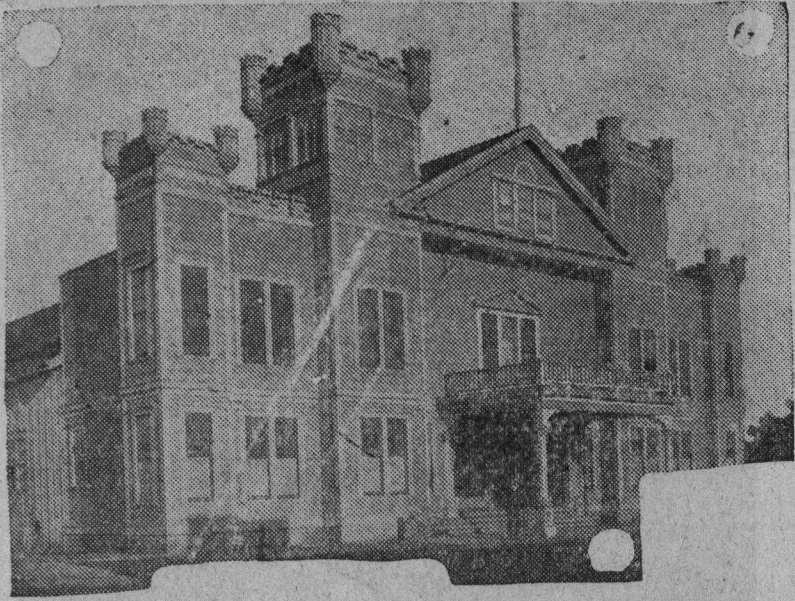


# THE ARMORY IN ASHES



The Armory, the property of the Santa Cruz Fair Building Association, standing on Front St., was in flames and ashes at sunrise Friday morning.

The association named was formed in 1883, F. A. Hihn and R. C. Kirby being the leading stockholders, and Mrs. M. Wilson being the moving spirit in the purchase of land on which it stood, occupying only a part thereof, from Mrs. Williams, mother of E. D. Williams. While thus lo-

cated the Armory was known as the Santa Cruz Pavilion, and was erected to accommodate the county fair, which was held annually, the state contributing \$2000 to each fair, which money was paid to exhibitors under the head of "prizes".

This pavilion stood partially in the line of Front St., fronting on Soquel Av., when said street was opened, and under a five years lease with the state, was moved across this street and considerably enlarged, and the monthly rental was \$62.50. The lease was not renewed with the state, and when the Casino was erected the rent fell to \$40 and the tenant became the Naval Reserves, their occupancy ending when a great majority of their members entered the European war. At that time the state leased one of the side rooms of the Armory and moved its guns and ammunition thereto, and the explosions heard during the fire were the result of such storage.

This building was 100x150 feet on the ground, 45 feet high from the floor to the apex of the roof; must have cost fully \$10,000 from start to finish; was insured for \$2500 with the New Brunswick Fire Ins. Co. of New Jersey, Theron Hinds, local agent.

The Armory, now in ruins and never probably to be reconstructed, has ever been a civic center, and since the disbanding of the Naval Reserves has been temporarily occupied, without cost to most of the tenants, for almost all worthy public funds raising fairs and the local military preparations of the last three years.

W. T. Newcomb, who owned the small building standing ten feet from and on the south side of the Armory, and in which he and his son-in-law were sleeping at the time the fire broke out, says that it was back of him and quite near, and he places his loss at \$250.

The high school boys, who occupied the room during the early part of Thursday night, and where the fire is supposed to have originated, place their loss at \$100.

Dr. Geo. A. Willey, for years the caretaker of the premises, was asleep therein when the fire bell awoke him from a deep sleep, and the flames were so near his room, that he saved little or nothing—not even his eyeglasses, his wardrobe, furniture and fine library being licked up by the blaze before he could save any part of it. Loss \$1000.

The state and Naval Reserves loss a great variety of valuable assets, estimated by Lieutenant A. A. Morey,

who was in command of such military force for years, to be worth from \$3000 to \$5000.

Too much credit can not be given

to our local fire department, because their efforts undoubtedly saved the premises on the west side, which were burned slightly.