

City's list of mayors is a litany of famous names

Thanks to Lorraine Washington, Watsonville's city clerk, I have in hand a list of all the Watsonville mayors and presidents; some more interesting than others but all dedicated to serving the community in one way or another. I think one of the best stories I ever heard was told to me by a woman who has since "crossed the great divide." She said that one of the very early mayors was so crooked he had to screw his socks on!

James Ingham died while in office and serving as president of the city council and Dr. Peter Blas Marinovich died while mayor in March of 1953. J.S. Yoacham (Sam) who served as president of the board of trustees in 1890, committed suicide in 1899 over the loss of office as justice of the peace.

James A. Linscott served from 1907 to 1909. The following is from the Evening Pajaronian, May 14, 1907 — "Mayor Linscott's march of triumph — A triumphal procession took place at about 8:30 p.m. last evening, as soon as the official count of the election was announced. A number of his enthusiastic supporters surrounded Mayor-elect Linscott and with loud cheering and general jubilation marched him down the street, followed by a crowd several hundred strong. To make the celebration of victory more complete some enterprising persons seized and took along as a captive N.H. Lovering, proprietor of the Eagle Cigar Store, who had been an active partisan of Mayor Trafton and Chief Rasette." Linscott's ashes were



Betty Lewis
Local columnist

That was Watsonville

scattered over San Francisco bay when he died in 1913 — he was a cousin of School Superintendent James Linscott for whom Linscott School is named after.

The most controversial mayors race was in 1903 when Richard Quinn and William Trafton were running against each other. Quinn won by a small margin and Trafton contested the count of 411 to 407. The state supreme court reversed the superior court's finding and Trafton won by a vote of 407 to 401. He was sworn into office on July 8, 1904 and the question of who was legally the first mayor has always been questioned. It was also a time of controversy over where to put the Carnegie Library — Quinn wanted it in the plaza and Trafton did not. Needless to say cooler heads prevailed and it was built at

the corner of Union and Trafton.

C.H. "Jack" Baker served as mayor for the longest time, more than anyone. He was in office from 1927 to 1951 and died in 1956 — serving through the depression and beyond the end of World War II. He also served as president of the Appleton Investment Company as well as president of the California League of Cities plus many other civic interests.

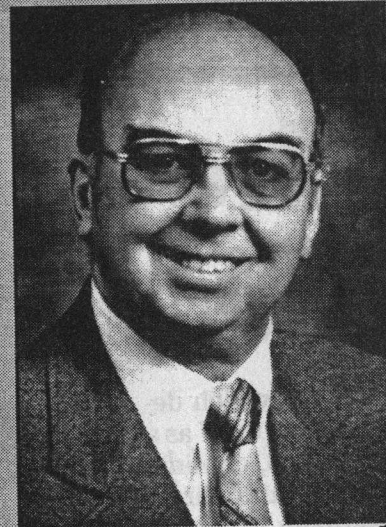
Several of the mayors authored books — James Hall wrote "Starving On a Bed of Gold" and Fred Atkinson wrote two books — "100 Years In the Pajaro Valley" and "The Argonauts of 1769" — all are available at the Watsonville Public Library.

Watsonville did not have a woman mayor until Ann Soldo became mayor in 1983. Since then, Betty Murphy and Betty Bobeda have served as mayors.

According to historical records, when Watsonville became a charter city in 1903 it was the first time for a mayor to be elected. Before that there had been a board of trustees with a president and four councilmen. Between 1903 and 1960, there was a board of aldermen. In 1960, the council-manager city charter was adopted and starting in December, 1989, mayors were no longer elected by the general public but were appointed by the city council.

In one election, the local paper noted that a candidate whizzed around town on roller skates handing out flyers — he lost the election!

City of Watsonville mayors and board of trustee presidents:



MAYOR	VOTE
WILLIAM "BILL" JOHNSTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

A campaign card for Bill Johnston.

- Chas. Thomas -1877
- Ed Martin 1877-1881
- George Trafton 1881-1885, 1889-1899
- Arthur Atteridge 1885-1888
- George Peckham 1888-1889
- J.S. (Sam) Yoacham 1890-1890
- E.H. Madden 1890-1892
- Henry "Hy" Jackson 1892-1894
- James Ingham 1894-1895
- Alex Chalmers 1895-1897
- E.F. Wyckoff 1897-1900
- William Trafton 1900-1903, 1904-1907, 1913-1921
- Richard Quinn 1903-1904
- James A. Linscott 1907-1909
- Dr. P.K. Watters 1909-1911
- James "Gus" Hall 1911-1913
- C.H. Baker "Jack" 1927-1951
- Dr. P.B. Marinovich 1951-1953
- Dr. W.J.C. Ramsay 1953-1959
- Louis Gluhan 1959-1960
- Fred W. Flodberg 1960-1967
- William Murphy 1967-1971
- Bill Johnston 1971-1983
- Ann Soldo 1983-1987
- Betty Murphy 1987-1989
- Todd McFarren 1989-1991
- Oscar Rios 1991-1993
- Lowell Hurst 1993-1994
- Tony Campos 1994-1995
- Betty Bobeda 1995-1996
- Al Alcalá 1996-

REFERENCE

WATSONVILLE
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
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