

A Window on San Jose's History

By Dale Tibbils

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Introduction

Why the New Century Building:

On a recent trip to Manhattan, my wife, Bonnie, and I joined a walking tour of SoHo. This district, named because it is located south of Houston Street, enjoyed a remarkable history in the early days of New York.

As we strolled along streets and down alleys our guide provided insights into history and building design. She stopped in front of an ornate building and asked us to guess what it was made of. Arched windows, Roman-like columns and massive decorations led our group to guess the building was stone.

"Not so," she said. "This is a cast iron building."

She went on to explain that, as immigrants flooded the eastern shores of the United States, cities like New York realized they couldn't construct buildings fast enough. Stonemasons required years of training to efficiently build a multi-story building. Immigrants couldn't wait for years while apprentices learned the trade.

With the advent of the mass production of steel, a new opportunity arose from the steel furnaces of Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. Molten steel was poured into casts to create pillars, window frames and doors. Shipped east these parts were assembled into cast iron buildings. Simple to construct, their success hinged on a set of skills learned in a short time.

By the late 1870s cast iron building construction spread across the United States. Companies soon designed columns, window frames, doors and other support pieces to construct a completely modular building.

These were not two or three story buildings. Many tower 10 stories high and cover a quarter of a square block. Ornate balconies, staircases, and exterior decorative pieces give the buildings a look of grandeur.

A major advantage of these buildings, beyond the ability to construct them in a matter of weeks or months, is the fact they are modular. If an owner decided five years later that he would like to add an additional 40 feet of store frontage, he merely called the foundry and placed an order. The new building section was attached to the existing one.

As we walked the streets of SoHo we realized how difficult it was to identify these buildings. They look,

in every way, like a stone building. Our guide once again provided the answer.

"Look here," she said and pointed to the base of the columns. "You can see the foundry stamp."

These buildings fascinated me, and when I returned home I began a tour of downtown San Jose to determine if any cast iron buildings existed. I got some pretty weird stares from people as I dropped my notebook to the ground, knelt on it and inspected the column base. I was fooled by many buildings, but the stamp from the foundry became my key indicator.

After several hours of wandering the streets I mentioned my dilemma to my son. He works in downtown San Jose and told me the building next to his grocery store had some columns on its front.

I made a second trip and located the Saratoga Capitol building at 2nd and Santa Clara. The green columns show signs of wear and chipped paint, but I spotted the words "City Iron Works of San Francisco, 1868" stamped at the base of several pillars. Others showed words worn with time and hard to read.

I tried an old school trick used to copy something too difficult to draw. I crouched down, placed a piece of paper over the writing and began to scribble with a pencil

across the paper. The words "San Jose Foundry" rose from the shaded portion of my paper. Others were stamped "Enright's Foundry."

I looked at the rest of the building to see if it was truly modular. Unfortunately, the only cast iron portion was the columns. I was disappointed.

My son told me the building had been completely restored so my interest grew. I arranged to see the owner, Jim Fox, who had restored the building in 1984.

The honey oak-colored wainscot along the stairwell to the second floor looked hand-carved and deeply polished. Jim Fox took me into the executive conference room. A lush carpet, floor-to-ceiling drapes, and redwood window shutters surrounded a replica of San Jose's electric tower.

He gave me a brief tour and showed me photographs of the interior before the restoration began. I was hooked. I wanted to write this building's story.

Research for *A Window on San Jose's History*:

I faced several challenges in writing this story. The first was to determine if adequate information existed about the building. Research with the San Jose Historical Museum Association, the California Room and documents Jim Fox retained provided a wealth of information.

Trying to determine the origin of the New Century Building proved difficult. Confusion exists from the designation "New Century Block" and "New Century Building." The building consists of five buildings, and construction occurred in four phases. In addition, there are two more buildings on this block, but they are not part of the New Century Block.

The New Century Building initially consisted of a building at the corner of 2nd and Santa Clara and was built around 1868. Three one-story buildings were added directly east in 1881. In 1897 Pedro de Saisset added a second floor to the building on the east side and modified the buildings to make them one; the New Century Building.

In trying to determine the dates for construction of the various buildings I went inside Hank Coca's Discount Furniture Store where I met Hank. I mentioned I thought his building was erected in 1883 and he said, "No, 1888. There's a plaque in the basement that says 1888." We went to the basement, pulled aside some boards and boxes, climbed over dusty I-beams and shined a flashlight on a plaque that read "Combs, Blanchard, O'Neil and McLennan 1888. I confirmed the date when I found the directory for the City of San Jose listed the IOOF address as 3rd and Santa Clara beginning in 1888.

The expansion of the New Century Building appears to have occurred in 1897, not 1900 as listed in most documents. From a photograph I was able to identify six businesses that occupied the building. The San Jose Transfer Co., W.A. Parkhurst Real Estate and Insurance, and Northrup Piano all list their addresses as 2nd and Santa Clara beginning in 1897.

The photograph referred to above was taken after 1900 because Edward Cureton lists his address as 2nd and Santa Clara for the first time in 1901. In the photograph the name "Cureton" appears on one of the turret windows.

Since I felt the existing documentation did not sort out the building phases I have included a detailed summary as an addenda and footnoted the sources of the information.

I obtained two documents from Jim Fox, which I made available to the Research Room of the San Jose Historical Museum Association and the California Room. These were the Historic Resources Inventory Certificate confirming completion of restoration work and a write-up by Michelle Pheasant detailing the interior restoration.

In addition, as I read numerous books I discovered many photographs of, or taken from, the New Century Building. One in particular caught my eye. On page 26 of "San Jose and other famous places" is a photograph of

President McKinley addressing a huge crowd downtown. The caption indicates President McKinley spoke at St. James Park, on 2nd Ave. between St. John and St. James St. It further states the crowd fills 1st Ave. looking north. President McKinley is to the left. On the right side of the photograph, a little further back than the president, is the turret of the New Century Building. Closer inspection reveals the window pattern of the building. That means the president spoke one block away from the park, almost at the corner of Santa Clara and 2nd Ave.

Challenges in Writing *A Window on San Jose's History*

Terminology of the building's design included many words I'd never heard; quoins, rusticated pilasters, dentils and *lincrusta* to name a few. With a dictionary, the Internet and helpful people I became a modest expert on the Italianate architecture and the skills of craftsmen who constructed the building.

Another major challenge was creating the voice for the story teller. Since the story spans 136 years, the voice must emulate maturity. But, building design can become stale, so I added a touch of humor to the voice. Finally, a sense of pride without being boastful seemed appropriate.

A concept began to emerge. Why not let the New Century Building talk? For over 130 years it stood in the center of San Jose. Combining the building's history with that of San Jose posed an intriguing challenge for a writer, one I decided to accept. The result became *A Window on San Jose's History*.

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A Window on San Jose's History

By Dale Tibbils

I appeared on the scene 136 years ago. The exact date has been lost in the archives. My birthplace, 2nd and Santa Clara in the heart of San Jose's commercial district, gave me a window to the dynamic growth of this great city. None of my kind remains in San Jose today. I have spent my entire life at this single location from where I witnessed the mob of St James Park, the electric tower, and the creation of the personal computer.

But, I get ahead of myself. Let me tell you how it all started.

In 1868 San Jose enjoyed great commercial success. Already part of a state blessed by tremendous growth from the gold rush, an agricultural boom promised continued growth. A new commercial area was envisioned for San Jose by many local businessmen including Adolph Pfister. The location? Second Ave. and Santa Clara St. That became my beginning. I started

as a two-story 10,000 sq. ft building and I eventually became known as the New Century Building.

Adolph Pfister was an active businessman. He financed my construction, ran a bank, and was a partner in the San Jose trolley line. He built San Jose's first hotel, ran four flour mills and several retail businesses.

On opening day, many came to view my features. A set of rails ran down the center of Santa Clara St. and allowed horse drawn trolleys from nearby Santa Clara, to bring people right to my front door.

Grooved rectangular columns, rusticated pilasters in the architectural world, framed large first floor windows. The pilasters are cast iron, a new concept in building construction in the 1868. After 136 years, if you look close, you can spot the foundry stamp, worn nearly smooth, near the bottom of my columns. Those first columns were stamped "Iron Works of San Francisco, 1868" to denote their origin.

That first day was exciting for me and all those who walked my first floor, but the real excitement came for the next 136 years as San Jose grew from a small farming community to a major metropolis. And I got to watch it all through the many arched windows that wrapped around my exterior.

The fruit growing industry faced a major glut of peaches, pears and apricots in 1868. The problem threatened the

viability of downtown. The glut forced farmers to sell their product at a loss. Wagons often sat outside my windows piled high with fruit that rotted in a matter of days. Farmers began to question the wisdom of converting their acres from grain to fruit trees.

Louis Pellier offered a solution. That same year he developed a method to dry fruit. The problem with spoiled fruit was overcome and San Jose's commercial business boomed. All along Santa Clara St. buildings popped up.

By 1876 San Jose was the capital of fruit shipping in California and the town boasted 12,600 citizens. The Alden Fruit Co. packaged 4,000 lb. of prunes a day.

As business grew Adolph Pfister decided to expand his enterprise. Three single-story buildings were added along Santa Clara St., directly east of me. As the first mayor of San Jose, from 1870-1873, Adolph founded the San Jose Library and Alum Rock Park. The library was housed in one of the three buildings back then.

One hot summer morning in 1881, I watched in fascination as a huge tower, spanning the intersection of Market and Santa Clara began to reach for the sky. Before long a tall spindly tower dotted with tiny lights and a huge light at the top spanned the intersection of Market and Santa Clara. Four black boiler-pipe poles, secured at each corner of the intersection,

rose 237 feet above the dirt roads. Support wires, attached to the four corner pieces and a series of concentric metal circles inside the frame provided stability. At night the lights made the rings look like a series of smoke rings rising toward the sky.

At its top sat six 4,000 lumen carbon-arc lights and a shiny reflector. The idea was to have a single tower to light the entire city. Now, I'm no engineer or scientist, so I can't convert lumens to brightness, but this tower put San Jose on the world map. It was officially turned on Dec. 13, 1881 and met with mixed reviews. I heard folks laughing one day about the French chastising their government for not being as forward thinking as San Jose.

Even in those days, it seems, folks spoke with hidden agendas. The San Jose Daily Mercury praised the tower. According to the paper one man claimed he could read his paper at night by the light of the tower and he lived 13 blocks away. J.J. Owens, who first introduced the idea of the tower, just happened to be the paper's publisher. In fact, he promoted his idea in several editorials. He even went so far as to claim the light from the tower would "make crime shrink away."

When the tower's illumination fell short of expectations others called the tower "Owens Folly." Of course, they were gas people and the tower didn't use gas. A rancher from Morgan Hill

fretted over the decline in egg laying by his chickens. Guess they were confused about night and day.

The tower provided San Jose world acclaim, but its fame was brief. By 1884 the lights were illuminated for special occasions and weekend events. On a cold, windy December night in 1915 I watched as its metal frame twisted under the heavy winds and crumbled to the ground, 10 days short of its 34th birthday.

The electric tower may not have provided the illumination promised by its builder, but electricity continued to gain acceptance in San Jose. In 1886 Sam Bishop and Jacob Rich launched a plan to run an electric trolley from downtown San Jose to Santa Clara. Many thought these two would never work together. Years earlier, as competitors, they fought over the exclusive rights to any horse-drawn trolley system. They merged their companies in 1878 and ended a long business feud. Eight years later they launched their project.

Creation of an electrical trolley system was fraught with difficulties. Finding competent engineers and contractors to handle this new technology was difficult and bankruptcy plagued the venture. Insulators fractured, connections burned and mechanical malfunctions added to the difficulties.

Personally, I thought the biggest problem involved people who liked to stick umbrellas between the power ties to watch the

sparks. Gave them a chance to create their own little fireworks. It also raised havoc with the trolley system.

My first experience with fire, never an enjoyable thing for a building, came in 1887 when Chinatown burned to the ground. At the time one-third of San Jose's population was Chinese and they crowded into over 1000 rundown wooden shanties. Those dilapidated sheds were all destroyed.

The fire never got close, but I watched the flames and saw the frustration of those who tried to save the tumbledown shacks. The fire began at 2:57 p.m. as a large crowd gathered to see who won the daily lottery. No one saw what happened on Ah Toy Alley and the cause of the fire was never determined. The San Jose Evening News reported that "by superhuman effort they (the firefighters) saved the ground on which Chinatown was located and prevented the spread of the fire to surrounding buildings.

The Chinese were not looked upon with great favor in those days. They couldn't own land unless they were born in the United States and the San Jose Daily Herald provided the typical sentiment when it reported the next day that, "Chinatown is dead. It is dead forever." A group of Chinese signed an agreement 10 days later to start a new Chinatown at 5th and Taylor.

A fair amount of mystery surrounds the entire event. When the firefighters attempted to get water from the water tank it was nearly empty. That was the first time it had been found in that condition. Speculation was the tank was drained. Rumors also ran for a week before the fire that the men who owned the land and buildings had raised their fire insurance.

At this time Chinatown occupied Market Plaza at Market and San Fernando. Teeming with ramshackle wooden sheds, many townspeople felt the property too valuable for the Chinese. A bond issue to build city hall at Market Plaza came before the voters the day after the fire. Within days Theodore Lenzen was hired to design the new city hall for Market Plaza.

While that fire destroyed all the sheds and five brick buildings it was by no means the worse. I experienced true fear five years later (1892) in San Jose's worst fire. Over 40 houses, businesses and factories along First and Second Ave on San Fernando (two blocks away) were destroyed.

The cause of this fire was no mystery. A Chinese businessman had stored his fireworks inventory in a building in the area. A young lad, passing by, flicked his cigarette butt into the fireworks and July 2nd was a whole lot more exciting that year than the 4th of July. For me the fire came way too close.

Commercial business boomed toward the end of the 19th century. With it came exciting new technologies and improvements. By 1890 San Jose boasted 18,000 residents and a new dome appeared on the mountains west of town. The Lick Observatory was acclaimed as a new window to the stars.

I was extremely grateful the day they began paving the streets. All that dust from farm wagons gets messy for someone my size.

Many have been my keeper. Adolph Pfister turned me over to Pedro de Saisset. A former French Admiral and son of a Napoleon Lieutenant, he was a long-time San Jose resident. In fact, he founded the San Jose Electric Brush Company, the same company that built the electric tower.

Mr. de Saisset expanded my size considerably. He added a second floor to the three buildings next to me. He then opened the interior of all four buildings and built a hallway that ran the entire length.

I became a two-story building. My first floor expanded to 18,000 sq. ft. and overall I tripled in size. My designers, two prominent San Jose architects Theodore and Jacob Lenzen, followed the Renaissance Revival of Northern Italia style of buildings. The main entrance to the second floor was shifted to Santa Clara St. An arched and buttressed parapet above the entrance announced my new name, "New Century Building." The

name was selected to match my mission; to usher in the new millennium. And I did. For the next 30 years I was at the center of San Jose's commercial boom.



Photograph 1--New Century Building around time of opening

Many who passed by talked of the architectural features that made me unique. Not being one of architectural background I listened closely as technical descriptions were interspersed

with oohs and ahhs of what people saw. My vocabulary grew to include pilasters, entablatures and quoins.

A deep green and black marble facade covered my outer walls. A bracketed entablature extends the length of the building. The entablature is a highly enriched, sculptured cornice that projects from the exterior walls, much like crown molding often seen in building interiors. Between sections of windows are columns of protruding blocks, called dentils that add a certain strength to my image. The cornice is supported by a series of sculpted corbels which jut out from the face of the exterior walls. People identified this architectural combination as Italian Renaissance.

Windows are important. How else might I observe the happenings of this wonderful city? Arched ten foot high windows with molded brick "gibbs surrounds" and decorative keystones span the entire second story. The 25 windows are grouped in sections with the central window of each section accented by an arched pediment.

The real eye-catcher was a modified Queen Anne turret that stood proud facing the corner of 2nd and Santa Clara. Topped with a gilded gold dome I was the talk of the town.

On the main floor the big attraction, besides the businesses, was the pressed tin ceiling. Ornate in design and a

cross between a champagne and gold color, it added to the beauty of the design.

Modern conveniences were a part of my original features. Take lighting for example. With 14 foot ceilings on the second floor, lighting became a challenge. A series of recessed skylights helped solve the dilemma. They even coated the recesses and upper walls with a special wallpaper to reflect electric and gas fixture lighting.

That's right; electricity was part of my makeup too. Electricity was a new concept and lights on the second floor hallways consisted of three gas lamps with their crystal shades opening upwards, and three similar shades for light bulbs, pointed down. Adolph may have believed in electricity, but someone involved in my design wasn't sure electricity would catch on so he included gas as a backup.

San Jose summers can grow warm. Another new technology feature involved air-conditioning. The skylight recesses were angled inward and the windows were tilted. This allowed air to flow throughout the upper floor.

Pedro de Saisett understood the need for a commercial center. Not only did he claim I would be the core of a new commercial center in San Jose, but because of his vision, I believe I can claim the honor of being the first indoor mall.

The entrance to the second floor led to a directory area. The area opened to a business center that housed real estate offices, insurance companies, and other businesses. People climbed the stairs to gain immediate access to an indoor mercantile center; a legitimate 12,000 sq. ft shopping mall.

The storefronts that lined my corridor consisted of double glass doors. When you stepped inside a business area the light from the hallway burst through the Florentine glass, etched like fine crystal, and sparkled across my walls.

My interior also attracted attention; especially the entry and second floor. The stairway employed a wainscot on the lower half of the walls called *lincrusta*. Created by the same person who invented linoleum (Frederick Walton), *lincrusta* looks like an embossed vinyl. It's actually made of linseed oil and ground cork dust. An 1880 brochure touting the durability of *lincrusta* stated that it "would not warp or be eaten by worms." That was an encouraging endorsement.

The stairwell *lincrusta* always drew attention. Embossed in a fanciful combination of vine-like ropes that intertwine in a never ending design that winds around swirls of leafs, few could pass without stopping. The deep honey oak color created an extra richness to the walls. .

The second floor corridor featured additional *lincrusta* in four different designs. Geometric patterns, bells, flowers and

miniature pillars were integral parts of these designs. Those who ascended the stairs and walked my halls thought this wainscot was embossed leather or polished wood.

Visitors were often fooled by the oak colored doors, frames and moldings on the second floor. The wood is redwood, plentiful in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Oak was the preferred wood of that period, so the redwood was stained and then streaked to create the look of light grained oak.

Ladies with colorful parasols strolled through the businesses I housed. Kids in knickers clamored for ice cream. Within my walls Rucker Real Estate sold land. The Northrup Piano House brought Steinway pianos to San Jose. Edward Cureton, a dentist, stenciled his name on the upper part of the turret room window facing 2nd and Santa Clara. All his patients could sit in his dental chair and observe the happenings on the streets below. And there was plenty to see.

My location placed me at the center of San Jose's business hub. The San Jose Transfer Company occupied a portion of the 18,000 square feet of my first floor. Each day horse drawn wagons crowded the streets at my sides. Piled high with goods to trade, these wagons brought business downtown, and the business was fruit. In 1900 over 2,700,000 fruit trees blanketed the valley. The Santa Clara County Fruit Exchange

packaged 8,000,000 pounds of dried fruit that year. A new business boom had arrived.

Memories are often shaded with little events that mark defining moments or help recollect the past. The year 1900 marked the first car garage in town—Lechter Garage operated by Clarence Lechter.

In 1901 President McKinley visited here. They erected a platform across the street and soon a crowd swelled to fill the entire intersection and ran down the streets in all directions. People stood shoulder-to-shoulder waiting for a chance to glimpse President McKinley. Politically our image must have been growing because Teddy Roosevelt honored us with a visit two years later.

But, not all was well. I recall being awakened one morning to the rumble of the ground. It was 5:13 a.m. on April 18, 1906. The ground rolled beneath me and shifted horizontally 14 feet. I trembled from the ground for a minute and from fear for several hours. I saw others, not built to my standards, grumble in a heap. Many buildings were destroyed that morning including the Phelan Building, St. Patrick's Church and the Post Office steeple.

A fire roared on 2nd Ave. when the underground thrusts broke the water mains. Flames licked at my sides and ash fell on my roof, but fast acting firemen minimized the damage and I

survived. Many did not. Sixteen people died in downtown, but the worst tragedy took place at Agnews Hospital where the San Jose Mercury-Herald reported about 125 people met their death.

In 1908 the Lyric Theater, just around the corner, offered movies for a nickel. These silent flicks were short in duration. Ben Hur, filmed in 1907, was 15 minutes long. That same year Bronco Billy, America's first film cowboy was introduced. The Lyric brought more people downtown.

And who could forget Armistice Day in 1919. Crowds swelled the streets right out front. I knew something was up when people started hanging ropes from my cornice to the roofs across the street. Flags hung from the ropes every few feet. By early morning the streets were filled with men in felt hats, ladies in fine dresses and bonnets, and kids toting balloons. This was the first national celebration of the war that had ended the previous year and the city honored its heroes.

In 1930 I noticed a huge object floating majestically overhead. The dirigible "Akron" was headed to the Sunnyvale Navy Air Station for a short visit. A huge hangar had been constructed there and eventually the "Macon" became the first dirigible to call the station home.

By the 1930s San Jose had grown to 60,000 people. We were known as the "Valley of the Heart's Delight." The lush fertile valley ground drove agriculture and 92,000 acres were planted in

fruit trees. In late winter and throughout spring apple, cherry, prune and apricot blossoms covered thousands of acres in a quilt of pink, white, and purple. An open window brought the sweet scent of cherry, peach, apricot and plum blossoms to my occupants. In the fall the heavy aroma of peach syrup filled the air and the streets filled with wagons heaped with peaches, almonds, prunes and other fruit.

I had to chuckle about the world's view of the mild San Jose climate one year; Dec. 11, 1932. That morning I awoke to an inch of snow on my roof. The warm climate and center of fruit production for the United States seemed a little out-of-kilter that morning.

Almost one year later snow was the furthest thing from my thoughts. San Jose was a bustling town by 1933. With the bustle came a drive for action. That drive, at times, boiled over. The depression shortened tempers. Stress and frustration made everyone edgy.

One evening, near Thanksgiving, as I recollect, I saw Sheriff Emig and two of his deputies move two men to the county jail. Along the streets a crowd gathered and looked hostile. Demands for justice rang through the night.

The events leading up to this night involved a young man, Brooke Hart, who turned up missing two weeks earlier when he left the family business (Hart's Department Store) to go home.

Hart, 22, had just taken over his father's business. The Hart's were a respected and well-liked family. Within hours a note arrived at the Hart home demanding \$40,000. J.N. Black, San Jose Police Chief, and Sheriff Emig began an immediate investigation. By midnight an abandoned car had been located. The entire town searched for six days. The kidnappers continued to call. On Nov. 15 the police managed to trace a call and within minutes they arrested Thomas Harold Thurmond. Interrogation of Thurmond revealed an accomplice, John Holmes. Holmes was under arrest six hours after Thurmond.

Police turned to a search for the body and took Thurmond with them to the San Francisco Bay. The concrete block they tied Hart to was located, but the body was not. On Nov. 26 two duck hunters found the decayed body of Brooke Hart.

The news hit the radio and spread like one of our town's early fires. People passed around pictures of Hart's decomposed body. The Lindbergh baby kidnapping a year earlier shortened everyone's tolerance. I watched in horror as the mob moved toward the jail. They picked up bricks and pipes from the post office construction site. At 9:00 p.m. a battle for the jail began. The sheriff fired tear gas in a futile attempt to disperse the crowd. To avoid injury to the citizenry Sheriff Emig made his deputies lock up their firearms. Bricks smashed

against the jail walls and a six inch pipe was used to break down the door.

The mob pushed its way past the deputies and pulled Thurmond from his cell. They dragged him across the street to St. James Park and located a convenient tree. In a matter of minutes he dangled lifeless from the rope around his neck.

Holmes proved tougher. While still in the jail they placed a rope around Holmes's neck and used it to drag him over the stairs and into the street. He managed to remove the noose twice before they finally tied his hands behind his back and threw the rope over a tree branch.

I watched 3,000 people stream to the park that night to witness the lynching. No one ever came forward to identify those responsible. Most felt like one onlooker who said, "They got what they deserved."

Today, Virginia Giraudo, a longtime Los Gatos resident who was 17 at the time, doesn't recall many of the details leading up to the lynching, but she does recall that night. "My father took my brother, my sister and me down to the theater. We saw the crowds when we got out and he took us over there. There were lots of people when we arrived and I saw the two bodies dangling from the trees. It was pretty gruesome."

The trees were stripped of their bark by the curious seeking a souvenir. Before the week was out the city ordered the trees, a mulberry and an elm, cut down.

The depression took its toll on my residents. People moved out of town. Businesses left and my second floor soon stood empty. The trolley system ceased operation on April 10, 1938.

At first the solitude allowed me to enjoy moments where the hustle and bustle was gone. But, in time the quiet turned to frustration and eventually desperation. The wallpaper blistered and broke open like a sore that wouldn't heal. The *lincrusta* split and pieces fell to the floor. It appeared my time drew near. Dank winter coldness tore at my insides. A neglected roof allowed January rains to stain my walls and floors. Light fixtures dangled precariously from the ceiling. Visitors no longer clamored to be part of my life. Neglect led to a slow destruction that no one saw from the outside.

In 1950 the de Saisset family bequeathed The New Century Building to the University of Santa Clara. I changed caretakers again in 1963 when the Adoradio family purchased me. For 52 years their clothing business, The Wardrobe, occupied a portion of the first floor.

They weren't the oldest tenants. The Carroll and Bishop Tobacco Shop existed within these walls from 1915 to 1990. Attorneys, students and local merchants could grab a sandwich,

enjoy a cold brew or read a paper from any major city in the country. Cigars came from Havana and jars held candy or tobacco. Pinball machines provided entertainment if the local gossip wasn't interesting enough.

Around 1955 things changed for the city, but not for me. The Valley of the Hearts Delight shifted from fruit growing to electronics thanks to some activity in nearby Palo Alto. Names like Noyce, Bushnell, and Moore filled the news. The advent of the semi-conductor created a new revolution. San Jose became the heart, brains and spinal cord for this new industry. Bill Shockley, co-inventor of the transistor, founded Shockley Transistor and the race was on.

In 1958 Gordon Moore, Bob Noyce and six others left Shockley to seek funding for their own company. The result was Fairchild Semi-Conductor. Bob Noyce received patent No. 2,981,877 for the integrated circuit, which Fairchild introduced in 1961. This device was destined to create a 1,000,000 to 1 cost savings in electronic design.

Another innovation sprang from this group. They became the first employees to leave a company with a team of people, and form a new company to compete with the one they left. That concept soon drove the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley.

Neglect continued and my appearance suffered. A shift to urban areas drove business out of downtown. I saw buildings

fall victim to the crowbar and wrecking ball. In 1958 City Hall, another Italianate building, was torn down. The Bank of San Jose, Commercial Savings Bank, and the Auzerais House (a hotel) became piles of rubble. Before long no buildings of the Italianate design remained, but for myself. I feared I might meet the same fate.

As the business-mix changed downtown, social change also found a home in San Jose. Cesar Chavez took up the plight of the immigrant farm worker. With an eighth grade education he founded the National Farm Workers Association in 1962. In 1963 it became the United Farm Workers Union, which saw great acceptance by Mexican-Americans, but few realize his entire effort started in support of Philippine farm workers.

Tall buildings blocked much of my view by the 1960's, but I still stayed tuned to city happenings. Over at San Jose State three athletes came together to run. Tommie Smith and Lee Evans had worked the same fields as Cesar Chavez before they began to make names for themselves as sprinters. In 1966 they set world records for the 200 and 400-yard dash. In 1967 John Carlos joined them at San Jose State and in 1968 the world watched as they provided their own protest when they stood atop the Olympic platform and thrust black-gloved hands into the air.

The city also changed. Not far away ten city blocks were leveled to accommodate the Park Center Plaza in 1968.

Things really began to heat-up in the electronics world that year too. The same eight who left to form Fairchild Semiconductor left Fairchild to form several other companies including Intel, Advanced Micro Devices and National Semiconductor. In 1971, Bob Noyce formed Intel and introduced the microprocessor which launched what eventually became a trillion dollar worldwide industry.

A lot of things happened in 1971. Businesses sprang up in the most unlikely places. Nolan Bushnell and his team tried to convince the company that financed their research, to allow them to market a game they'd developed. The company turned them down. Bushnell built 11 video machines himself. The game? Pong. The outcome? Parents soon heard their kids clamoring for games from an upstart company called Atari.

In 1971 our name changed from Valley of the Heart's Delight to Silicon Valley. Don Hoefler, editor of Micro Electronics, coined the name in an article and it stuck.

Bushnell brought together two other young entrepreneurs in 1974. At the time they both worked for Atari. Steve Jobs sold his VW bus and Steve Wozniak did the same with his scientific calculator. They pooled their money and founded Apple in 1977 on April Fool's Day.

It was Jobs who said, "Fairchild was like a ripe dandelion. You blew on it and the seeds of entrepreneurship spread

everywhere." By the early 1980s over 3000 electronic firms called Silicon Valley home and one-third of those resided in San Jose.

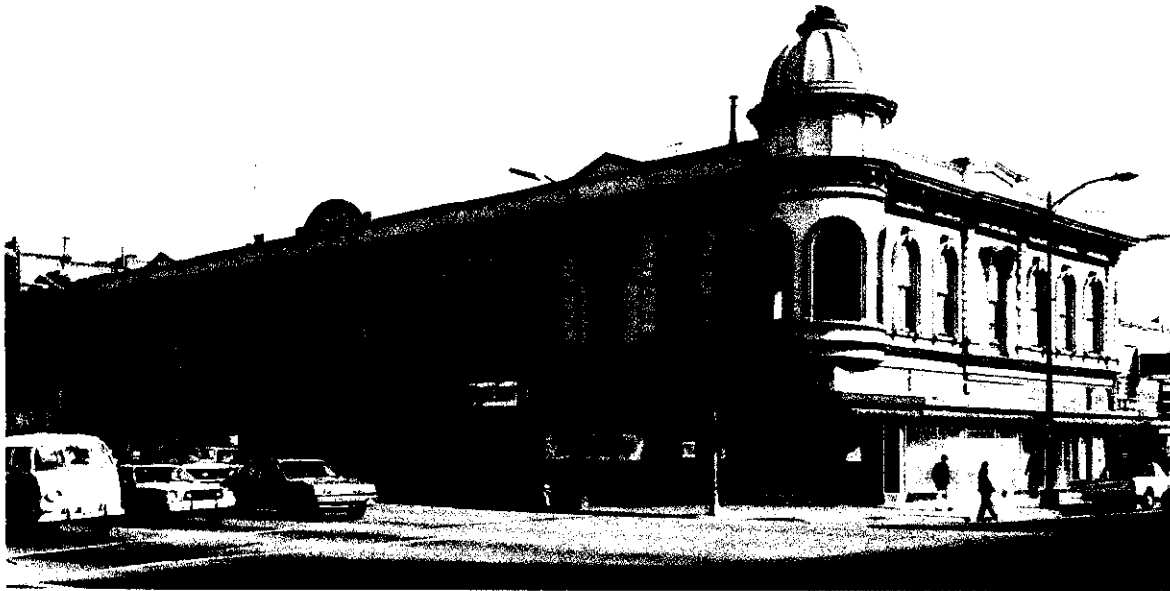
Through all this tremendous growth my second floor remained empty and I became a bit player, an observer.

For me, things began to change for the better in 1980. By now the upper floor had been vacant for almost 50 years. The walls were coated with dirt and stains. Water had long ago peeled sections of the *lin crusta* from the walls. Debris and dirt covered my floors. Door frames were chipped and molding broken loose. Other doors were damaged or gone. In many areas the plaster was chipped. The oak stained redwood had bleached, the grain had disappeared. Bare electrical wires hung from the ceilings, the bulbs shattered across the floor. I will say I suffered little of the one plight many others of my kind faced; graffiti was not significant.

In February of that year a simple City Council resolution, #52764, stated I was, get this, "A Landmark of Special Historical, Architectural, Cultural and Aesthetic Value and Interest." Pretty neat, huh? The resolution passed and I became protected.

I still remember 1984 when Jim Fox led several people on a tour of my halls. He spoke of my deterioration and lost beauty.

What caught my interest was his belief I could be returned to my former self.



Photograph 2—New Century Building, 1984—Note dome is not gold.

"I'm not a historian," he told the group. "But I've restored about a half-dozen other buildings in San Jose and I'd like to see this one join them."

The commercial side of business suffered at this time. Most the tenants I housed were not paying rent. I may have been protected, but I certainly was not maintained. It presented a quandary since San Jose had grown to become the 16th largest city in the nation with a population exceeding 625,000. Yet downtown

businesses floundered. Jim Fox, owner of Saratoga Capitol, Inc. believed in the commercial viability of downtown and decided to make me a part of it once again.

The transformation was dramatic. I never enjoyed a lot of structural reinforcement in my early days. I went into shock one morning when they started to chip away at my foundation. They shored-up my foundation to allow the old material to be removed and reinforced.

Barry Swensen Construction handled the retrofit and foundation work. "The foundation was nothing but rocks," Barry Swensen recalled. "It led to the most exciting time we had on the project. Wasn't funny at the time, but Steve Andrews, our engineer, was inside the building while when an earthquake hit. With 100 years of dust and dirt floating through the air he had trouble finding his way out."

Anchors were sunk in the footings. Steel framing and concrete blocks replaced weakened sections of the foundation. The anchors were bolted to the new framing to improve my ability to move in an earthquake.

Vertical stability was another concern. With several fireplaces in various offices, the architect, Bill Hedley, decided to use them. Rebar was run down the length of the chimneys and concrete poured down each chimney.

"Brick is great for vertical support," Jim Fox said. "But it doesn't sway real well. The seismic retrofit was critical to our restoration."

To strengthen my resistance to sway they pulled up a four foot-wide section of floor around the entire interior perimeter—that's a hole almost 400' long. Threaded bolts were inserted into the one foot thick outer brick walls.



Photograph 3—Interior—Note flooring removed for seismic retrofit

"We used the epoxy method to secure the bolts," Mark Cardosa said. Mark, Biggs Cardosa Associates, designed the

seismic retrofit. "Epoxy allowed us to strengthen the building without doing anything to the exterior. It helped retain the historical integrity of the outside."

Bolt placement in the outer wall proved difficult. Once the bolts were in place three-quarter inch rods were inserted below floor level. In some cases the bracing ran at angles. Some rods ran alongside joists, others perpendicular to them. Special hardware allowed the rods to be bolted to these supports. This tied the floor, joists and outer walls together.

They also reinforced the parapet. Steel braces were run down the brick and anchored to the roof framing.

Every detail was monitored during restoration. "Bill Hedley designed many San Jose buildings and he respected the historical significance of what was in this building," Jim Fox said. "He didn't want to add to the original architect's creativity."

The sad condition of my interior required extensive restoration work. Jim Fox assembled a team to tackle the interior. The two key people were Bruce Bradbury (Bradbury and Bradbury) and Michelle Pheasant (Michelle Pheasant Design).



Photograph 4—General condition of interior offices

I still recall the morning a young man pushed open the door to the stairway leading upstairs. As others headed up the stairs he stopped inside the door and stared at the wall. His eyes lit up in excitement as he grabbed his partner.

"This is the same *lincrusta* we restored in Sacramento," Bruce Bradbury exclaimed. "Can you believe it?"

Jim Fox had stopped and Bruce explained that one of his first jobs had been restoration of the governor's private office in the original capital building three years earlier. In that building the *lincrusta*'s destruction was far greater. All that remained were small chunks they meticulously pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle. With an idea of the pattern in mind they

searched England (*lincrusta* was first created in England) and from there around the world trying to find the pattern. They failed.

The only remaining option was to build a mold. They copied the pattern to paper, then laid the paper on a block of wax. Once they'd transferred the pattern to the wax they used small tools to hand carve the pattern into the wax. This was no simple task when you consider the intricate design and its various depths. The wax provided the base for making a mold. Fiberglass, to provide structural strength, was mixed with plaster and poured into the mold to create the replacement *lincrusta*.

On my walls most the *lincrusta* was in place. The mold from the governor's private office, made my restoration simpler. Years later Bruce would recall little of the rest of the restoration efforts. "Seeing that *lincrusta* was like a significant emotional event." He laughed. His voice took on the easy tone of someone about to share an oft told story. "I went around the world looking for that pattern and it was right here in San Jose. When I saw it I kind of mentally blocked out everything else."

The upstairs hall *lincrusta* proved a simpler task. Michelle Pheasant located a source in the Midwest that supplied the four patterns.

Other aspects of the interior restoration proved challenging. Michelle described my condition as "unbelievably bad." As she walked the halls and inspected rooms she commented, "This is the last vestige of this type of building. The Italianate architecture is western American architecture at its finest."

Michelle admired Jim Fox for taking on this restoration. "The owners were pretty gutsy to do a building then," she said. But it was just the beginning of the rebirth of the downtown area and now look at it." But she had a different worry. "The street scene in 1984 was pretty bad," she said. "There would be vagrants in the doorway when I arrived after dark for a site meeting. I was very nervous until somebody opened the door."

Lighting required special consideration. In the offices the high ceilings gave a shaded look to everything. The large recessed skylights in the hall provided hallway light but did little for the office spaces. "Lighting was a big issue," Michelle said. "In those days they used ambient lighting, not the recessed ceiling lights we see today." An old Victorian era stem light fixture was found in one of my many rooms. Using this fixture as a prototype they built a replica of the original light fixtures. The result was a six-shaded light fixture with three lights pointed upwards and three down. In the hall

incandescent lighting was used, while the offices utilized low-voltage lights.



Photograph 5—Second floor hallway before restoration

The doors, frames and molding showed signs of neglect. Chipped, faded and missing pieces were all problems to be addressed. Craftsmen arrived to make the necessary repairs and restore the oak-look to the redwood.

"We had a crew of specialists in their 70s come in here," Jim Fox said. "They arrived with equally old hand tools. They

used this special roller with little bumps all over it. They sanded everything, stained it and then ran that funny roller over the wood to create the grain. I'm sure it was almost a lost art."



Photograph 6—Hallway after restoration

The team spent long hours researching interior design from the 1900s. "I found an old period design book and selected the green, rust, blue and gold color scheme," Michelle said.

The wallpaper also required replacement. In fact, at the time of the restoration the wallpaper had all disappeared but for a few scraps.

"You could see the lattice work beneath the plaster," Michelle recalled.

With the color scheme selected she worked with Bruce Bradbury to select period designs for wallpaper, borders and friezes. Bruce then created the wallpaper using his designs and Michelle's colors. The hallway was papered in a somewhat floral look in shades of green. Crews worked late at night to hang the wallpaper, often staying until two in the morning.

More than once I've heard visitors look at the walls they created and say, "That's a Bradbury and Bradbury."

What they did in the turret room remains my favorite. With outside walls that are rounded and a ceiling 14 feet high the room leaves an impression. Before the work started the room was cluttered with chunks of wood, old furniture, and pieces of molding that had fallen off. Not my better side.

The turret room became an executive conference room. The only operational fireplace that remains is in this room. A large mirror stands above the fireplace mantel and two carved lion's heads, which serve as mantel pillars, draw attention to the fireplace when people enter. Red oak panels stretch from

the floor to the ceiling and add to the quiet formality of this room.

"Those lion's heads got a few laughs," Michelle said. "We bought them from an antique dealer and discovered they were full of worms. We had to fumigate them before they could be installed."

She may think worms are funny, but I find them rather frightening.

If you let your eyes follow the blue velvet drapes from the floor toward the ceiling you will enjoy a real treat. The ceiling in this room is a cornucopia of paper designs. Over 15 wallpaper designs cover my ceiling. Geometric and floral patterns, shaped in wedges, octagons and arcs cover the ceiling in blue, gold, ruby red and green.

Anyone who has hung wallpaper recognizes the complexities of standing on a ladder and trying to roll the paper into place. Imagine having the paper on the ceiling, in odd wedge shapes and 15 distinct patterns and trying to match the edges.

The five windows in this room are shuttered with louvered panels. An Axminster carpet, designed for high traffic, carries the same deep blue and rust color scheme and also runs the length of the 2nd floor hallway.



**Photograph 7—Restored turret room—Note wallpaper patterns
on ceiling**

The renovation cost over four million dollars in 1984 (almost seven million in today's dollars). Wonder what Pedro de Saisset would have done? His cost was under \$10,000 (\$250,000 in today's dollars). Of course, movies aren't a nickel anymore either.



Photograph 8—Saratoga Capitol Building—Note gold dome

Today I am honored to be designated a Historical Building. I am part of the National Historic District of Downtown San Jose. My name has changed to the "Saratoga Capitol Building." Much else changed in my 130-plus years, but many things remain the same. The enthusiasm for change, the can-do spirit, and an environment that allows you to pursue your own interests have never left, and I suspect they never will.

The End

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Acknowledgements:

Photograph 1-Provided by Jim Fox

Photographs 2-8: Provided courtesy of Russell Abraham
Photography.

Addenda

Details of Origin of the New Century Building

Situation:

Various documents discuss the New Century Building or New Century Block as three buildings. The term "block" could imply the area along Santa Clara between 2nd and 3rd of which the New Century Building is the western portion. These documents also list constructions dates as 1868, 1881, 1880s, 1885 and 1900.

A detailed review of certain source information indicates the New Century Building is five buildings (not three as often stated) which were built in four phases. The IOOF Building is two buildings.

Since the IOOF Building was not part of my research I did not pursue complete identification of when it was built or by whom.

Construction dates are as follows:

Phase 1--Original building corner of 2nd and Santa Clara: 1868 by Adolph Pfister

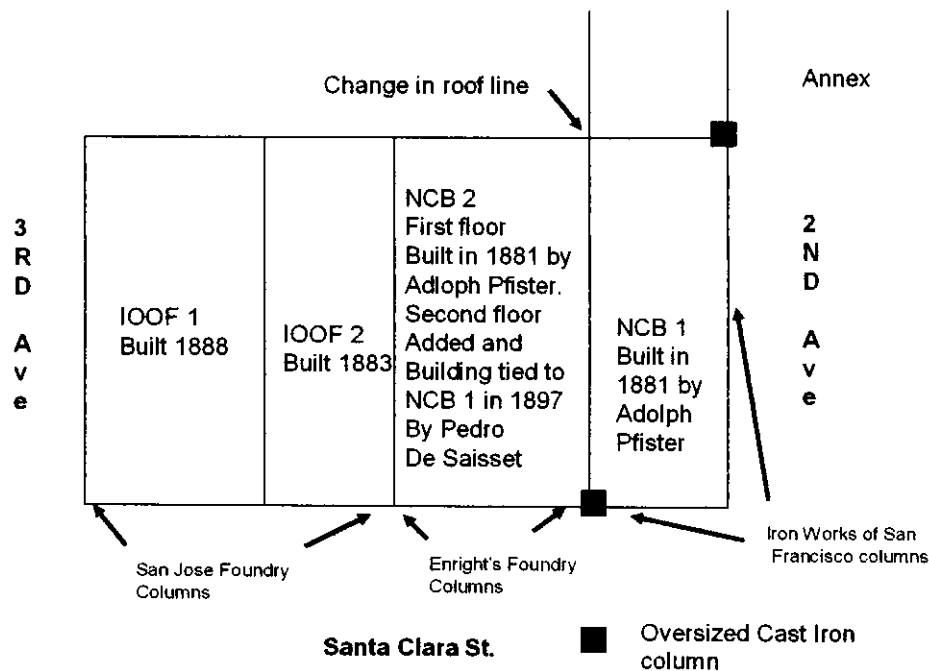
Phase 2--Three buildings directly east of original building: 1881 by Adolph Pfister

Phase 3--New Century Building--Added second floor to three buildings and opened entire interior: 1897 by Pedro de Saisset

Phase 4--Annex to New Century Building: 1931 by de Saisset Estate

Layout:

The following details the building arrangement:



Basis for Builder and Construction Dates:

The following information was used to establish the layout, verify the dates of construction and owner:

NCB 1 (Older portion of New Century Building):

Columns from the City Iron Works of San Francisco dated 1868 are found on the front of this portion of the building. In addition, at a point that defines

the interface between the NCB1 and NCB2 is a column approximately 16" wide, while other columns are 12". This is the same size column found around the corner where the annex has been added. Clearly, these two columns were the end of the old building. An inspection of the roof shows the roof line of NCB1 is several feet lower than NCB2 and the location of this difference is the same as the location of the larger column mentioned above. (1)

NCB 2-First floor:

This section, consisting of three buildings, was added by Adolph Pfister in 1881. (2)

The 1881/1882 San Jose Directory (3) indicates Adolph Pfister had businesses at 350 Santa Clara which would be between 2nd and 3rd. Adolph Pfister was a member of the Germania Club (4) which was located at 362 Santa Clara according to the 1881/1882 directory. In addition, the Sanborn map (5) for 1884 shows a two story building on the corner of 2nd and Santa Clara and a one story buildings directly east of that building.

The second floor of NCB 2 was built in 1897. At this time the dome was added and the four buildings were combined. A photograph (6) of the building shows signs for several businesses with addresses listed as 2nd and Santa Clara in 1897 , but not 1896. (7)

Only two people are credited with construction of the New Century Building and Adolph Pfister retired in 1887 (8) which is 10 years before NCB2 was built. The Sanborn map for 1899 (9) shows the New Century Building at the corner of 2nd and Santa Clara. All this indicates Pedro de Saisset was the builder of the new section.

IOOF Building:

As an aside, several documents stated the IOOF Building was constructed in 1883. This is actually two buildings. The one furthest west (next to NCB 2) was built in 1883 based on the 1884 Sanborn map (5), which shows a "Society Hall" (which was the IOOF Building) at that location. A plaque (10) in the basement of Hank Coca's Discount Furniture Store states "Combs, Blanchard, O'Neil and McLennan 1888. This is a granite and marble company listed in the San

Jose Directory in 1888 (11). The Sanborn map for 1887 (12) is marked "IOOF" on the corner of 3rd and Santa Clara.

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10-- Personal tour with Hank Coca (owner of the Hank Coca Discount Furniture store which occupies the building). A plaque at the front eastern corner of the basement is stamped "Combs, Blanchard, O'Neil and McLennan 1888."

11--The San Jose Directory for 1888 lists the IOOF address as 3rd and Santa Clara. Prior to that year the address is 42 1st St.

12--1887 Sanborn map