

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

June 30, 1958

### **San Jose's Old Jail**

During recent visit in Santa Clara we read an article by Dick Barrett published in the San Jose paper which we are sharing with our local readers today. We hope Mr. Barrett will be complimented for we were most interested and we are sure that all other former Santa Clara County residents now making their homes on the Peninsula will also be interested in a bit of history of that part of California.

The old county jail in San Jose has now been abandoned in favor of a spotless new bastille at the civic center. For years, we remember, it has been the target of unfavorable reports by Grand Juries and unkind remarks from reformers who felt that the Black Hole of Calcutta was no place to keep the poor misguided folks who commit crimes against humanity.

The old jail was built about 1870, it survived the earthquake of 1906, and while it yielded to a mob a quarter of a century ago, it stood long enough to give the taxpayers their money's worth many times over. Obviously, the architect who planned it must have known what he was doing.

"His name was Levi Goodrich, and he was the man who gave America the bay window - but not the kind that comes from too many steins of brew and too many bonbons.

"A biographer says Goodrich was for many years the leading architect of the Pacific Coast. He was a descendant of a New England puritan family that could be traced back to the time of Charlemagne and was born in New York 136 years ago. He was orphaned in childhood and reared by relatives in the Berkshires, where he learned the carriage trade from a cousin, with whom he formed a partnership of architects and builders. Before he was 19, he had finished his first work of importance, the plans for a large residence in Berkshire County."

It is said that at that time there wasn't a bay window in America, but on a basis of description by a writer who had recently returned from Europe, Goodrich designed and built one in the home for her. The building superintendent gave up on building it, and so the completion was a great victory for Goodrich. The author was so pleased she recommended him to a New York

firm, which employed him until he came to California via Cape Horn in 1849. He brought along a supply of building material which he sold at great profit.

In San Francisco he was almost immediately commissioned to draw plans for the Hall of Records, which was erected at Washington and Kearney streets.

"Goodrich chose San Jose for his headquarters and came there toward the end of 1849, and the following spring built an adobe house at Market and Santa Clara streets, using clay from the spot where the Auzeais house later stood on the north side of Santa Clara street, between Market and First. He also erected one for John Hoppe on the site where the original jail stood. He spent 36 years in San Jose following his profession. He designed the Knox block, which stood at First and Santa Clara streets, before it was demolished, and a modern building built on the site. Goodrich also built the First Presbyterian Church, the State Normal School, the College of Pacific (when it was in San Jose), Martin block, San Jose bank building, many public schools and the Convent of Notre Dame.

There is a brick building at the northeast corner of Almaden avenue and W. Santa Clara street and the one occupied by the Rosicrucian Press are all that are left of the old convent, so they, along with the old jail may be the final remnants of Goodrich's work to be seen there. It would be interesting to know whether this may be true or not.

After he retired from architecture, he developed the sandstone quarries on Almaden Road which supplied material for the Normal School, Lick Observatory, College of the Pacific and Stanford University. He also served one term on the County Supervisors, to which he was elected in 1852.

"Goodrich was the father of one child, Edwin B. Goodrich, who was killed in a trolley car accident on the Alum Rock Railroad in 1903. He died while visiting in San Diego in 1887. Some of the buildings he erected in San Jose have stood as monuments to his memory probably longer than even he had hoped."