



That Was
Watsonville

Betty Lewis

In 1916, the Pajaro Valley Progress Edition was published, featuring Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley's progress and possibilities with special emphasis upon agricultural and horticultural conditions and opportunities for the homemaker and investor.

S.J. Duckworth, secretary of the Watsonville Chamber of Commerce, wrote the following article in this edition: "With a population of 6,500 within its corporate limits, it is the trading and business center of about 20,000 people in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties, whose patronage makes it, in the estimation traveling men, the best commercial field between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The original area of the town was one mile square, with the plaza in the center.

"In recent years these limits have been outgrown in several directions, but whilst the corporate lines still remain practically as at first laid out, the adjoining subdivisions conform with them so that all new constitute on community. In very recent correspondence relative to conditions here, the following passage occurs.

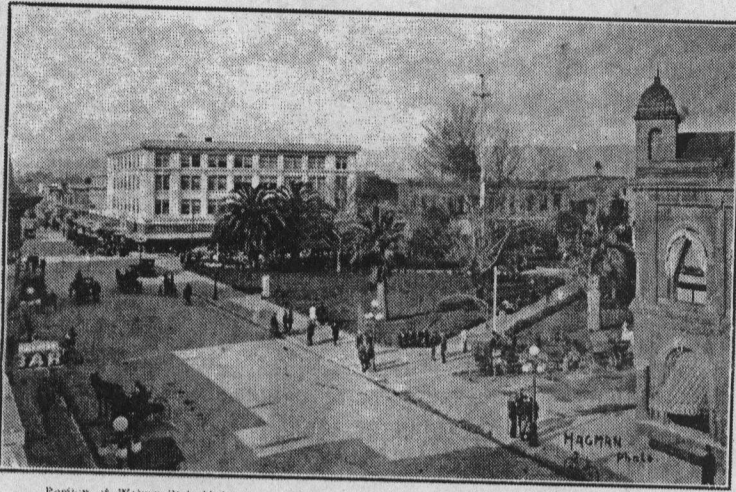
"The word City of Watsonville is no misnomer. Her streets, schools, churches, hotels, theaters, newspapers, transportation, facilities and business enterprises generally, are in a class by themselves and outstrip anything in their respective lines offered by the average community five times its size.

"On analysis the foregoing quotation will be found to be more than justified by the facts. The type of water found macadam roadbed connecting upper Main street with the highway to Santa Cruz, with its wide, finely constructed cement walks on either side is one of the best driveways to this section; while the type of oil bound macadam street leading out East Lake Avenue to connect with the old San Jose route over the Santa Cruz mountains cannot be improved by any city of the West.

"All over Watsonville these two types have been used with most satisfactory results, and when viewed as a whole, give to the city an air of solidity, cleanliness and attractiveness seldom equaled and never surpassed by any other places, whatever their size. The magnificent new concrete bridge just erected over the Pajaro River at the foot of Main Street is the very latest word in that type of construc-

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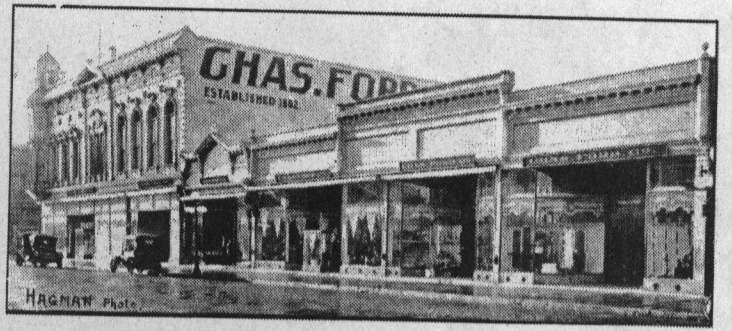
Portion of Watsonville's Main street and Civic Plaza. Large structure in the background is the new Lathrop building.

WATSONVILLE REGISTER

Featuring Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley's progress and possibilities with especial emphasis upon agricultural and horticultural conditions and opportunities for the homeseeker and investor

Charles Ford Company

Established in 1852



Home of Charles Ford Company, Watsonville's Great Department Store

The store carrying the largest and most complete and up to date stock between San Francisco and Los Angeles

Satisfied customers explain our growth

The front cover (left) and inside of the front cover (right) of the Watsonville Register Pajaro Valley Progress Edition 1916.

tion.

"The lighting system on the bridge, installed and maintained by the City of Watsonville, is an extension of the magnificent electroler scheme installed some months ago on Main Street, the principal business artery, at a total outlay of some \$20,000. The primary, grammar, high and convent schools of the city afford national advantages of the highest order, as set elsewhere in this issue.

"Our churches as a whole, more than compare with their surroundings and command the support of unusually strong congregations. The Catholic and Christian churches, especially, are architectural gems and would do credit to communities counting their population in six figures. The YMCA building on upper Main, the public library overlooking the Plaza, the Masonic Temple at Union and Maple Avenue, the Forester's Hall, on Main, the Native Sons Hall on Peck and the I.O.O.F. building on East Third Street, are models of their kind and occasion in the heart of every true Watsonvillian a just need of pride because of the high ideals typified in their erection and maintenance.

"The roster of fraternal and benevolent societies elsewhere in this edition will convey to the reader a proper idea of the scope covered by these truly great institutions and of the opportunities for intimate social intercourse their existence suggests. The Plaza —

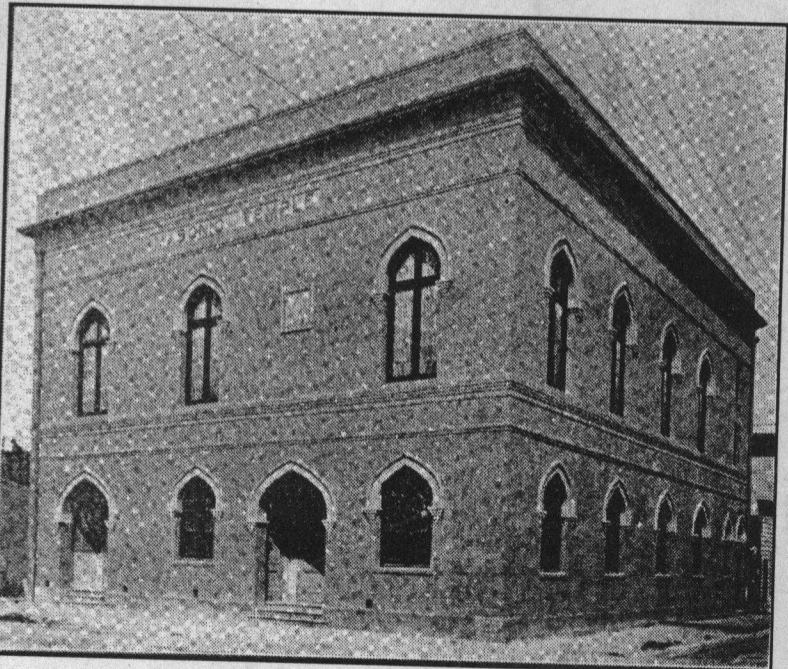
the beauty spot of Watsonville! Embracing an entire square in the heart of the city, with its well-kept walks, lawns, gardens and shade trees it is both an inspiration and delight. Here — from the massive stone music stand, corresponding to the Zocalo of the leading cities in Latin-America, a weekly concert is provided for during the summer months and on occasion its many advantages are availed of for the public entertainment of passing celebrities..."

And that was 1916.

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



An image of the Watsonville Public Library from 1916.



Courtesy of Betty Lewis

An image of the Watsonville Masonic Temple from 1916.