

Old Santa Cruz Armory Was Hub Of Social Events For Community

By Margaret Koch

He remembers the "hup-hup-one-two-three" of the military drill every Monday night.

She remembers the "one-two-three, one-two-three" of the waltz, and "dancing holes in my shoes."

They may remember it differently. But both Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kaiser of 205 Marnell avenue have vivid memories of the old Armory—Santa Cruz' first civic center and naval reserve meeting place.

It was built in 1883—a huge (for that day) 100 by 150-foot building, known first as The Pavilion.

Footing the construction bill was a stock company, the Fair Building association, organized by F. A. Hihn, L. K. Baldwin, R. C. Kirby and Duncan MacPherson.

Their purpose was to have a place suitable for special meetings, flower fairs and other exhibits. The building went up near the southeast corner of Soquel avenue and Front street and originally faced north. Later when Front street was extended down to Cathcart street in 1895, the big building was turned so it faced west, turrets were added and it became known as the armory. Today a car parts business occupies the site.

Kaiser, who was born here in 1885, was one of the early members of the Fourth Division

Naval militia which used to meet and drill at the armory. He joined when he was 17—by "stretching his age a year or four."

"I was big and husky for my age," he explained.

He believes he is the only division member now living in Santa Cruz.

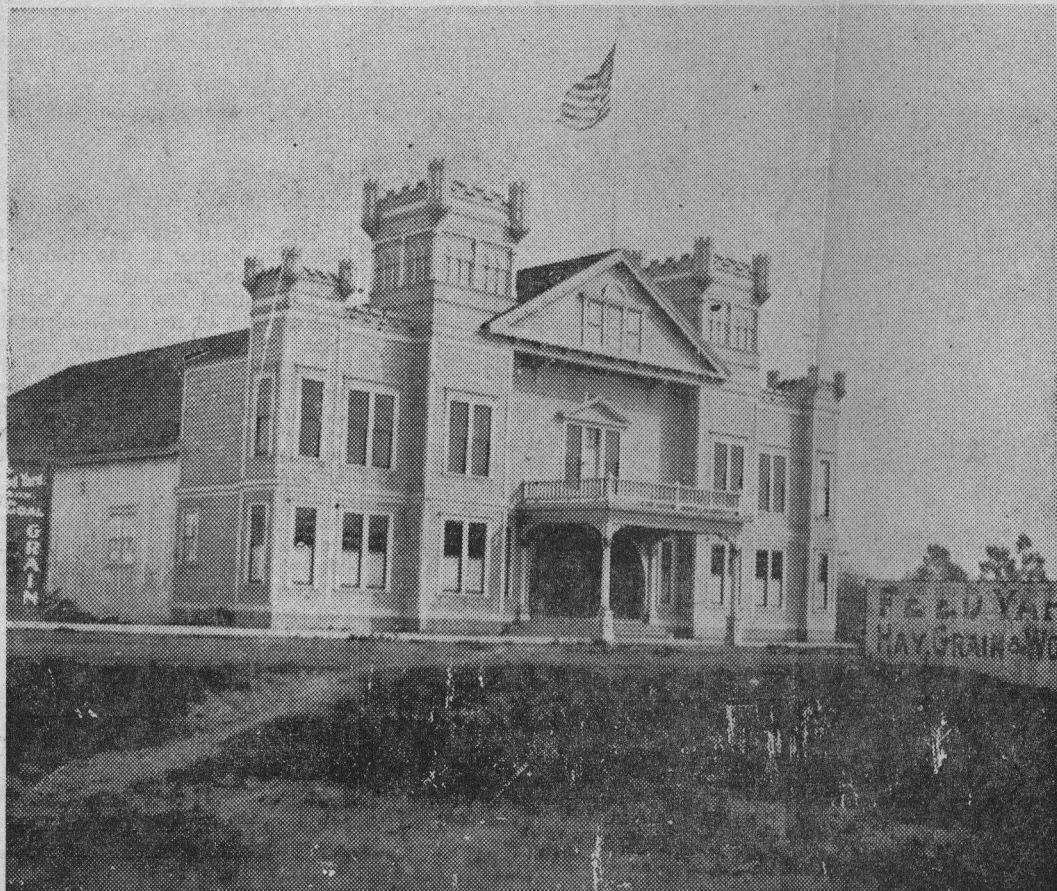
"The division originally organized in 1898 for the Spanish-American war but none of us ever went to Cuba," he said.

Instead, eight years later, the Fourth Division all went to San Francisco to patrol Chinatown. Looters were running wild in "the city" after the 1906 'quake and fire. The trip to the bay area was made by train to Pajaro Junction, then by walking across the Chittenden Pass trestle, which had sagged three feet during the big earthquake, then getting another train on the other side.

"We stayed in San Francisco for a month," he recalled. "Camped right on Nob hill."

The Fourth division, one of eight militia companies in California at that time, later was absorbed by the state. But until then, it was an active group with A. A. Morey, cashier at Farmers and Merchants Bank, as division commander.

There was a cutter for rowing practice on the bay . . .



The Armory, Santa Cruz' first big civic meeting place, was built in 1883, swung around to

face another direction and remodeled a bit in 1895, and burned down in 1920.

ed to the ground in 1920. Photo through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kaiser.

"every Sunday in good weather," Kaiser explained.

Monday nights were drill nights for the 58 men in the group. Kaiser became a quartermaster second class, but in 1908 he became inactive due to transportation difficulties.

He also had married the former Miss Ruth Morrison—who still treasures two old dance programs from armory days. The couple retired a few years back from the furniture refinishing and upholstery business they established together in 1926 on Soquel avenue. Today it is run by their son, Harry Kaiser, and their daughter, Mrs. Evelyn Ronk.

The Armory served the community well for 37 years. Political

meetings were held in the building; lecturers appeared there; it was the official registration center for the draft during World War I and physical exams were given there. In addition to the large stage it contained a balcony, locker space and a separate office or meeting room.

Then at 2 o'clock in the morning on January 16, 1920, the building went up in flames which were punctuated with explosions from the ammunition that was stored there.

Caretaker G. A. Willey lost his personal belongings. The great heat of the fire caused the loss of several nearby buildings and threatened others in the immediate area.

Kaiser, who lived out on North Branciforte avenue, didn't receive word of the fire until late the next day. It's almost hard to believe today, but even in 1920 transportation and communication were slow from one side of town to the other.

"I had a bicycle in those days," he said.

Memories of the armory and the old Fourth Division were revived each year until last, with a dinner reunion at the Santa Cruz hotel. James Walker and Kaiser were the only two members still living in Santa Cruz in 1961. Today, Kaiser believes he is the only one here.



Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kaiser of 205 Marnell avenue recall memories of the Armory, Santa

Cruz' first "civic auditorium," where he drilled with the naval militia and they both attended parties and dances.

Work Rehabilitation Program Proving Successful In North Carolina Prisons

Editor's Note: Penal authorities, thinking of the adjustment prisoners must make someday to outside society, have abolished striped suits and leg irons. North Carolina's prison system has done even more. Its convicts go outside and hold down jobs.

By Phil Corner

Raleigh, N.C. (AP) — On the

and restoring him to the community with a chance."

Prison reform in North Carolina began in earnest in the middle 1950s under then Gov. Luther H. Hodges, now U. S. Secretary of Commerce. Gov. Terry Sanford has given its continued impetus.

State policy is predicated on the calculation that it costs 12 times

Successful alumni include a court reporter for the state industrial commission and a mechanic who used his savings to open a business in eastern North Carolina. He now is hiring work release prisoners.

Randall said about 5 per cent of the work release prisoners