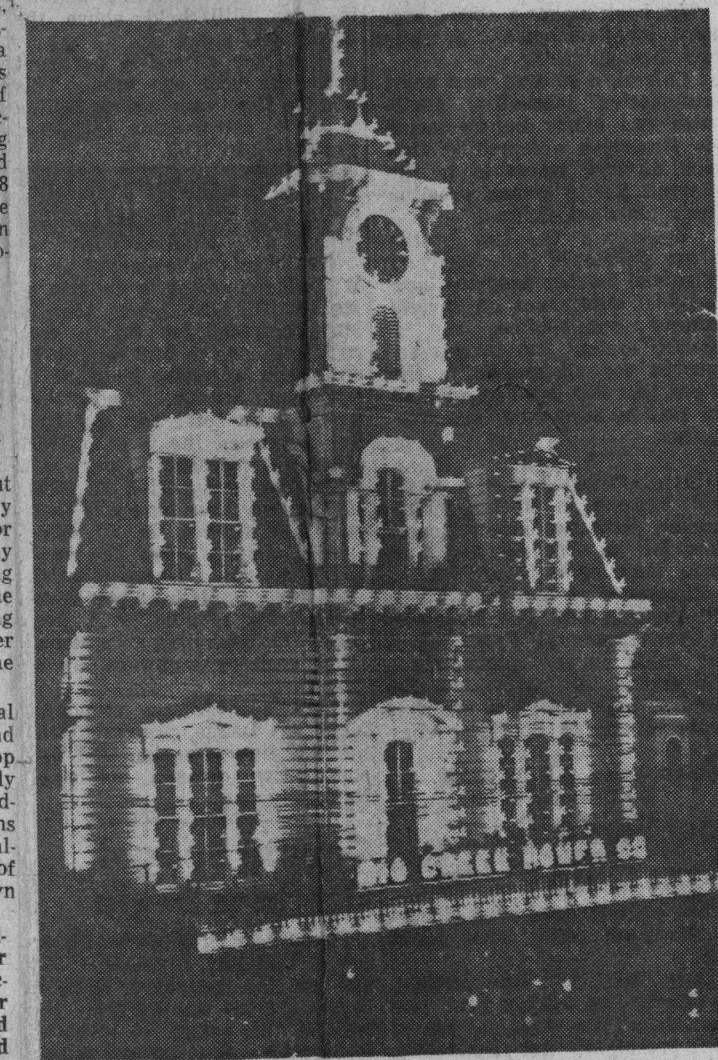
tive days. Stan Williams cleaned it and tightened its bearings but he refused to predict how long it might continue to run.

A few days later it stopped again and The Sentinel predicted it was "running on borrowed time." Finally, a month later, it got an overhaul job. Cost: \$335.

In October, 1951, the picturesque old timepiece was electrified, with the Odd Fellows lodge footing the bill.

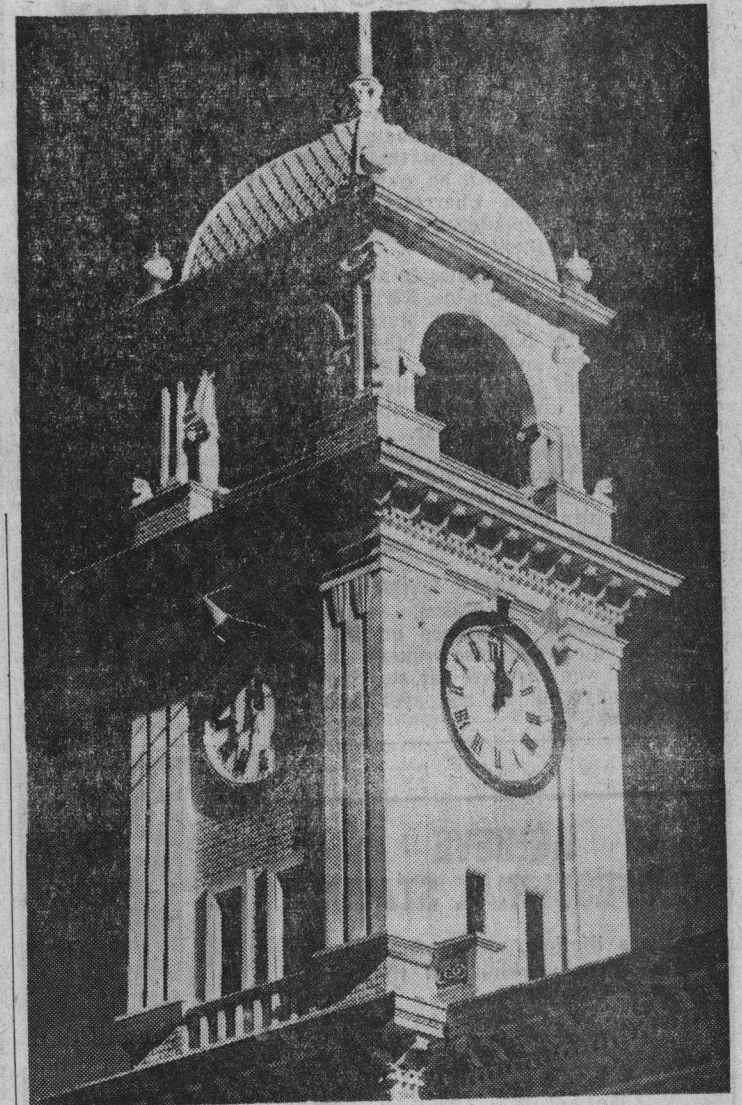
Six weeks ago the clock stopped again with the hands at 11:20. Again shoppers looked up in confusion. People noticed it immediately. Phones rang.

Queries to A. G. Atwood Sr., chairman of the IOOF building committee, brought the following answer: "The clock is to be taken down but future plans have not yet been made for it."



As it looked in 1896 when the first clock and tower were lighted electrically to mark the acquisition of Santa Cruz' first electric power. The 600 electric lights were turned on dur-

ing the evening of June 15, also the occasion of the second Venetian Water carnival on the San Lorenzo river. (Photo from the Roy Boekennoogen collection.)



As it looks today — and take a good look, because Santa Cruz' historic town clock is to be taken down soon during remodeling of the Odd Fellows building.

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As it looked after the "town clock fire" of 1899 which "melted" the tower and its first clock. They were built with \$1000 raised by subscription. (Photo from the Roy Boekennoogen collection).

## City Building Permits Total \$119,334

Twenty-six permits for construction valued at \$119,334 were issued by the city building inspection department during the week of June 17-23.

Largest was a permit issued to the C-Shore Investment company for a \$34,000 restaurant at 2301 Mission street. A \$30,000 permit was issued to Dolores Koontz for a four-unit apartment building at 509 Liebrandt street. Other permits included:

Palmer and McCall, \$20,000, for a house at 416 Lighthouse avenue; William Sohriakoff, \$12,000, for a house at 145 Woodcrest place; Earl Towne, \$6900, for a house at 231 Seaside avenue; Wilson and Prindle, \$26,000, for an office separation at 110 Dakota street.

Tom Butler, \$4000, for a swimming pool at 1519 Laurent street; Charles Abbott, \$2375, to move and remodel a building at 510 Lincoln street.

Scotts Valley.



the St. George "Mission inn"—they couldn't sleep. The clock's bell, striking the wee hours faithfully, was keeping them awake.

Petitions were circulated. The clock bell was labeled "obsolete" and "a nuisance." One complaint read: "The town clock ringing out the hour was essential in olden times when this was but a backwoods town, but it is not necessary in these modern times."

The complainers won that round and the hour bell was allowed to run down and was not wound again. Official "clock watcher" for the historic timepiece was Del Williams, Santa Cruz jeweler employed by the city at \$50 per year to maintain the clock.

In 1939, after nearly a half century of service by this sec-