

They Built Them To Last, Back In 1909



Noel Patterson, next-door "neighbor" to the "fortress" on Walnut Avenue, takes a last look at one of its 21-inch thick brick walls. ♦ ♦ ♦

By Margaret Koch
Sentinel Staff Writer

The "fortress" is coming down.

Long-time Santa Cruzans will know immediately that it is the "Telephone Building" being referred to. Newer citizens are likely to wonder.

The solid brick structure stands in the way of the Vine Street Extension. Solid—and I do mean solid—lower floor brick walls are 21 inches thick; second and third floor walls are 17 inches thick, according to Noel Patterson. The first and third floors are laminated two by sixes with finished floors. The second floor is laminated two by tens. All floors are supported on 10 by 12-inch wood beams.

In other words, it's really built. Patterson, next door realtor, has long been interested in the old Telephone building, and gathered data on it. When they stacked bricks in those days, they really stacked them.

"They built it solid so there would be no vibrations to jar the equipment," he explained.

The building's story starts back on December 13, 1909, when F. A. Hihn deeded the property at 123 Walnut Avenue to the Sunset Telephone and

Telegraph Company. Those were solid days—\$10 in gold coin changed hands. Hihn, who was Santa Cruz' first millionaire, was a civic-minded individual who saw ahead to days of city water service, electricity and—finally—telephones.

Following the transaction, the Sunset Company built the front portion of the building to a depth of about 57 feet.

On April 13, 1917, the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph

Company purchased the property and building. By the time of World War II, facilities became so cramped that in 1947 the building was extended to a depth of 97 feet.

By 1953 the old building was once again so crowded and the town was growing so fast that PT&T purchased property at the corner of Walnut Avenue and Center Street for a new dial system. It opened there September 19, 1954. The old Telephone building was vacated at that time.

Highlight of the old building's history came in March, 1926 when the PT&T company celebrated its 50th anniversary. The old plant on Walnut Avenue was opened to the public by Manager George M. Huntton and several hundred Santa Cruzans toured the building from basement to roof.

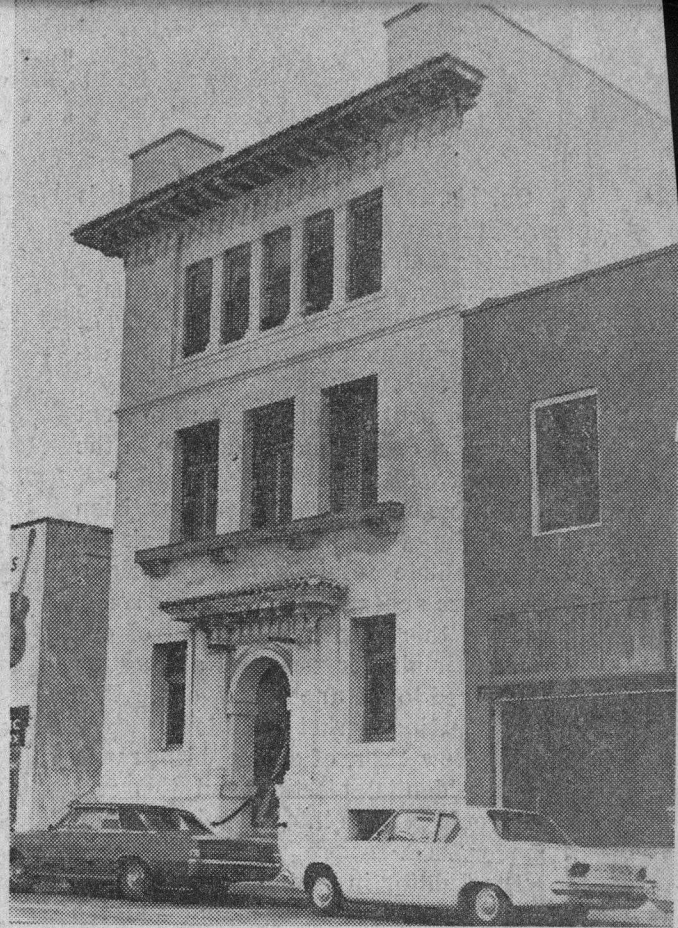
A dinner followed at the "Mother Goose" Tea room, a converted home that stood almost next door. Among the dignitaries who spoke at the dinner were C. E. Canfield, Fred Swanton and Ex-Lt. Gov. William T. Jeter. The honored guests included two pioneer "telephone girls," Nellie Huntington and Florence K. McCormick.

Three County Students Win Honors At Davis

Three Santa Cruz County students are among more than 1200 who have been named to the deans' honor lists at the University of California, Davis.

They are Thomas A. Nelson of Santa Cruz, who is studying engineering; Elizabeth A. Sparks of Santa Cruz, who is enrolled in the college of letters and science; and Robert F. Carr of Soquel, a major in agriculture.

The list honors students who maintained an over-all grade point average of at least 3.0 through the end of the 1967 spring quarter.



"The Fortress," called that by long-time Santa Cruzans, was really built like one. The old telephone building was made solid to do away with vibrations that might interfere with telephone equipment. A Santa Cruz landmark since 1909, the building is coming down to make way for the Vine Street Extension.



"Unbelievable construction" is shown in this photo of two top floors are constructed by ten floor joists. They are supported by 10 x 12 beams. Two top floors are constructed of two by six joists also on edge and placed solidly side by side. The building is being taken down by Sam Balovich.

Richard Finds A Nation Of Friends

By Tom Tiede
NEA Staff Correspondent
Bottom Creek, W. Va. (NEA)

—Two weeks ago, young Richard Church, a cross-eyed, pitifully impoverished epileptic, picked absently at a hole in his trousers and wished aloud for a fire wagon at Christmas.

Well, he got the fire wagon—and a lot of other things to share with poor friends. In fact, Richard got 250 fire wagons, all red, all shiny and all given to the unbelieving boy in the spirit of what was a very unusual, very Merry Christmas in this threadbare Appalachian coal community.

Richard's reaction was predictable.

All he could do was wipe his eyes.

Richard Church's Christmas wish was transmitted to American newspaper readers through the facilities of Newspaper Enterprise Association. Thousands of those readers responded to an extraordinary degree.

They sent wagons big enough to sit in and small enough to stuff in a patched pocket. They sent plastic ones, steel ones, old ones, used ones and ones that, "golly, shoot real water."

And that's not all they sent. Boxes of clothing, food and even money were mailed from every state in the union.

other things, also. He has, for instance, over 200 pairs of shoes. The Thom McAn Shoe Co. alone sent the promise of half the load. Local merchants have also contributed.

Hundreds of items of clothing have likewise been received. Sweaters, pants and stockings head the list. Young Richard can use a share; his family's wardrobe was wiped out by fire six months ago.

Other items received in prolific numbers have been: toy airplanes (at least five dozen), hats (over 30), underwear (dozens of sets) and at least one hand-knitted blouse by an 80-year-old Ohioan.

One clothing sender said it for all when she wrote: "I don't get much here, but I got more'n you. God bless you, boy."

In truth, God has blessed young Richard Church to excess lately. The gifts are far too numerous for him alone, or even his five brothers and sisters. Therefore, all that the Church family can't use is being distributed to other needy area youngsters.

Some of the kids already have shared in the bounty. Prior to Christmas, poverty officials held a gigantic party for 400 "desperately poor" boys and girls. Each was given toys and

