

A little history - SCM's building

During the devastating 1906 earthquake, Santa Rosa was hard hit, and afterwards the need to rebuild downtown was urgent. Local hop dealer, C.C. Donovan, wrote to James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect of Federal Buildings, asking him to give priority to the construction of the new Post Office slated for Santa Rosa. Taylor designed a building that was an example of Classic Federal Architecture in California, a design style greatly influenced by the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Construction of the new Post Office began in 1908. Local firms were hired to complete the majority of interior and exterior work. Henry Kroncke of the Santa Rosa Planing Mills did the interior woodwork. J. D. Mailer Hardware installed the building's plumbing. Stone contractor, George Reilly, was responsible for the Bedford stone columns and marble terrazzo floors. On March 9, 1910, Post Master H. L. Tripp and his postal staff moved into the newly completed Santa Rosa Post Office.

Points of interest:

- The area behind the front desk was a **post office service window**. You can stand in the depressions in the marble made by the thousands upon thousands of people standing in that spot over the years.
- Most of the lobby area was taken up by **post office boxes and service windows**.
- What is now the main gallery of the museum was the **main sorting area** of the old post office.
- Down the hallway on the west side of the lobby is a small gallery that was once the **office of the Assistant Postmaster** and the Deputy Superintendent of Mails.
- What is now the kitchen of the Museum was the **Postmaster's private office**.
- There is a small bathroom off the kitchen area that was the postmaster's private bathroom. In 1950, the postmaster committed **suicide** in that bathroom by shooting himself. His name was McBride Smith and he only had one arm at the time of his death.
- The door upstairs on the west side of the building that is more six feet off the ground with no apparent way to reach it once provided access to a **hidden viewing corridors** that north to south along either end of the museum, built to secretly keep an eye on workers. The corridors were joined by a catwalk that spanned the east west length of the building. The catwalk and viewing corridors now form part of the museum's attic.

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- There are four **vaults** in the building. The largest is in the east gallery and contains large safes inside the vault.
- There have been **reports of ghost sightings** and some strange occurrences in the old post office. The stories of these incidents have revolved around the postmaster who committed suicide in the building in 1950, and three nooses in the museum's collection that were used in a lynching in Santa Rosa in 1920. According to some investigators of the supernatural, objects too can be haunted.
- The mezzanine floor of the museum was only added when the building was restored in the 1980s. The upstairs sections on the east and west sides of the building are original. They were **IRS offices** on the west side, and the **postal carriers' showers** and swing room on the east side.
- The building was nearly demolished in the 1979 to make room for the mall. It was saved from that fate by being moved 750 feet from 5th and A Streets, to 7th and B. The move was supposed to take 8 days, but ended up requiring 79 days.