

The tragic story of Thomas Albright

By BETTY LEWIS

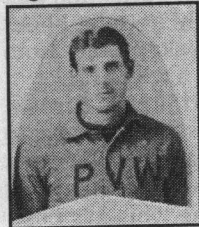
Thomas Albright was born in Watsonville in 1876, the son of Joseph and Jane Albright and brother of William, May (Mrs. Frank Tuttle), Josephine (Mrs. George Leland), Myrtle (Mrs. Edward J. Kelly) and Etta.

After attending local schools, Tom worked on his father's farm for a while and then entered into the blacksmithing business on Main Street. He married Eva Aston in 1900 and they were to have three children. In 1907, Albright ventured into the political arena running for the office of police chief. He won the election and was re-elected two years later by a very large majority.

Tom spent many of his leisure hours playing baseball and worked very hard towards establishing a baseball team in Wat-

sonville.

"Chief Albright is now wearing the smile that won't wear off, for now over \$700 has been subscribed to the local baseball fund and the prospects of raising \$1,000 are as bright as the prospects for more rain."



Albright

— *The Pajaronian*, 1901

The Three "C" Baseball League was formed that year and Tom became the manager of the local team - the Pippins. Under his leadership the team won the pennant in 1909 and 1910. Albright was considered a sure bet in the 1911 election but the combination of the saloon and

That was Watsonville

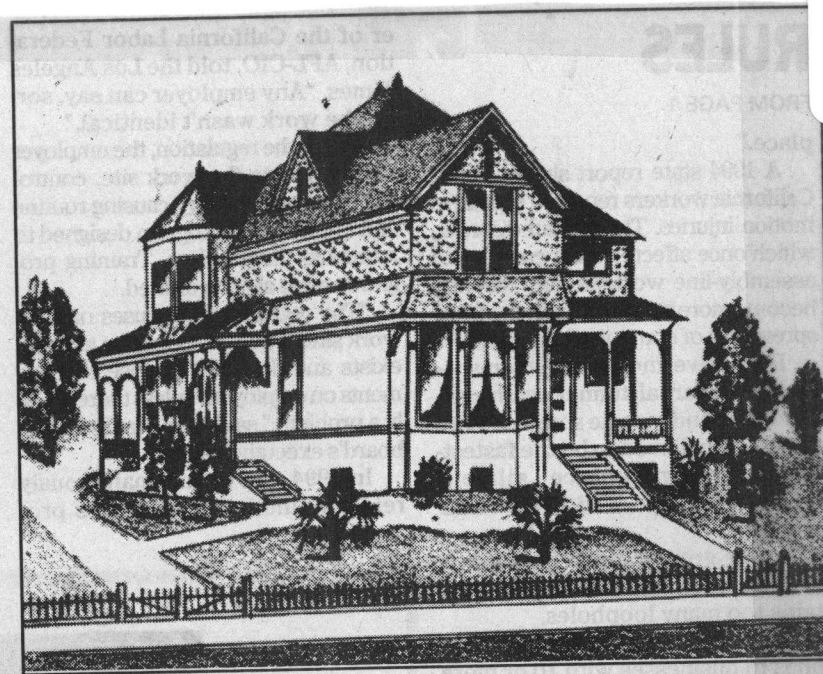
church elements made for a "peculiar" election, noted the local newspaper, and he was ousted by Sylvester Whitsitt for the job of police chief. Albright supported Sunday afternoon baseball, which went against the grain of church goers as well as the saloon trade - bad for business.

Albright became an automobile salesman, being associated with Elmore Lee, son of Judge Lee, who owned the Century Garage. He later sold his interest in the company to H.W. Vaughan and went into business with John Covell, brother-in-law

of architect William Weeks and who had the Overland agency. In May of 1916, Albright and another automobile dealer from Santa Cruz, F.A. Shultz, were out on a demonstration ride with Chris Thompson of San Juan Road. After dropping Thompson off at his home, the two men drove toward the Vega railroad crossing where their car was struck by the Del Monte Express and the men were hurled out of the car and killed.

Upon Tom Albright's death at the early age of 39, the Pajaronian had the following to say:

"As a business man he was square, honest and upright, as a friend he was a true companion and a big hearted soul. The death of Mr. Albright has removed one of Watsonville's most popular citizens."



Pajaro Valley Historical Association

The Albright home at 109 E. Lake Ave., was built in 1894 and torn down in 1980. It was designed by architect W.H. Weeks.