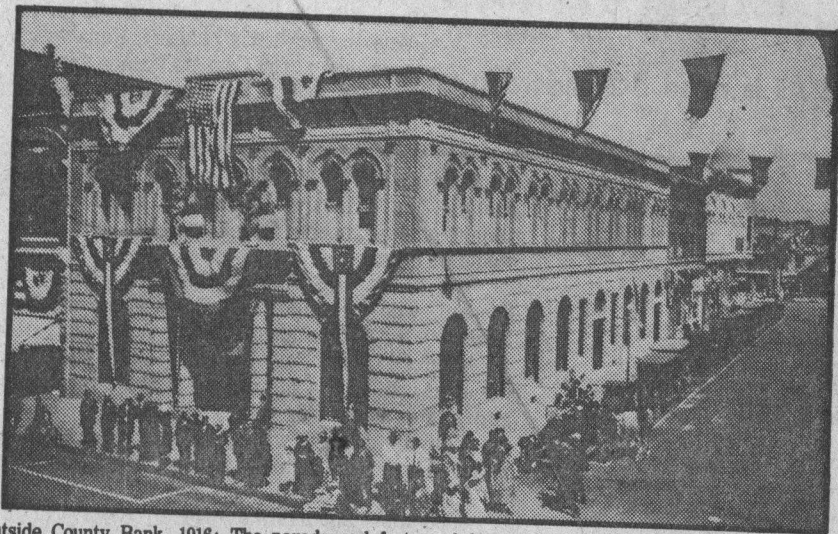


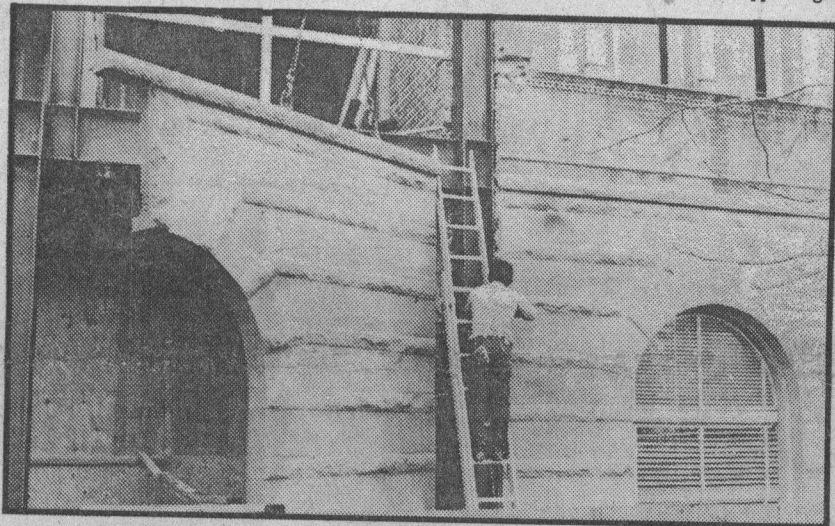
# Historical Vignettes



Inside County Bank, 1916: Left to right, Darrow Palmer, Ed Daubenbis, G. S. Tait, Jr., Uriah M. Thompson, Hugh Leonard. Tait was then cashier; Daubenbis was later to hold that office, but then, with Thompson, was Asst. Cashier. Palmer and Leonard were tellers by then. The descendants of Daubenbis, Palmer and Leonard are known to be very much about, while Tait and Thompson are at least survived by landmarks.



Outside County Bank, 1916: The parade and festooned facade had nothing to do with an opening or remodeling. Those ceremonies had been held in 1910, following architects Ward & Blohme's complete (perhaps too complete) renovation which dropped the floor to street level, moved the entrance off the corner, added to the Cooper Street frontage, and disposed of the cupola. The next expansion came on Pacific after World War II. Note the Leonard Building with its cupola on the upper right.



This is September 1980, and that intensely occupied young man is Rod Seigle. He, with brother Jake, is seeing to the final touches on the walls just outside and up the street from where the young men's grandfather, Darrow Palmer, started in business in 1912. Architect for this grand renovation is Melvin A. Rojko, who has designed most of County Bank's buildings through the past fifteen years. Biggest problems were 85-year-old party walls and matching the sandstone facade with other materials. Cost????!!!!

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Palmer, who had been born on a cattle ranch east of King City, came to Santa Cruz with a grammar school education to attend business college. Prior to joining County Bank he had worked briefly for local tycoon F. A. Hihn, as had Nina Balziger, the young woman he married shortly after taking up with the Bank. The Palmers celebrated their golden anniversary in May 1962 by treating some 350 members of the First Presbyterian Church to a mortgage-burning party at the church's Palmer Hall (named in the couple's honor.)

first expanded into the Pajaro Valley in October, 1977.

Their next job for the Bank was the East Santa Cruz remodeling, and now, 68 years after their grandfather started with County Bank at Pacific and Cooper, Rod and Jake — together with their mother, Ruth, and crew (minus John Dawson, since retired) are about to complete their biggest construction job yet — the expansion and extensive re-doing of the several-times-redone building, Pacific-Cooper.

In its last hours of completion, this work ranks with Leask's recent expansion among the most significant modern-era expressions of confidence in downtown Santa Cruz.

But back to Hugh Leonard. Earlier in



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Acting on Palmer's challenge, the congregation had raised the \$40,000 balance in a fund drive headed by Al McCommon and the late Bob Lyons. The Palmers paid off, and they reportedly loved every moment.



County Bank is celebrating its 110th anniversary, and we invite you to share a few historical vignettes in the bright light of today's events and participants.

—Jim Hammond

Darrow and Nina lived but a few years after that event. Their company has built many of Pasatiempo's homes, including their own on Hollins Drive and Hollins House, as it is now known. Much of their work was in remodeling, though, particularly commercial buildings. One such was the Odd Fellows Building on Pacific next to Cooper House. The Town Clock once was a stately cap to that old structure.

The Palmers' daughter, by now Mrs. Ruth Seigle and the mother of two sons, Rod and Jake, incorporated Darrow Palmer Construction following her parents' deaths, with her two sons and long-time foreman John Dawson as directors. One of their earlier jobs was the remodeling of County Bank's interior at Pacific-Cooper in 1970. Another was the reconversion of Watsonville's historic (1911) Lettunich Building, returning the ground floor to banking when County Bank

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But back to Hugh Leonard. Earlier in this series we noted that Mike and Grace Leonard were the owners of the Pacific-Cooper corner at the time of the 1894 fire. That couple also owned the Front and Cooper corner. They had buildings on both. Both burned flat. They sold the Pacific corner to the bank and rebuilt the other with the old gem that stands there today — "modernized" more than somewhat but with cupola still intact. Just a few days ago, Bill Leonard, son of Hugh and grand-nephew of Mike and Grace, showed us the original construction contract for that building. The document was drawn by the law firm of Jeter & McKinney; the contract price — \$3,575.76.

Hugh Leonard started with County Bank at \$30 per month. He resigned in 1923 about the same time that Darrow Palmer left for the construction business. (Banks then were said not to "pay well".) Hugh was the father of a large family, and among the legacies left his children was one to son Bill — a delightful knowledge of and feeling for local history.

Lawyer Harry Lucas, who for years has had offices in the Leonard Building, recalled recently that "Mike Leonard's saloon on that corner was said to have seen more court cases settled than the Court House."

**County Bank**  
of Santa Cruz