

*Historic Houses*

# A Fine Old House Dies...

William Rennie's house is dying.

It is coming down by inches, in chunks of plaster and screeching nails torn from virgin redwood boards and stained glass windows taken away to leave eyeless walls. . . .

By the time this is printed the 100-year-old house may be a jumble of splinters and broken brick.

The stately old home at 514 Cliff Street is dying in the name of progress . . . and with its going, and the going of many others of its vintage, Santa Cruz is losing an irreplaceable asset—a unique and picturesque flavor.

Rennie House is lost because of a combination of factors: taxes, rising land values, speculation and investment. The property was purchased by a teachers' management investment group from Southern California.

Rennie was a Scot carpenter-turned-miner-farmer, who arrived in Santa Cruz in 1869 with money in his pocket from farming the Sacramento Valley—mining hadn't paid off and had almost cost him his life to boot.

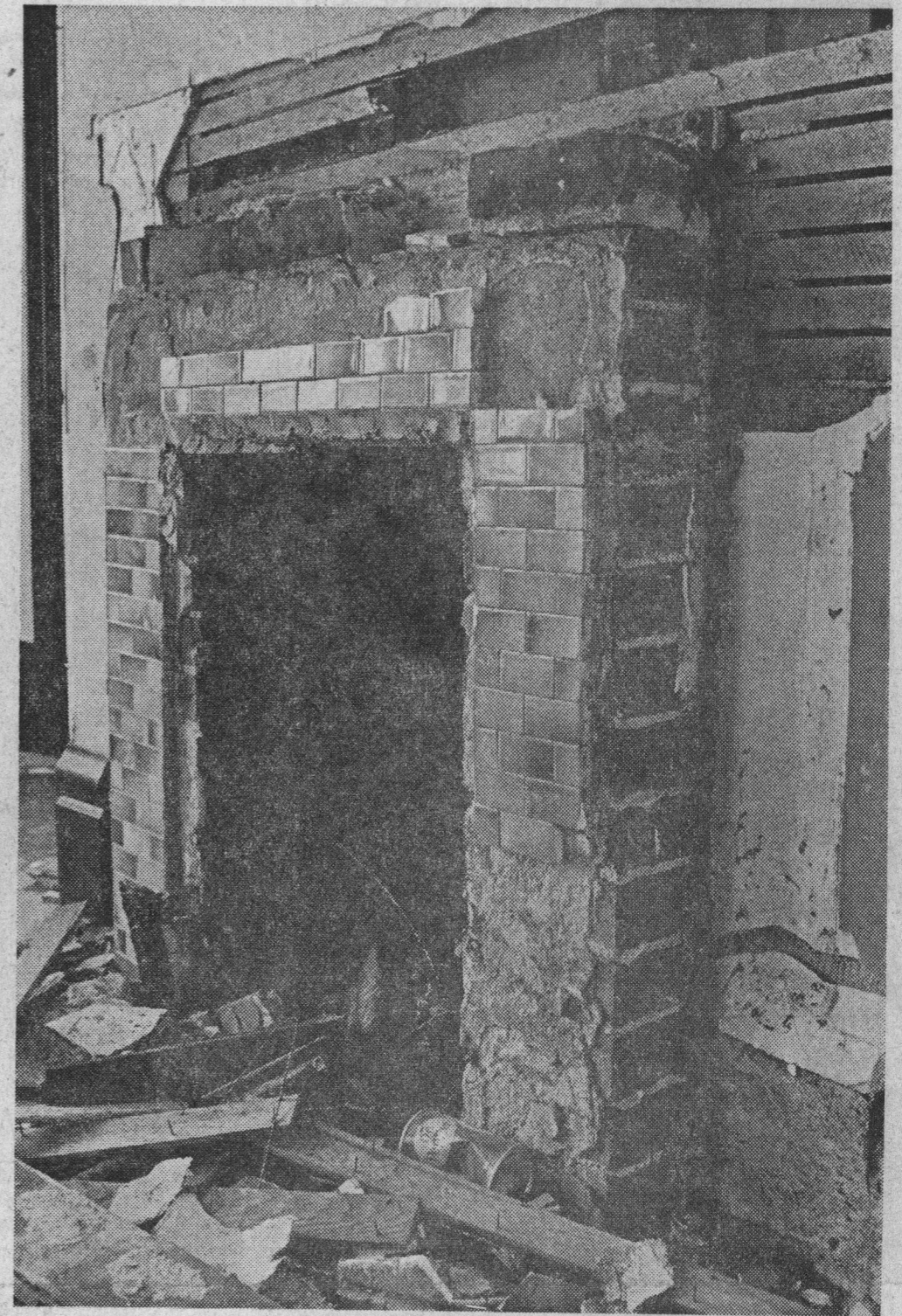
He built his house where he could look back over the fertile San Lorenzo River bottomlands, then in orchards and row crops, as well as to look out over Monterey Bay and the Pacific Ocean. It was on the Pacific that Rennie came near drowning in a shipwreck while sailing to and from a profitless trip to the Australian gold fields.

His house is just one of many similar to it that have gone down under the wrecker's crowbar in the last year or two. . . . Santa Cruz' famed Victorian houses are disappearing.

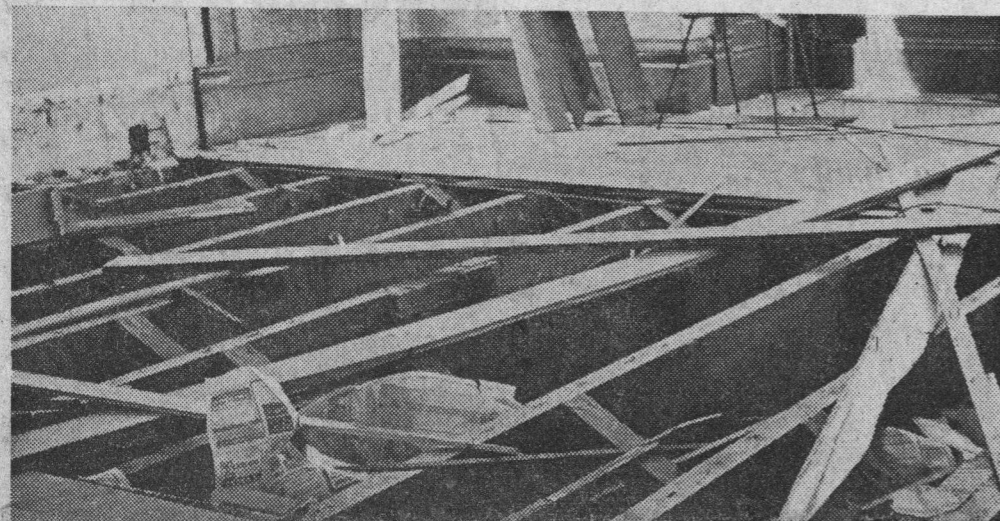
Progress is with us, whether we like it or not.

But must we lose our identity in the process?

*Margaret Koch*



## Photos By Pete Amos



Only the finest of materials—redwood from the Santa Cruz Mountains and bricks made right in town—went into the Rennie home. . . .

Imported tile facing on one of main fireplaces; above right, has been partially removed; another fireplace has been almost completely demolished.

Below right, carved balustrades are gone from stairway, some vandal-scribbler has left his mark





on the wall.  
 Directly below, empty windows gape glasslessly  
 . . . Wall lath protrude from wrecked walls like  
 broken ribs.  
 Left, sturdy old flooring was a prize for some-  
 one. A house built as well as this one was, dies  
 hard.



# Tree'n'Sea Living

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