

CALIFORNIA ROOM

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SAN JOSE ARCHITECT

LEVI I. GOODRICH

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INTRODUCTION

Architect Levi I. Goodrich contributed to the development of Santa Clara County in the buildings he designed. Credited as the first professionally-trained architect in San Francisco, Goodrich settled in San Jose just months after he moved to California.

Here, his first buildings were constructed of adobe. He is perhaps best remembered for his public buildings -- schools, courthouses, and jails. His sandstone quarry, located about eight miles south of San Jose, produced high-grade building material used in numerous projects including Lick Observatory atop Mt. Hamilton, Leland Stanford Jr. University , the San Jose City Hall (torn down in 1958), and San Jose's first federal building, which currently houses the San Jose Museum of Art.

Indeed, Levi Goodrich made significant contributions to Santa Clara County, and his buildings which survive today stand as monuments to his success as an architect.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Born on New Year's Day, 1822, in New York City, Levi I. Goodrich was orphaned in early childhood.

Goodrich was of English ancestry, and a direct descendant of Captain David Goodrich, who had become famous for his participation in the French and Indian War.¹

Since Levi's parents died when he was quite young, he was raised by relatives in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Following his common school education, Levi studied the carpenter's trade with his cousin Horace. Upon completion of his apprenticeship, he became the junior partner in the firm of Horace and Levi Goodrich, builders.

At 19, Levi's first major challenge, which early biographers credit as inspiring Levi to pursue professional architectural training, presented itself while he was assisting in the construction of the E.W.B. Canning residence.

It seems that Miss Catharine Maria Sedgwick, a prominent author of her day,² had seen bay windows on a recent trip to Europe. She attempted to describe them to the builder, who was unable to design them to her liking. But Levi took on the challenge and successfully executed the bay windows. Pleased with Levi's architectural ability, Miss Sedgwick wrote him a letter of introduction to R.G. Hatfield, a noted New York architect.

So young Levi returned to the city of his birth and received formal training under an accomplished professional. His father had also been an architect. Levi "subsequently met with excellent success as an architect and builder, being kept busily employed in New York and New England."³

LEVI COMES TO CALIFORNIA

Levi's adventurous nature carried him much farther. On May 8, 1849, he set sail from New York City aboard the ship Loo Choo.⁴ The journey took him around Cape Horn, and he arrived in San Francisco on September 16 of the same year.

With "true Yankee thrift and foresight"⁵ Levi had managed to bring finished building materials with him on the ship. Perhaps he had read about or someone had recounted to him the "tent city" condition of Gold Rush California. At any rate, he reportedly sold his lumber for a large profit.

Other sources emphasized the importance of his training and skills as an architect:

No sooner had he arrived than his acquirements were called into requisition; indeed, he had not left the vessel when he drew the plans and specifications for a three-story wooden building, that was put up at what is now the corner of Kearney and Washington streets, where the old Hall of Records stands, tents being torn down to make way for it.⁶

A modern account of Levi's first work in California recounts the incident in a different way:

The Parker House, erected on the old Spanish Plaza in 1849, was either constructed of sections shipped from the East Coast or pieced together from imported materials. If the latter is true, the hotel was probably designed by Levi Goodrich, who is credited with the first work wrought in San Francisco by a professional architect.⁷

After two months, Levi decided to move once again. He travelled to San Jose via Alviso. Accounts claim that the journey took three days and two nights by small sailing craft to Alviso, and that Levi walked the remainder of the trip into San Jose.⁸ He arrived in San Jose on November 30, 1849, and he called San Jose his home for the rest of his life.

LIFE IN SAN JOSE

In the spring of 1850 Levi Goodrich constructed his first building in San Jose, an adobe house at the corner of Santa Clara Street and Lightstone Alley where the O'Banion and Kent Store later stood. (By 1887, the store had become known as T.W. Hobson and Company.) The adobe bricks were made from clay removed from the site that a few years later was used by Theodore Lenzen to build the Auzerais House.

Shortly thereafter, Goodrich constructed another building of adobe. This one, which was much larger, was built for John Hoppe at the northeast corner of Market and Santa Clara streets.⁹

Goodrich also became involved in other endeavors. In 1852, he was elected a member of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.¹⁰ On December 6, 1852, the Board consisted of L.W. Bascom, President; Jno. B. Allen, Joseph C. Boyd, A.M. Church, and Levi Goodrich.¹¹ After serving only one term, Goodrich had his fill of politics and did not run for re-election. This was to be the only political office he ever held.

Goodrich married Julia Peck in 1854. Other than the fact that she was a daughter of Judge Peck, precious little is known about Goodrich's bride. In 1849 alone, four different J. Pecks (each with a different middle initial) journeyed by ship from various East Coast ports to California.¹² One of them could have been ~~the~~ *the*

Levi and Julia had one child, Edwin Brandon Goodrich. He was born May 14 in either 1856 or 1858. According to the Great Register of Santa Clara County of 1879, he registered to vote at the age of 21 on August 16, 1877. A biography published in 1904 states that he was born in 1858.¹³ The earlier date seems more likely.

The marriage of Julia and Levi did not even last a decade. A decree of divorce was entered in the District Court of Santa Clara and published in the San Francisco newspaper Daily Alta California on May 24, 1863.

Since divorce was much less common in the nineteenth century than it is today, it tends to lead to speculation about the grounds for divorce. The most likely possibility appears to be that Julia Peck-Goodrich was ruled incompetent and housed in one of the local insane asylums. No mention is ever made of her again. Biographies of Levi even fail to mention the divorce at all.

Young Edwin did not appear to be severely influenced by the separation of his parents. In fact, in later life his two children were named Louise Juliet and Donald Levi, obvious references to his parents. Edwin spent six years at the Edward's Place School in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, probably staying with his father's relatives there during vacations.

With his son back East, Levi could concentrate on his occupation. He is known to have designed buildings in Monterey and San Diego as well as his adopted home of San Jose. He is credited with the jails and courthouses of Monterey and San

Diego Counties. He also designed Horton's Bank Building and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall in San Diego. Built in 1882 for the Masonic Lodge No. 35 and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge No. 153, the hall was used for that purpose until 1974. The San Diego Ballet presently occupies the structure.¹⁴

By far, most of Goodrich's work was done in San Jose. That he managed to find time to perform work in other locales speaks to his great ability as an architect and businessman.

Here in San Jose Goodrich chiefly designed public buildings and offices, although he is known to have built some large homes. The homes of Dr. William James and Sarah Louise (Browning) Knox and Cabel Harrison and Virginia (Knox) Maddox on North First Street were among those done by Goodrich.

After Dr. Knox purchased the land on the northwest corner of First and Santa Clara streets from James Lick for \$21,000, he hired Goodrich to design an office building. B.F. Graham served as contractor. Known as the Knox Block, the two-story ornate building cost \$30,000 to construct.

Thereafter, Goodrich had his offices in the Knox Block. It also housed Feist Brothers Dry Goods, Morton and Company Music Emporium, Willard's Dollar Store, real estate and law offices, cigar stores, and the San Jose Library.¹⁵

When the San Jose City Hall was built on what is now 35 North Market Street, it "was built under the impression that San Jose would soon again be the capital of the State, and it was constructed with a view to its possible use as a state-

house."¹⁶ This City Hall was designed by Goodrich. Its castle-like crown was distinctly different from the other buildings he designed. The large hall on the second floor was used by several churches while they constructed their own houses of worship, and also housed agricultural and horticultural exhibitions and public meetings.

After the 1887 City Hall was completed, the earlier structure served other purposes. It was being used as a firehouse in 1906 when the April 18 earthquake damaged it beyond repair.¹⁷

Goodrich's two visits to Europe most likely influenced his architectural style. As one nineteenth biographer eloquently explained:

No poet or painter ever basked in the ideals of beauty, no singer was ever entranced by the harmonies of sound, more than he was with the laws of symmetry and proportion. To him the Corinthian capital, or Doric column, or Lombardian portico was a poem and song.¹⁸

Goodrich designed the three-story Santa Clara Street School House (also known as the Second Ward School) in 1867. Constructed at a cost of \$20,000, the school was built by Thomas Cook.¹⁹

The structure for which Goodrich is probably best known is the Santa Clara County Courthouse on North First Street, facing St. James Square, as St. James Park was then known. Construction of the elaborate building got underway in 1866 and

was completed in 1868. Although it cost \$173,737.96, Goodrich reportedly only received \$100 as his fee. Thompson and West's Atlas of 1876 describes in minute detail the architecture and dimensions of the Courthouse:

It is of the Roman-Corinthian order of architecture.

... The superstructure is of solid brick masonry, resting on a foundation of concrete six feet deep. The building is two stories in height, one hundred feet front, one hundred and forty feet in depth, including portico. Its height at the cornice is sixty feet, to the top of the dome one hundred and fifteen feet, to the top of the flagstaff one hundred and eighty-five feet. The diameter of the dome at the base is fifty feet; at the top seventeen feet. The front is broken into a portico seventy-six feet long, fifteen feet deep, supported by a Corinthian colonnade, and flanked by fluted pilasters, which support the entablature. The building has twenty-one rooms, two of which are used for court-rooms, the others being used for offices, all of which are finely finished and furnished. The principal court-room is sixty-five feet long, forty-eight feet wide, and thirty-eight feet high, and is lighted from the ceiling by means of panels set with ground glass.²⁰

The dome of the Courthouse was lost in a fire in 1931, and the building was restored in 1933.²¹ It is still in use today.

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Directly behind the Courthouse Goodrich designed the county jail. Construction on this \$80,000 structure began in the spring of 1870 and was completed in 1871. The complimentary atlas of 1876 noted, "It is surrounded by a high brick wall, and for health, conveniences, and security is considered one of the finest prisons in the State."²²

Although similar in architectural style to the schoolhouses designed by Goodrich, the Reed Street School (or Third Ward School) was the work of architect Victor Hoffman and contractor L. Therkelson. It was built in 1870 at a cost of nearly \$16,000. Perhaps Goodrich was too busy with other projects at the time.

A few years later, however, he did draw up the plans for the Fourth Ward School, for which C.A. Cook acted as contractor. In 1874 this school house cost \$17,000.

And the next year the \$18,000 First Ward School House was designed by Goodrich. E.A. Vandalsen was the contractor.²³

Numerous other buildings in San Jose were designed by Goodrich. As one biography put it, "... prominent and elegant buildings in the Garden City have sprung from his fertile brain and trained hand."²⁴ Among these were the First Presbyterian Church, the Bank of San Jose, a large portion of the Convent of Notre Dame, the Martin Block, and some of the buildings on both the State Normal School (now San Jose State University) and University of Pacific (now Bellarmine College Preparatory) campuses.²⁵

That he contributed this many buildings to the bustling city of San Jose lends credence to one biographer's remark that, "he subsequently became the foremost architect and builder in this section of the state."²⁶

Yet another biographer's praise of Goodrich went to greater extremes. He also noted Goodrich's hobby of playing the flute:

Nothing less could have been expected of this man, with his rugged, sincere nature, great intelligence, and poetic sensibilities. Added to his intellectual vigor, and to his integrity of purpose and action, was a heart as tender as that of a loving child, and a sunny temper whose genial rays were felt alike by friend, neighbor, and employe. His appreciation of the beautiful in fine art was akin to his love of music; he practically demonstrated the latter by his skill as a flutist.²⁷

GOODRICH QUARRY

In addition to the buildings Goodrich designed, he is also remembered for the sandstone quarry he discovered. Although one source indicates that he both discovered and purchased the 500 acres on which the quarry is situated in 1870, excavation of the building material did not get underway until five years later.

Goodrich's Free-Stone Quarry, as it was initially known, was located about eight miles south of the center of San Jose, just east of the road leading to the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines.

The quality, as well as the quantity, of sandstone proved particularly high. In fact, one account claimed, "Critical analysis and comparison have been made by leading experts of Europe, who pronounce it the most valuable deposit of building stone in the world."²⁸

From 15 to 40 men were employed at the quarry, and the stone was handcut to builders' specifications. It was transported by rail to various building sites. Among the workers at the the Goodrich Free-Stone Quarry was Jacob Pfeiffer. A native of Alsace-Lorraine, Pfeiffer's first home in America was in Kansas where he operated a stone-cutting business. In 1875, he came to the Santa Clara Valley with his family and began working for Goodrich.²⁹

The Thompson and West atlas called the building stone "one of the most important products of Santa Clara County."³⁰

In the scientific department at Santa Clara College (now University) professors conducted tests and evaluated the quality of the stone. The results of the tests indicated that the sandstone was very pure and fireproof.

In the early years of the twentieth century, California state mineralogist Lewis E. Aubury reported not only on the quality of stone but on its precise quantity:

The sandstone occurs in beds from a few inches to 10 feet or more in thickness. ... About 50 feet of sandstone are exposed below the bottom of the present [August 1904] quarry, and about 100 feet on the outcrop above the quarry, while a still greater thickness is exposed on the hills immediately adjoining on the northeast and northwest. ... Like many sandstones, it is quite soft when first quarried, but indurates on exposure until it has a quite firm, hard surface.³¹

Numerous structures used sandstone from the Goodrich Quarry. In Santa Clara County alone, the stone was incorporated into the Lick Observatory (1888), the Exhibition Hall of the College of Notre Dame, the 1887 San Jose City Hall, Agnews State Hospital, and buildings on the State Normal School campus.

By far the largest project which took advantage of the rich deposit of sandstone from Goodrich's Quarry was Leland Stanford Jr. University. The local rail line was employed for

some five years transporting the stone from south of San Jose to the campus at Palo Alto.

The Masonic Temple in Oakland, as well as several structures in San Francisco, also used the stone. The list of buildings in San Francisco includes the Union Club, Bancroft's History Building, the Starr King Memorial, the Pioneer Building, Lachmann Block and the Children's Playhouse at Golden Gate Park.³²

Edwin Goodrich took over the operation of the Goodrich Quarry on the death of his father. Due to the high quality and vast quantity of the stone, the business proved quite lucrative.

Later Jacob Pfeiffer leased the quarry. In 1901, he renamed it "Graystone Quarry." His sons also worked at the quarry.

Even in the twentieth century the stone was still quarried by hand. As the state mineralogist's report indicated, the stone is "loaded with steam-power derrick on small tram-cars, and sent down an inclined track about 800 feet to the stone mill and cutting yard near the railway track. The mill is supplied with two gang-saws for cutting dimension stone, and a large crew of stonecutters is at work finishing the stone."³³

By the time Pfeiffer died in 1905, the quarrying business was experiencing a rapid decline. As cement increased in popularity as a building material, the expense of cutting stone by hand was no longer cost effective.³⁴

LIFE WITH SARAH

When Levi Goodrich married the widow Sarah Knox, they had known each other for quite some time. He had designed the Knox Block for her husband and the Bank of San Jose, with which she had remained active following the death of her first husband on November 13, 1867.

The Knox-Goodrich marriage took place in her family mansion at 11 a.m. on January 15, 1879. Conducted by Rev. Dr. W.W. McKaig, the ceremony was modest and private, with a small group of relatives and close friends attending. San Jose Mercury editor James Jerome Owen toasted the couple with the wish "that their marriage might prove an intellectual and spiritual union, and that peace and happiness might crown as with a garland the meridian and evening of their days." C.T. Park congratulated the bride "on having a Goodrich husband, and the bridegroom on having a good rich wife."³⁵

A later account of the marriage of Sarah and Levi reported that they were a particularly happy couple and complimented Sarah herself:

[Sarah Knox-Goodrich was] a lady of intelligence and refinement, and one of the most distinguished women in the State. Remarkably social in disposition, loving in heart, liberal in sentiment, and courageous in living up to her highest convictions, of right and duty, this union proved a rarely happy one; and although, when contracted, each had passed what is considered the romantic period of life, their pure

sentiment and loyal affection for each other proved a marriage in its most sacred sense.³⁶

Sarah Knox-Goodrich was well-known for her contributions to the women's rights movement, in particular, the struggle to earn women the right to vote.

RETIREMENT AND DEATH

Levi continued to design buildings until 1886 when he retired "full of the honors and comforts which had followed in the wake of his indefatigable zeal and labor."³⁷

Even though he had generally enjoyed good health, "The strain of steady application to business finally told on him and he was obliged to retire and seek recreation."³⁸ He did, however, remain active in managing the quarry.

In late March 1887 Levi and Sarah travelled to San Diego where they had enjoyed their honeymoon eight years earlier. After a day of sight-seeing on April 2, he collapsed at the dinner table of the Horton House. Although he received immediate medical attention, he died within a few minutes at the age of 65. His remains were sent to San Jose where his funeral was held on April 6, 1887.

So ended the life of one of the most influential architects in the history of San Jose.

FOOTNOTES

¹J.M. Guinn, History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties, California, Chicago: The Chapman Publishing Company, 1904, p. 297.

²Webster's Biographical Dictionary, Springfield, Massachusetts: G&C Merriam Company, 1980, pp. 1337-1338.

³Guinn, p. 297.

⁴C.W. Haskins, The Argonauts of California, New York: Fords, Howard and Hulburt, 1890, p. 427.

⁵Guinn, p. 297.

⁶J.P. Munro-Fraser, History of Santa Clara County, California, San Francisco: Alley, Bowen and Company, Publishers, 1881, p. 759. This quote also appears in "Biographical Sketches: Levi Goodrich," [San Jose] The Pioneer, 7 February 1882, p. 2, cols. 1 and 2.

⁷Harold Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier: Style and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century, San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1960, pp. 41-42.

⁸J.P. Munro-Fraser, History of Santa Clara County, California, San Francisco: Alley, Bowen and Company, Publishers, 1881, pp. 759-760. This information also appears in "Biographical Sketches: Levi Goodrich," [San Jose] The Pioneer, 7 February 1882, p. 2, cols. 1 and 2.

⁹Horace S. Foote, Editor, Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World; or Santa Clara, California, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1888, p. 226.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

¹⁰Guinn, p. 298, and Foote, p. 226.

¹¹Thompson and West, Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County, California, Philadelphia: Thomas Hunter Printing, 1876, p. 14-3/4.

¹²Haskins, pp. 444, 452, 483, and 497.

¹³Guinn, p. 455.

¹⁴Sally Woodbridge, California Architecture: Historic American Buildings Survey, San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988, p. 203.

¹⁵Thompson and West, p. 54.

¹⁶Thompson and West, p. 15.

¹⁷Clyde Arbuckle, Clyde Arbuckle's History of San Jose, San Jose: Smith McKay Printing Company, 1985, p. 49.

¹⁸Quoted with no source given in Foote, p. 226.

¹⁹Thompson and West, p. 15-1/4. Illustration shown on page 50.

²⁰Thompson and West, p. 13.

²¹Mary Gottschalk, "A Walk from Past to Present," San Jose Mercury News, 30 May 1982, p. 2G.

²²Thompson and West, p. 13.

²³Thompson and West, p. 15-1/4. Illustrations of these two school houses appear on page 51.

²⁴Foote, p. 226.

²⁵Anonymous, "Biographical Sketches: Levi Goodrich," [San Jose] The Pioneer, 7 February 1882, p. 2, cols. 1 and 2.

²⁶Guinn, p. 297.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

²⁷Foote, p. 227.

²⁸Foote, p. 226.

²⁹Patricia Loomis, "Signposts: County Lane a Family Tie," San Jose News, 10 September 1971, p. 33.

³⁰Thompson and West, p. 14.

³¹Lewis E. Aubury, The Structural and Industrial Materials of California, Sacramento: W.W. Shannon, Superintendent, State Printing Office, 1906, p. 134.

³²Foote, p. 226, Kirker, p. 102, and Munro-Fraser, p. 243, all list buildings which used Goodrich Quarry sandstone.

³³Aubury, p. 134.

³⁴Loomis, p. 33.

³⁵James Jerome Owen, "The Altar," San Jose Daily Mercury, 16 January 1879, p. 3.

³⁶Foote, p. 226.

³⁷Foote, p. 227.

³⁸Anonymous, "Levi Goodrich, Death of a Prominent Santa Clara County Pioneer, Stricken with Apoplexy," San Jose Daily Mercury, 3 April 1887, p. 5.

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