

THAT WAS WATSONVILLE

Watsonville Register Pajaro Valley Progress Edition 1916 — Part II

Editor's note: The following is the second of a two-part series on the Watsonville Register Pajaro Valley Progress Edition of 1916.

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The following is from an article by Mayor W.A. Trafton: "The City of Watsonville during the year of 1915 has done much to maintain its reputation as one of the most progressive and up to date cities in Central California. In fact, 1915 may be said to be a 'red letter' year in the history of our city. The attitude of the public towards its city government has much to do with the practical growth and improvement of that city. When the public becomes sympathetic with real constructive policies, when it supports and applauds the presentation of new ideas and new undertakings, when it encourages a big and progressive public or municipal ambition in exactly the same way that it encourages a worthy personal ambition.

"It is then that the co-operative labors of city government and people are bound to produce splendid results.

"It may be safely said that a broad spirit of co-operation has manifested itself between the public of Watsonville and the city officials. And it is with much gratification that I can say that the public has most liberally supported every move for the betterment up-building and growth of the city as proposed by the city administration. In this way the governmental policy has been adjusted to produce a great measure of advantage attendant with the minimum of inconvenience. And this spirit of co-operation between public and officers had much to do with enabling us to take one of the most extensive steps forward in munic-

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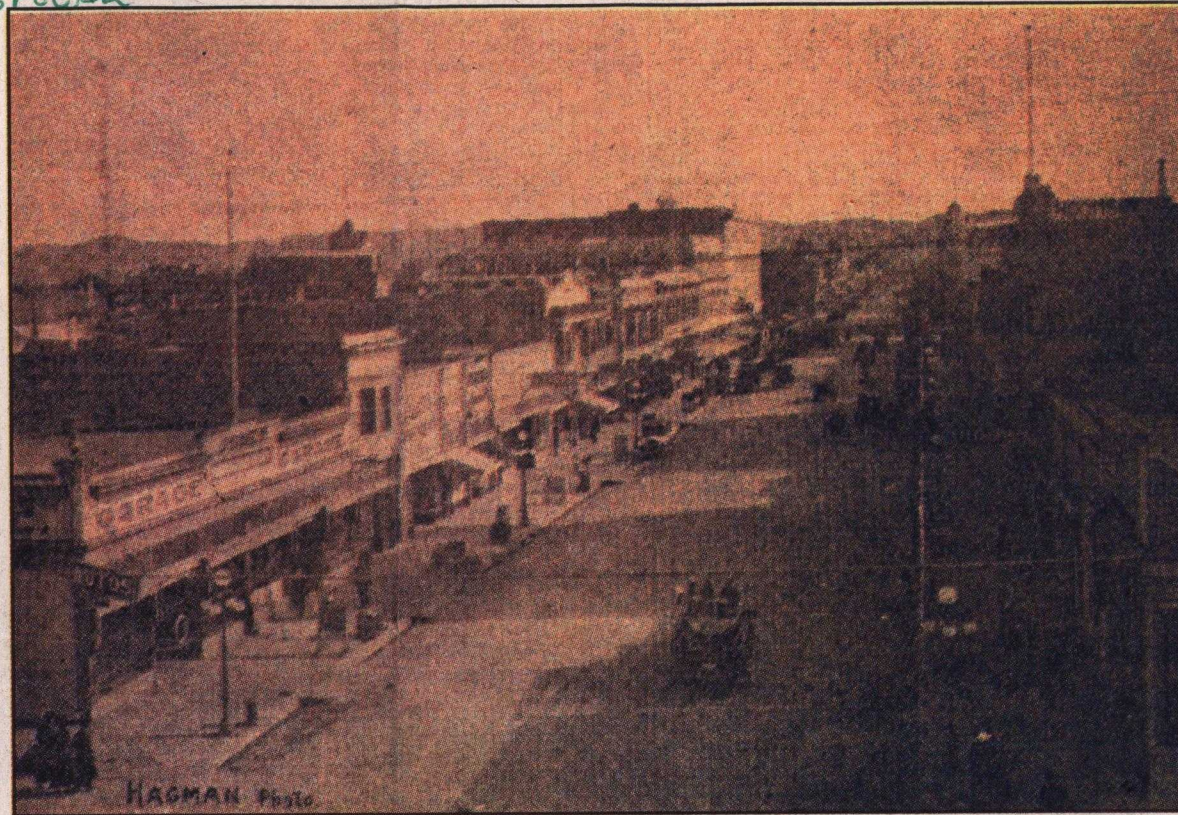
Betty Lewis



Mayor W.A. Trafton

ipal advancement within the history of the city. I will briefly mention some of the most notable public achievements of the year.

"For several years past the city of Watsonville has put forth a great deal of effort to keep in touch with the latest and most improved methods of street building. With the idea in view of giving the people the very best streets possible for the money invested. It has taxed to the utmost the inventive genius of the building engineers and road builders of the county to produce a street or road that would successfully meet the new conditions brought about



Main Street Watsonville looking south in 1916.

Courtesy Betty Lewis

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— W.A. Trafton, then mayor of Watsonville

by the advent of the auto. And even today road building may be said to yet be passing through its experimental stages.

"But that the efforts of the officials of the city of Watsonville to

keep place with the newest developments in this line have met with at least some degree of success is evidenced by the fact the oil-macadam streets of the city of Watsonville are looked upon by engineers

as models and are as near a permanent street as it is possible to construct with the money invested. Under this oil-macadam system, we expended over this year \$20,000 for additional new street

work, putting us in the enviable position where we can now boast of many miles of improved streets. In addition, ten blocks of streets and alleys were improved temporarily by covering with a coat of waste rock....

"While I have mentioned some of the accomplishments of the city for the past year, I will now take the liberty to call attention to the crying need of the city of Watsonville — a new city hall. As the city has passed from the 'small town' stage into the class of a growing, prosperous and progressive city. It has been found necessary to house the executive, legislative and administrative offices of the government as well as the fire department in one building. And the quarters have on several occasions been found inadequate. I hope the people will hear this matter in mind and give favorable consideration to the proposition when the administration places it before them." So that's what was happening in Watsonville in 1916 — the present city hall was built in 1964-65.

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