

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

March 3, 1961

### Old Jail Plans

"Trenches for the outside wall are to be dug to the ledge, if reached within five feet, otherwise to that depth, and three feet wide." These instructions to the contractor are contained in the original specifications for the Monterey County Jail next to Colton Hall, according to the plan submitted, the original of which is one of the prized possessions of the Monterey History and Art Assn.

The document dated 1854, was presented to the association by Robert J. Richards, son of the builder of the jail. Robert Richards was born in Monterey in 1858, son of Charles J. Richards and Carmen Simbreros de Richards.

The specifications go on to state that the trenches for the yard must be two feet wide and three feet deep or to the ledge, if reached before that depth. A well was to be dug in the rear of the jail, deep enough for a sufficient supply of water. A privy was to be dug in the yard four feet in diameter and six feet in depth. The yard was to be leveled and all surplus dirt and rubbish hauled away.

The specifications for the building were executed in 1854 and signed by James H. Gleason, County Clerk of Monterey County, with the seal affixed on the seventh day of October.

Under "stonework" were requirements for the foundations to be laid in courses of three feet square on the bottom, after leveling with concrete of the best cement and gravel. The walls were to be three feet thick with hammered bed and build, and to be laid in courses. The foundations were to be laid in Monterey granite and each stone used in the cells' walls to be clamped and dowelled, with the top of the cells arched with granite, the lap of each wall one foot and to be laid in pieces from two feet wide and upwards. The floor was specified to be of granite block one foot thick and at least two foot square, and to lap over the foundation, at least one foot. The front and rear steps were to be of Monterey granite.

It was also made very plain in the specifications that all iron bars, eyes, loops, etc., required were to be built in the walls as the work progressed.

It is interesting to note that a wall was to be built of the same kind of stone as the present courthouse (Colton Hall) or of granite, at the option of the court, round the lot at the south end of the courthouse. This wall was two feet thick at the surface of the earth and one foot nine inches at the top, and to average nine feet in height, it being finished level at the top with a concrete of strong cement with broken bottles imbedded in the same.

It would be attractive and timely if that wall could be replaced around one of the West's most historic buildings.

"Two chimneys were ordered built, one to each front room to start from the top of the wall, with apertures for stove pipes. Letters over the door were to be block letters raised on the surface of the door lintel. Privy and well were to be built up with 12 Inch brick work, substantially laid in good lime and sand mortar.

The bars for the cell windows were well specified in the plans. They were to be upright two inches square, and horizontal one-half inch by three and one-half inches flat iron. The upright bars were to be built into the wall two feet above and two feet below the openings and the horizontal bars to be built at least two feet into the wall on each side window. We wonder if any prisoner was ever able to remove a bar?

The debtors' room door, each cell door, the entrance to the cell passage, the rear door and the other openings are each provided, according to the specifications of 1854, with one iron door of three-fourths inch boiler iron. The same quality and description then used in the county jail in San Francisco was to be used on all fastenings of all iron doors.

Redwood was specified under "carpenter work" for the rafters for the roof and joist for the ceiling along the entire length of the building and measuring three by eight inches. The roof was to be covered by inch redwood boards, and good redwood shingles in four-inch courses. The floors were originally one and one-fourth inch tongue and grooved yellow pine.

The privy was ordered built of redwood three by four framed and clapboarded with sound redwood boards planed. The roof was to be redwood and "well shingled." The floor was to be yellow pine and to have three seats, well covered, and a neat panel door.

All the inside of. the jail was to receive two coats of lime mortar and all other inside walls to have, three coats.

The Specifications were signed by, W. S. Johnson.

This old-time jail is now part of the Colton hall museum and is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.