

IN REGISTRY OF HISTORIC PLACES

Old Santa Cruz Mansion Gains National Standing

By DON WILSON
Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ—The ornate old Palais Monte Carlo which looms over downtown Santa Cruz from atop Beach Hill

But even in the conversion, the air of elegance has been retained.

Marble fireplaces grace the "new" apartments. Paneled walls reach along hallways and up stairs.

A gold-plated chandelier still hangs in the elegant drawing room near the entrance, and it was (and is) fitted to use both gas and electricity. Tiny gold star glitter down from the high

curved blue ceiling of the entry hall inside the massive front doors.

Santa Cruz historian Margaret Koch recently wrote of the tragic Major McLaughlin and the Palais Monte Carlo. She told of the tragedy in which the major shot and killed his step-daughter, Agnes and then sat down on her bed and drank a fatal cocktail of lemon juice and strychnine.

It was the tragedy of the age, Mrs. Koch wrote: "Tongues wagged, heads shook and tears came into eyes that had watched Agnes swish elegantly down the aisle at church on Sundays and the major dash about in the family's handsome coach drawn by a matched pair of black horses."

There were other tragedies in the major's life. He had a career as a promoter and engineer which ended abruptly when a multi-million dollar scheme for sluicing gold out of the Feather River in 1879 turned into a fiasco.

McLaughlin had spent four years promoting and pushing that sluicing job, including construction of a dam, a wall and a flume for diverting the river — and using 1,000 men in the project.

When the project unearthed only the picks, shovels, buckets and other paraphernalia of the miners who had worked the area 40 years earlier, McLaughlin blasted the whole works to bits and retired to his mansion in Santa Cruz to brood.

His wife died, he turned down an offer of a post in the cabinet of President McKinley, and he declined urgings of friends to run for the office of Governor of California.

And then, the ghosts of the Feather River project apparently walked into the old mansion, haunting the major with memories of his failures.

Palais Monte Carlo looks down on city from Beach Hill.

—Staff Photo

Cabrillo College Contract Near

APTOS — A contract is expected to be awarded Tuesday for the first phase of construction of a new \$4 million occupational training center on the Cabrillo College campus.

Bogard Construction Co. of Santa Cruz submitted the low bid for the first phase construction.

According to Cabrillo business manager Garrett Nichols, all seven of the bids were under the cost estimate for the project, which was \$2,250,000.

Bogard bid \$1,818,000 to construct three buildings on the former Salesian Sisters property across Soquel Drive from the main campus was the lowest of the seven bids.

The bid is still being reviewed by architects, but is expected to be the one recommended for the contract. College trustees and members of the Joint Powers Board which oversees the training center will meet in a combined session Tuesday morning at the college to award the contract.

Work included in the first phase of construction are three

would have let the county office use half of an already existing 10-cent tax to cover the cost of the work was vetoed by Monday by Governor Brown.

The county office of education has tried to raise this money in several ways, the latest being through Grunsky's bill. According to Grunsky and county education officials, the bill would have required no new taxes.

Brown, however, did not accept that contingent. In vetoing the bill, he said it would authorize a property tax on the people of Santa Cruz County to fund the project rejected at the polls last year.

The voter rejection Brown referred to came in a June, 1974. The county office of education asked voters to allow it to borrow \$2 million from the state for its share of the cost. The measure gained approval from a majority of voters but not the two-thirds needed to pass.

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by architects, but is expected to be the one recommended for the contract. College trustees and members of the Joint Powers Board which oversees the training center will meet in a combined session Tuesday morning at the college to award the contract.

Work included in the first phase of construction are three buildings: a mechanical services and metal shop facility, an electronics service facility and an early childhood education and nursing building.

Construction is expected to begin in late September and the buildings are scheduled for completion next February.

The second phase of

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Now, said county school superintendent Richard Fickel, "I don't know what the next step will be. We had been waiting on this piece of legislation before planning anything else."

Fickel said he would meet with Cabrillo college superintendent Robert Swenson and other county education officials and members of the Joint Powers Board which oversees the center to decide on future moves.

One possibility Fickel



Mansion was home of tragic Major Frank McLaughlin.

—Staff Photo

Monterey CofC Board Seeking

Pipeline Environmental Report

of President McKinley, and he declined urgings of friends to run for the office of Governor of California.

And then, the ghosts of the Feather River project apparently walked into the old mansion, haunting the major with memories of his failures.

The glittering golden stars looked down from the ceiling in the entry hall as the major's lifeless body was carried out to a waiting hearse.