

# Watsonville's been home to

# many clubs

Over the years there have been many clubs and organizations that have held forth in Watsonville — some for a very short time and others that have lasted to this day. Following are some of the groups that helped form our town.

Pajaro Lodge No. 110, Masons, was formed in 1856 and held its meetings on the Saturday of or preceding the full moon of each month.

The Pajaro Bucket Brigade was organized in 1861. The Pajaro Engine Company was then located on Union Street, later moved to Main Street and now located on Second Street.

The year 1863 saw the first Union

## That was Watsonville

League meeting held at Scott's Hall on Union Street and the Watsonville Guards, a military organization, was founded with Jerome Porter serving as Captain Major. John R. Porter was first lieutenant and Joseph Knowlton, second lieutenant.

The year 1870 saw the Ladies Relief Society in full swing, holding many fund raisers "and providing for the deserving poor and needy in our midst."

The Watsonville and Pajaro Driving Association, also called the Jockey Club, was organized in 1876. Shares in the new venture were \$10 each, and the association leased, for \$650 a year, the Gonzales track across the Pajaro River in Monterey County. Officers were David Bothwell, T.D. Alexander, Dr. Simmons, D.M. Aldrich, Charles Fowler and Willis Peck.

In 1878, the Amateur Literary Club met in the old school house, then located on East Lake Avenue. A program for one evening included readings, recitations, songs and a debate.

The Young Men's Gymnasium and Boxing Club was meeting in 1879 at Kennedy Hall on South Main Street. Seven years later, in 1886, a gymnasium club was meeting in Allen's Hall on West Lake Avenue. "The club has a large membership and is of great benefit to those of our young people who work indoors and have no chance for physical exercise. The club also has connect-



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ed with it roller skating." Allen's Hall was torn down to make way for the Greyhound Bus depot which was later moved.

In 1892, Richard Quinn and John Shea, two enterprising young men of the town, rented the Tarpey cottage on lower Rodriguez Street and turned it into a bachelor's hall. "All friends are invited to call and pay their respects."

The year 1893 saw the Pajaro Valley Wheelman's Club being formed as bicycles really came into their own. "The bicycle club has come to stay and was permanently organized Tuesday evening. It will have rooms in Harmonien Hall and will make it an attractive club house... The new bicycling novelty, the aluminum bicycle, has arrived and is at the local agency, Baxters. The frame of this wheel is made of aluminum, and it is a beauty." — The Pajaronian, 1893.

Aromas was the scene for the newly-organized Literary and Social Society in 1896 with H.F. Blohm the first president. The group met every Friday night for an evening of stimulating exchanges.

In the early part of the century, there was a group called the Watsonville Canton Patriarchs Militant. The Lettunich Company lot on Rodriguez Street was used as a parade ground, having been cleared off and electric lights installed. The 25 members drilled regularly in preparation for competitive drills held at the Grand Encampments.

A meeting was held in 1903 for the following purpose: "A number of young men of this city have decided to keep house on their own hook, and have procured quarters for the purpose of carrying into effect their ideas of what constitutes an ideal home. The club has hired a woman cook and, as steward, Harford. Called the P-p-pe-trified Club."

# International Order of Good Templars.

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**OBLIGATION:**—Every applicant will be required, at initiation, to pledge themselves to the following obligation: "You, in the presence of Almighty God, and of these witnesses, solemnly and unreservedly promise that you will never make, buy, sell, use, furnish or cause to be furnished to others, as a beverage, any Spirituous Liquors, or any Malt Liquors, Wine or Cider, and that in all honorable ways you will discountenance their use in the community. You also solemnly and unreservedly promise that you will not reveal any of the private work or business of this Order to any one not entitled to know the same; and that so long as you remain a member of the Order you will in all things yield a cheerful obedience to our Laws, Rules and Usages; that you will not knowingly wrong a member of this Order, or see one wronged, and that you will do all in your power to promote the good of the Order and to advance the cause of temperance."

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**Prospective members of this club had to swear off alcoholic beverages, in addition to meeting other obligations.**

This same year the R.L. McCook Post No. 26, Grand Army of the Republic, was formed in Watsonville with 18 Civil War veterans attending the first meeting. The last meeting was held in 1935 and the last veteran, Asa Story, died in 1937.

The Gawsling Club was formed in 1913, a dancing club for the unmarried men of the town. The first dance was held in the I.O.O.F. Building. Patrons of the club were Mr. and Mrs. Edward Kelly, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Judd, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Watters, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Menasco and Mr. and Mrs. George Jensen.

During the 1920s, the KKK was organized here as a "purely patriotic organization." The group met in Aromas and did not last long, thankfully.

By 1951, there was one club for every 72 people in the Pajaro Valley, a larger percentage than in Santa Cruz or Salinas. This included such groups as the Libyan Club, Townsend Club, Swingtimers Folk Dancing Club, American Guild of

Organists and the So-So Club.

If you are thinking of organizing a club or naming a new organization, maybe this has given you some ideas!

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