

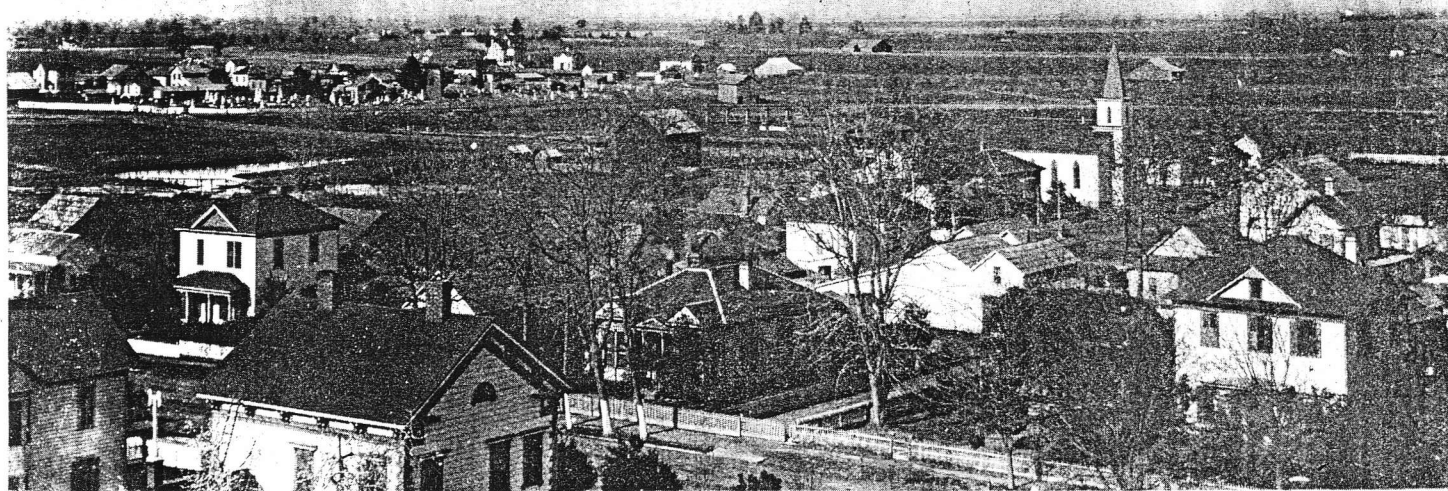
SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS BULLETIN

Vol. 3 No. 3

YUBA CITY, CALIFORNIA

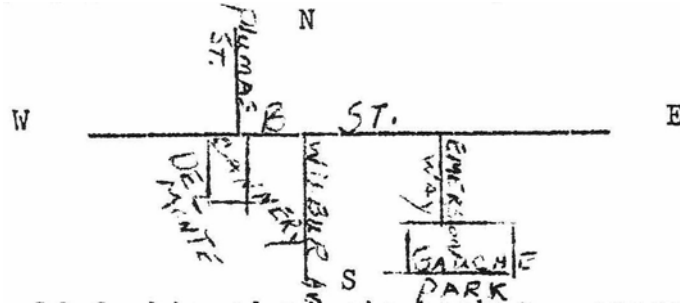
JULY 17, 1962



BIRDSEYE-VIEW OF YUBA CITY AROUND 1890 TAKEN FROM TOWER OF COURT HOUSE

SUTTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OLD FASHIONED PICNIC
GAUCHE PARK
YUBA CITY
JULY 15th, 1962
6 P.M.

PLACE: "Gauche" Park — Yuba City



Bring an old fashioned picnic basket — enough food for your own family and a little extra coffee will be provided. We will have tables provided for a picnic spread for all.

If you have comfortable patio folding chairs bring them along. Comfort and good fellowship will be our keynote.

PROGRAM:

Speaker: Mrs. Sima Baker
Willows, California

Topic: Civil War Sentiment
Along the Upper Sacramento

A report on the general plans for the Symposium of Northern California and Southern Oregon Historical Societies October 12, 13, 14, 1962.

THE MARY M. AARON MUSEUM

The 1865 Marysville City Directory lists among the "brick houses" in Marysville, a 40 x 40 foot two-story dwelling on the corner of Seventh and D Streets, built by Mr. Warren P. Miller at the cost of \$5,000. Mr. Miller, an architect, came from New York State. Over one hundred years later, the people of our community are fortunate to have this house given to them by Mr. Frank Aaron, to be used as a museum in memory of his mother, Mrs. Mary M. Aaron. Mr. Aaron's father came from England and was an assayer of gold when he first arrived in Marysville. The Aaron family lived in this lovely house for many years. Mr. Aaron, in giving it to the City of Marysville, also left the interest from a trust fund to be used for the maintenance and operation of the museum. To insure the success of the project, an

interested group of citizens organized the Aaron Memorial Association. The object of the group is to preserve for posterity the historical heritage of Marysville and the surrounding areas.

Several other prominent people have lived in our community, including Mary Murphy Covillaud, who was one of the survivors of the ill-fated Donner Party. Her husband, Mr. Charles Covillaud, is often referred to as the "father of Marysville" because he purchased the land from Captain Sutter, had it surveyed and divided into lots which he sold for \$20.00 each. Marysville was once called Yubaville, but at the first town meeting the citizens officially named the new city Marysville in honor of Mary Covillaud.

Most of the historical items in the museum are from this locality and were used during the period between 1850 and 1900. Some, however, were brought here and are on display because of their historical value. The registration table is made of wood from an umbrella tree that once grew on the corner of Fourth and D Streets, where Kirk's Pharmacy now stands. In the parlor the portrait of the little girl above the fireplace is of Elizabeth Seymour Maben, who came from San Francisco. She was the wife of the City Tax Collector and City Marshall, who at one time earned the fabulous salary of \$150.00 a month.

The furniture with the fancy "eagles heads" came from the "old Flannery home" (a picture of the house is in the display room). The furniture has been recovered with drapes that were once hung in the Aaron home.

The hanging lamp came from the O'Brien home at Smartville. During the "gold rush" period Smartville and Timbuctoo Wells Fargo Station were important gold centers. Many a miner, sitting under this lamp, weighed his gold dust and nuggets. The statue of the Three Graces on the center table belonged to Mrs. Aaron.

The two mannequins are wearing clothes of different periods. The one with the parasol is dressed in an outfit which once belonged to one of the first school teachers in this area. The material was purchased in the 1850's in Sacramento. Her niece is compiling her biography, and we hope to have it on file soon. The shawl was brought from Washington, D.C. and is over 100 years old and undoubtedly saw many a famous person and attended many a fancy social function.

The Canton china dishes in the cupboard were purchased in China in 1819 by Captain Hutchison, who carried them around the Horn in his own sailing vessel to Boston. Later they were brought to Marysville. The lovely painting of the farmstead is of the Charles Covillaud Ranch, east of Marysville on the Yuba River.

Throughout the display room are many items of interest--a few are the wedding stockings brought from Paris, the gold scales, old pots and pans, household utensils used by early housewives and black and gritty ones used by the miners in the nearby hills. The skis

belonged to one of our early day doctors who used them during the winter months between Brownsville and Challenge. We have a banner from President Lincoln/s Campaign, a large collection of campaign buttons and a uniform worn during the Civil War. The office chair of Mr. Covillaud, used when Marysville was a tent city, is on display.

The patio, situated just north of the house is worth a visit. The old fountain once stood in one of the city squares. The bowl around the base was for animals, but many of the people who grew up in Marysville remember taking off their shoes and stockings and wading in it.

Our plans for the future include the opening of the second story. We have a bed carved in 1608 which will be on display then. We are continually adding to our collection of both historical items and historical pictures and documents and information about "old Marysville and the gold rush days". We hope you will spend as much time as you can with us. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them. If you are interested in joining our Association or assisting in any way please indicate your desire when you sign the Registration Book so that we can contact you.

* * * * *

SUTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Sutter County, Yuba City, California

Mary Hannah Stewart
January 12, 1962

Note: Quoted material in the section on the history of the building is taken from the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors, Sutter County, unless otherwise stated.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Original and Present Owner: Sutter, County, California Original and Present Use

The structure was originally built to serve as the county courthouse and office building: it still serves in this capacity. At one time it contained a ward for the mentally ill in addition to the offices and facilities more usually associated with a courthouse. It now houses, among others, the county audio-visual department, the offices of the District Attorney and the Justice of the Peace, the Sheriffs office, and that of the Superior Court Judge.

Construction

The building is constructed mainly of brick and plaster. It is built on soft ground, which becomes quite saturated during a rainy winter. For this reason it has a spread foot to retard the settling and sinking of the walls. It is built on slightly raised ground and for that reason has not been flooded as have nearby buildings. At some time in its history steel rods were inserted at the level of the second floor. They run north and south through the length of the building; their ends can be seen at the intersections of the "grid".

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The first Sutter County Courthouse in Yuba City was built in 1858 on the lot where the present courthouse now stands. This building was destroyed by fire in December of 1871, and the County Board of Supervisors immediately started upon plans for the erection of a new courthouse. It was completed early in 1873. But it too was ill-fated, for in 1899 it almost completely burned. After a delay due to a slight disagreement with the insurance company, it was rebuilt almost exactly according to the original design. This last structure still stands (2nd and C Streets, Yuba City), and though somewhat altered through the necessities of convenience and repair it possesses all of the stateliness of the original.

There are several valid reasons for considering the Courthouse built in 1873, even though it was destroyed. There is a great deal of evidence that the building now standing is almost an exact copy of the original one. It was built by the same contractors as the first. There is no mention of new plans for the building in the Supervisors Minutes. There is evidence that the insurance company wanted to rebuild it exactly as it had stood. (Sutter Independent, May 19, 1899; Editorial). And perhaps the most easily accessible and undeniable evidence is an old lithograph in The History of Sutter County, California, published in 1879. There are very few changes between this building and the present one which cannot be accounted for. But the most important reason for considering the early building is that without a knowledge that without a knowledge of it, the various architectural styles incorporated in the present Courthouse are inexplicable. They appear illogical and out of step with accepted classifications if one considers only the later building. Since the two buildings must be considered as an architectural entity, the most interesting and entertaining history of the first cannot be discounted.

Immediately after the original Courthouse was destroyed in December of 1871, the county clerk was directed to advertise for bids for the construction of a new courthouse. On February 8, 1872 the plans of Joseph Gosling were accepted. The contract was awarded to the company, Swain and Hudson for the low bid of \$19,200.00 on April 3, 1872. Construction commenced immediately.

In the months between April and November there is no mention of the details of construction, though there is ample evidence that it was proceeding. For example: on August 24, 1872 the Board ordered that the clerk's vault in the new Courthouse be fitted with bookcases and pigeon holes "in a proper and workmanlike manner." On October 7 Swain and Hudson were allowed \$4,000 on the contract for the Courthouse. On November 4, a committee was appointed to furnish the Courthouse, and on November 12 Mr. S.J. Stabler was "authorized and appointed to affect an insurance upon the Courthouse, in one or more good and responsible fire insurance companies upon the cheapest and best terms possible."

By February of 1873 the Courthouse was ready for landscaping. "It is ordered that W. W. Perdue and W. J. Craddock be and they are hereby appointed a committee to procure suitable trees and to superintend the putting them out in front (East and South sides) of the Courthouse

and together with Billy Coats and his Jail Force to repair the fence around the Courthouse, and make a gate on the South line immediately fronting the North and South Hall."

That the final polishing of the new Courthouse went on under the capable direction of Mr. Perdue is shown by the notations in the minutes of the following months. May 7, 1873: "It is ordered that W. C. Coates, the jailer, be and is required to take prisoners now in jail and all others that hereafter be confined therein, out of the Jail and have them work on the Courthouse yard, streets and c. and other public matters when necessary, cultivating trees, repairing fences, whitewashing, cleaning windows, etc. and that W. W. Perdue be appointed a committee of one to direct such work." November 5, 1873: "It is hereby ordered by the Board that W. W. Perdue be and he is hereby appointed a Committee of One, to have built in the Courtyard a wood house, size, style and c. to be left with said committee, and to make his report in the matter, together with cost of same, to this Board at its next regular meeting." At that same meeting Mr. Perdue and James Thomas were "appointed to have built forthwith a fine wall, twenty-six feet high for the protection of the Courthouse, on the North line of the Courthouse block, and that they have the same done in a good, substantial workmanlike manner, and to the best advantages of the county." (There was once a stable on that side of the Courthouse and it is interesting to speculate whether it was in existence at that time.) And finally on May 7, 1874, the county clerk was authorized to purchase a "suitable flag" for the Courthouse.

With the winter rains of 1874 trouble started; trouble which has been familiar to the majority of the succeeding occupants. On Thursday, November 5, 1874 the sheriff was ordered "to have the roof of the Courthouse, around the cupola repaired as to prevent leakages."

There is no mention of the Courthouse in the Supervisors Minutes until the following winter when instead of leaking the building apparently settled. For on December 14, 1875, the county clerk was directed "to advertise in the Sutter Banner for two weeks and in the Sacramento Daily Union for one week for sealed proposals to raise and repair the Courthouse." On February 7, 1876 the following proposal from the company Turton and Know was considered. "Gentlemen, the undersigned hereby propose to level up the Courthouse and put in a new and larger foundation in accordance with the plans and specifications on file in the Clerks office, and furnish all tools and materials therefor for the sum of \$4,200. and will raise the same four (4) feet above the present level, and brick up the walls with new foundation and repair all damage caused by raising for the sum of \$6,700... Or will agree to raise the building six feet for the sum of \$7,950." The proposal was taken into consideration and on February 9, 1876 the Board of Supervisors accepted the first plan.

The story of the building from then until it burned in 1899 is essentially one of repairs. The cupola was again leaking the next winter, for more repairs were ordered on November 13, 1876. The minutes state, "the said contractor insures the same not to leak for twelve months." There must have been a few startled or upset people

on Monday, March 8, 1877 for the minutes state: "On motion it is ordered that the petition of the taxpayers asking the improvement of the court yard be received and placed on file." In the next paragraph W. F. Peck was authorized to spend \$400.00 "fixing up and improving the court yard." Other entries in following years are concerned with various repairs, patching plaster, whitewashing and painting. There were two entries made during this time which are of interest: in January of 1894 money was allotted for a telephone for the sheriff's office and in April of the following year there was an allowance made for electric lights for the Courthouse.

On April 21, 1899 the Courthouse was almost completely destroyed by fire. There were certain difficulties in the settlement of the insurance. The county had a policy for \$20,000 in case of total loss, with an option to the company to rebuild if they so choose. The county claimed a total loss as the building was completely destroyed aside from part of the walls which they maintained were unsafe to use. (Even then they found their facilities somewhat inadequate and wanted to modernize and expand them.) The insurance company balked at this claim for a total loss and instead claimed their right to rebuild the courthouse. There was a great deal of controversy over the matter and several editorials were written about it. This excerpt from the May 19, 1899 issue of the Sutter Independent is illustrative of the problem: "If they desire to rebuild the Courthouse, all well and good, but the Supervisors will never accept a building erected on the walls as they now stand. They must be torn down as they are unsafe." On Friday, June 23, 1899 a satisfactory adjustment of the insurance was made, and a little less than a month later a contract was awarded to Swain and Hudson for the rebuilding of the Courthouse. (It is not known whether the old walls were allowed to remain.) There were a few changes made from the former plan: the county jail was expanded and a court added to it, an "insane ward" was included, and there were certain decorative details added or changed which do have some significance in connection with architectural styles. Nonetheless the new building was and is essentially the same as the original.

In January of 1903 a judges chambers was provided in the Courthouse. The building was re-roofed in 1915, and sometime in the early twenties the basement was dug out to provide for more space. On June 5, 1922 a contract was made with I.C. Evans for an addition to the Courthouse and for the remodeling of the tax collector's and treasurer's office. In early July of 1941 there was a motion and a contract to remove the cupola, and an investigation of the front porch and plans for its repair, if necessary, were ordered. There was enough objection from the citizenry to save the cupola, and the porch remained unchanged at that time. In 1947 the interior of the Courthouse was remodeled. This resulted in the construction of two stairways and a private office. Within the last decade the second story veranda was removed and the steel columns now present were put in its place. At the beginning of last December a new annex was opened. This is an extension at the north end of the building and it connects with the north hall. Stylistically it is so far from the Courthouse itself that it can, and should be, considered a separate building. In that light it is not so condemnable as is sometimes thought.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

General

The Sutter County Courthouse is a typical 19th Century building in its incorporation and blending of many various architectural styles and influences. It is indicative to a certain extent of the 19th Century desire for increased ornamentation of surface. It also reflects the long tradition of Baroque focus and Classical motifs present in American public buildings. Because it is a good example of these traditions and tendencies, as well as a pleasing building in itself, it is of architectural value and significance.

Exterior

The Courthouse is based upon late Baroque concepts of design which employed a center of focus in the design and an organization of elements in a minor-major-minor rhythm. The portico is confined to the center front of the building and is quite prominent, thus creating a strong central focus. This focus is further emphasized by the number of windows, both in the front and at the side of the building. In the front there are four windows, two on each side of the central door which is further emphasized by fenestration above it. There are three side windows now; originally the center window was a door. It was similar to the front door and was the central focus at the side. Even as a window it continues to be the central point for it possesses a complete hood mould which the other lower windows do not. The division of the surface of the building into three sections on the sides and into five sections across the front further strengthens the Baroque focus.

The influence of the Classical Revival movement is quite strong in the building's decoration and design. Before the second story veranda was removed there were two varieties of Tuscan columns present in the portico. Those of the first story were unfluted, those of the second fluted. The use of the Tuscan column indicates a Roman rather than a Greek influence, and the fluting of the columns of the second story is indicative of the fact that in the American adaptation of Classical orders and motifs there was not always an insistence upon the archeological correctness. The present columns are also Tuscan and while they greatly strengthen the Classical influence upon the building they tend to emphasize and make more obvious certain inconsistencies and incongruities in style. Because they are so strongly Classical and so dominant, they tend to exaggerate the Gothic influence and the incongruity of the cupola. They tend to destroy the delightful blend of inconsistencies which the building once was. The pediments and cornices are exceptional for their attention to purity in proportion and detail. The architrave has three divisions, the frieze a very correct dentil course, and the modillions are quite correct in their proportion and shape.

The reticular framework of the surface of the building is difficult to classify. The horizontal could perhaps be considered a variant of the string course and the vertical as very much simplified

pilasters. Or this framework could possibly be considered the result of the Stick influence which was coming into vogue at the time the building was designed. In this case the extreme simplicity of the framework when compared with accepted examples of the Stick style can be explained. When the building was built the Stick style might not have yet developed the ornateness in that particular area shown in later examples, and it would have been simplified to make it suitable for a public building of some importance which was based primarily on Baroque and Classical elements. It is probably best though to consider this framework as an indication of a desire for a regularity and focus of space in keeping with the Baroque basis of the building, and also an indication of the desire for a more ornamented surface which was typical of the 19th Century.

The combination of Classical and Gothic characteristics was not uncommon in the mid-century and later in California. In the Courthouse the Gothic influence is evident in the shape of the windows and the hood moulds over them. These shapes are neither those of the lancet nor the Tudor arch but rather a derivation from both, a characteristic which is indicative of the distortion which elements of adopted styles tended to undergo as they became more widespread in time and distance. In the first building the windows were of a slightly different design than they are at the present time. The repetition of the arch form in the pane emphasized the Gothic character of the window and added grace which the hood moulds need to avoid appearing slightly awkward. This change may have been made when the building burned in 1899.

The cupola, like the reticular framework, is an element of the building which defies precise classification. It repeats the Gothic fenestration in the body of the building. It contains brackets rather than modillions under the cornice. A fact indicative of the gradual dissolution of the more correct Classic and Gothic forms. Originally it was covered with clapboards, but sometime between the original construction and the fire these were replaced with shingles. It occupies the place a Classical dome would occupy, it serves no real purpose, and in fact, it creates a certain special discrepancy in the unity of the building. It is not unique for similar octagonal structures are found perched on the tops of many of the buildings of this period throughout the Valley and Foothills.

There are a few other features which should be mentioned in connection with the various stylistic influences upon the building. The quoins at the corners of the building add a certain visual stability. They were used extensively in buildings influenced by Italianate or Mannerist sources, but they are not indicative of them unless found in conjunction with other like characteristics. The second story veranda which the building possessed until fairly recently was an influence from the old south where it was developed as an aid to comfort as well as an element of architectural style.

Concluding Remarks

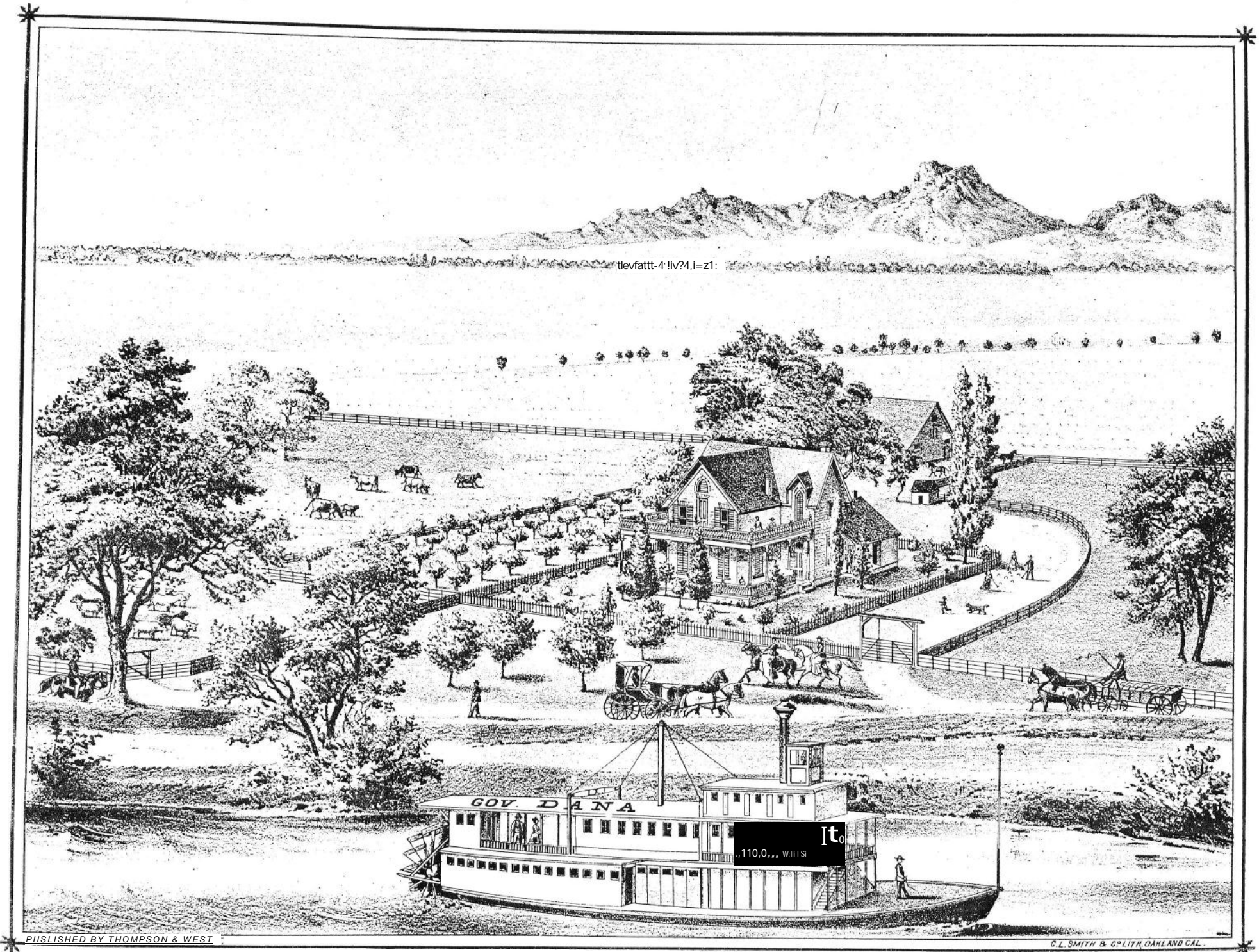
From the very beginning the Courthouse has incorporated in its design a variety of motifs. These are primarily Classical and Gothic, but there are others present, as the shingles in the cupola and the cupola itself. All of these elements are organized around a Baroque focus.

The effect of the changes made in the windows and portico cannot be ignored. The removal of the arch at the top of the separate panes lessened the strength of the Gothic influence and tended to make the hood moulds more awkward in appearance. The change in the portico can be either good or bad depending upon what one wants of the building and desires it to be. If one is looking for historical accuracy, a delightful blend of 19th Century inconsistencies, and a more typical example of the architecture of the period, the change was not a desirable one. If one wants a more Classical building with all the dignity of that style, if one dislikes the clutter and inconsistency of the 19th Century, and if one is not particularly interested in historical accuracy, the change is for the better. It is judgement to be made by the individual, if it must be made.

Interior

At one time the plans for the original building were on file, but they may have been destroyed in the last flood or lost in the move to the new County Office Building. But this much is definitely known of the original plan: there was a corridor which ran north-south through the building and had a door at either end; the main entrance hall intersected this corridor and the stairs to the second floor were at the back of the hall. The offices opened into these halls. The plan appears to be a variant of the Georgian, adapted to a public office building. This organization of interior space is a holdover from the 18th Century in which building plans were regular, formal, with the main focus in the central hall, and the interior space was largely determined by the exterior structure. Today the south end of the corridor has been turned into office space and the north end connects with the new annex. The interior is scheduled to be remodeled sometime this year, a move which should make the building more useable and add to the comfort and convenience of those who use it.

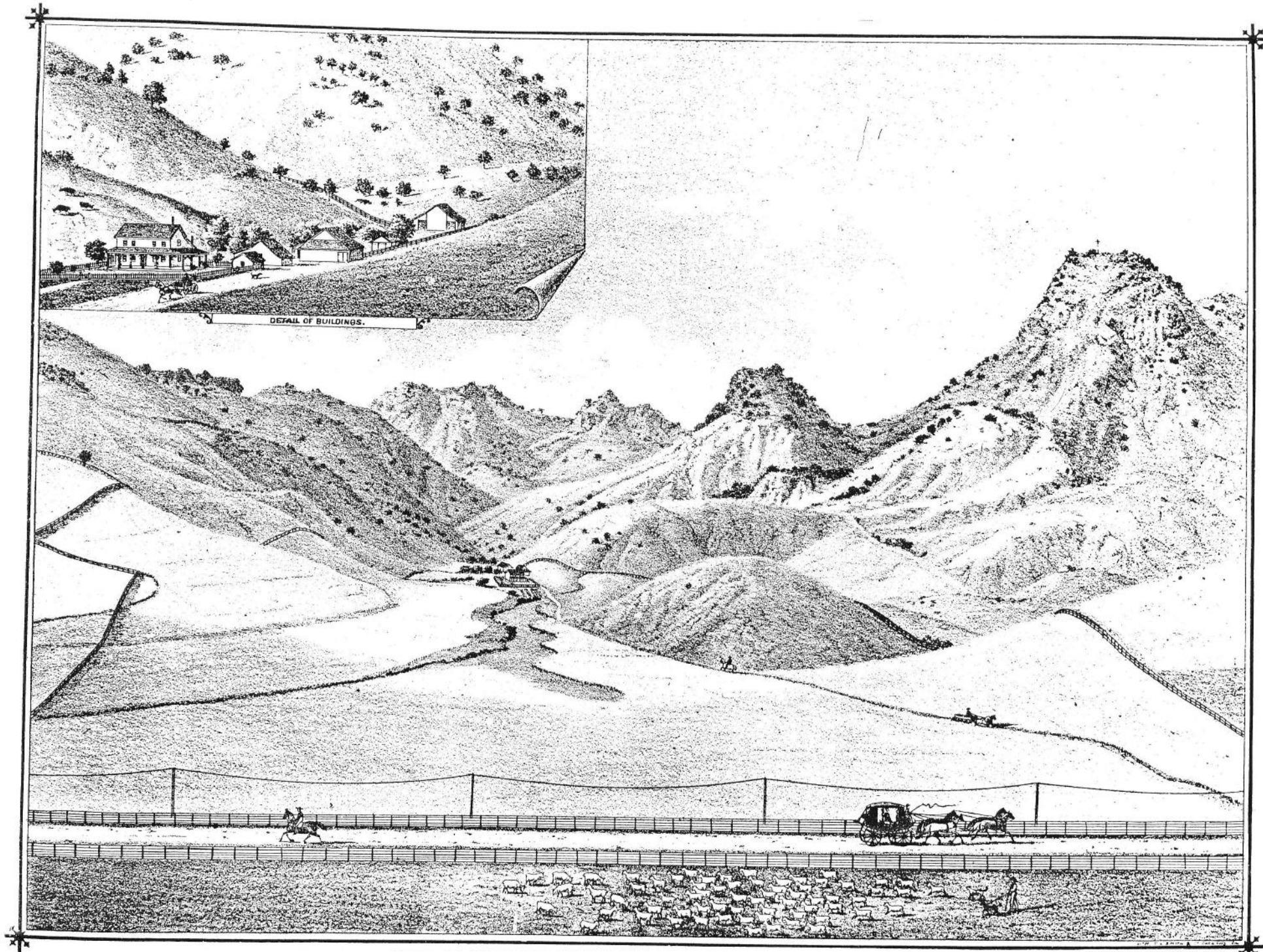
Not too much can be deduced about the interior design. Above the door to the courtroom and on a few other doors there are hood moulds of the same design as those over the windows. It is logical to suppose that this motif was carried throughout the building. The ceilings are quite high except for those in the basement which is uncomfortably low, due to the fact that it was probably not intended for use and was dug out in the early twenties to create more office and storage space.



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PROGRAM
ELEVENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND SOUTHERN OREGON
Yuba City and Marysville, California
October 12, 13, 14, 1962
Headquarters: Marysville Hotel

Reservations and Registration Chairmen: Earl Ramey & Randolph Schnabel

FRIDAY EVENING, October 12th Marysville Hotel, Marysville

2 P.M. to 5 P.M. — Registration

5 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. — Open House and Tea, Mary Aaron Museum
7th and D Streets, Marysville
Hostess Group: Mary Aaron Museum Association
Chairman: Hazel Redwine

SATURDAY, October 13th

10 A.M. — Registration, Marysville Hotel

General Meeting — Council Chambers, City Hall, 6th & C St
Marysville

Greetings: Judge Warren Steele, Yuba County and
Judge-Elect John Hauck, Sutter County
Jerry MacMullen, President, Conference
California Historical Societies

10:30 A.M. — Address: Writing and Recording Local History
Henry Mauldin, County Historian, Lake County

11:30 A.M. — Address: The Beginnings of Yuba City
Earl Brownlee, Retired Newspaper Editor, Yuba
City

12:30 P.M. — Luncheon: Marysville Methodist Church, 8th & D Streets
Chairman: Mrs. Wilbur T. Fawcett, President
of the W.C.C.S. of Marysville Methodist
Church

Fashion Show of Yesteryear
Models: Young ladies of this area
Chairman: Mrs. Glen McDougal
Special Organ Music: Mrs. Arthur Ritter

Address: The Beginnings of Marysville
Earl Ramey, Writer and Historian of Marysville

2:30 P.M. General Methodist Church, Dr. R. Coke Wodd, Presiding
meeting: Executive Secretary of Conference of
California Historical Societies

Reports of Participating Societies

7:00 P.M. Banquet: Marysville Hotel
Presiding — Mrs. E. M. Arritt, President
Sutter County Historical Society
Special Organ Music — Mrs. A. J. McCabe
Vocal Solo

7:00 P.M. Banquet (continued)

Address: John Sutter Settlement of this Area –
Hock Farm
Mrs. Francis Laney, Past President
Sutter County Historical Society

SUNDAY MORNING, October 14th

9:30 A.M. – Caravan Tour of local historical spots and old homes
ending with refreshments served at last home visited.
Refreshments served by Native Daughters of Golden West.

Tour begins at Marysville Hotel
Chairman: Mrs. Francis Laney

* Display tables for printed materials will be provided in
the lobby of the hotel.

* Resource People:
Mr. Thomas Gianella
Mrs. Ruth Herman