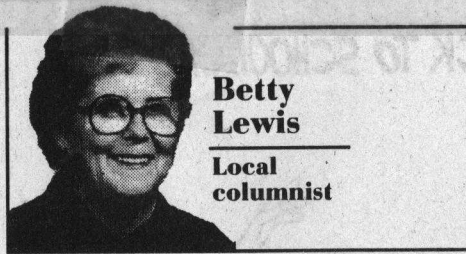


History of boy's orphanage goes back to 1869

"In the close vicinity of Watsonville there is an excellent institution for the care of orphaned boys, where the mental, physical, moral and religious training of these young and unfortunate wards of society is seen to in a manner highly creditable at once to the state, to the good fathers in charge, and to the noble order of which they are members. A correspondent drove to the Pajaro Valley Orphan Asylum, and was courteously received by the Director, Reverend Father Clementine Deymann, and being shown through the buildings and grounds was more than pleasantly impressed by what he saw and heard." - from the Pacific Coast Commercial Record, 1890.

The history of this boys orphanage (the girls' was in Santa Cruz) goes back to 1869. The first building was constructed near the old Valley Catholic Church on one hundred thirty-five acres of land donated by Mrs. Prudenciana de Amesti and her daughters - Mrs. Caledonia Arano, Mrs. Carmen Amesti Pinto and Mrs. Tomasa M. Mendia.

For the support of a "whole" orphan, the state paid \$100 a year and \$75 for each "half" orphan — or those who had lost only one parent. The surviving parent was expected to pay what he could to the institution. In the orphanage building there were four large classrooms on the lower floor plus the dining room and kitchen. There was also a



**Betty
Lewis**
Local
columnist

bakery out of which a barrel and a half of flour was used daily.

In 1874, Bishop Amat of Monterey gave the orphanage into the keeping of Franciscan fathers from the mission at Santa Barbara. Fathers Francisco Cardinna and Francisco Sanchez, along with Brother Joseph O'Malley, were sent up to take charge. In 1886, the Rev. Clementine Deymann was appointed director and he promoted the work of the orphanage with such zeal that the number of wards was tripled in 10 years.

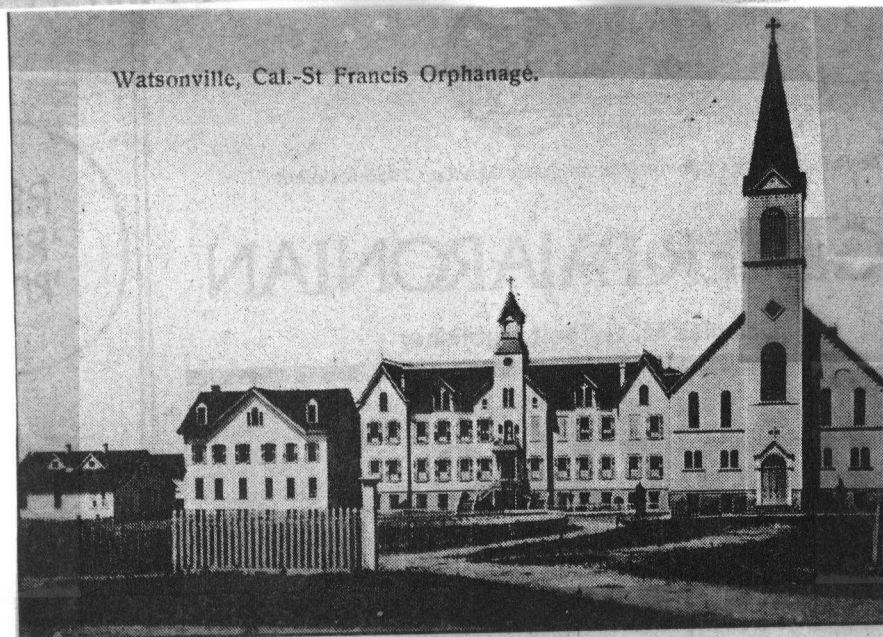
On holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas, local women would journey out to the orphanage bearing baskets full of food and then help with the cooking and serving. In 1907 there were 270 boys who enjoyed a big feast on Thanksgiving Day.

"No one looked forward to the great day with keener anticipation, as well as appetites, than did those boys when they all sat

down to feast at the heavily laden tables, which were fairly groaning with good things to eat, their cups of happiness were indeed running over. To make everything ready meant to carve about 35 turkeys, to dish out about 25 gallons of cranberries, to bag 300 packages of assorted candy, to cut and serve 100 pies, to distribute lots of sweet pickles and doughnuts, and to pass out 300 large cups of sweet cider. When everything is ready the boys march in and they are hardly seated at the tables before they begin to eat and it keeps the workers busy to keep them supplied with food." - from the Evening Pajaronian.

The buildings and the church were located on the summit of a high knoll; the greater part of the property was rented out with a sufficient amount reserved for extensive playgrounds and for the raising of vegetables. In the center of the grounds was an elevated tank holding 10,000 gallons of water, pumped by steam-power from the lake below which was used for sprinkling the grounds, washing, and fire protection. Water for cooking was drawn from a large well and stored in a 5,000 gallon tank built in the same elevated tower, under the large tank. In addition to these there were two other wells, sunk to a depth of 80 feet.

Between 1914 and 1917 the new Saint Francis School for boys was constructed across the street from the church and, in 1927, the orphanage and other buildings went up in flames. Many a small boy had passed through the doors of the Pajaro Valley Orphan Asylum to receive an education and to learn a trade — to use his hands as well as his head. Memories linger of an institution that played such a vital part in the caring and training of these young boys.



Watsonville, Cal.-St Francis Orphanage.

Orphanage burned in 1927.