

HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

In the Hoosegow



Creston Jail, seen here c1887. Small wonder that the term "pokey" was common slang for lockup!

Grand Jury Report

March Term, 1871

Originally published March 11, 1871 in The Standard

We, the Grand Jury of the County of San Luis Obispo, convened at the March Term of the County Court, beg leave to make the following report:

We have been in session for two days, and have examined into six cases, that have come before us. Found four true bills for grand larceny and two for altering marks and brands.

We have examined the County Jail, and find it not properly ventilated, and the locks of an inferior quality. We therefore request the Honorable Board of Supervisors to take immediate steps towards remedying these defects.

Having completed the business for which we have been empaneled, we respectfully ask to be dismissed.

S.P. McDougall, Foreman

{ed. note: A new county jail was opened in 1873.}



San Luis Obispo County's 1861 jail stood on the corner of Santa Rosa and Palm

Jail Break Averted

Prisoners Again Try to Get Out of the County Jail

Originally published January 18, 1918 in the daily San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune

Last evening at lock up time in county jail Sheriff Taylor and Under Sheriff Pond made their usual rounds of the interior of the jail, and in the toilet leading from the bull pen they noticed some papers that had been tacked up on the wall just above the 4-inch water pipe, a distance of probably six feet from the floor. The officials tore down the paper and picture that adorned the wall and behind it found that the bricks had been removed from the wall, leaving but one layer of brick, which could easily be kicked out when the proper time came for the getaway. The hole in the wall was large enough for any of the prisoners to have gone through it after the final layer of brick had been shoved out.

It is the opinion of Sheriff Taylor that the prisoners connected with the plot intended to await until some time on Sunday when everything was quiet, and then complete the work of opening the avenue of escape.

This is just another showing of what a weak place the county has for housing its prisoners, and yet if a prisoner does manage to bore through the walls or remove the bricks, which a mere boy could accomplish, the sheriff gets the blame whenever there is an escape. Until a new jail is built the sheriff will not be able to keep his prisoners in if they take a notion to get out. There is not a county jail on the coast that is as flimsy as that of San Luis Obispo County.

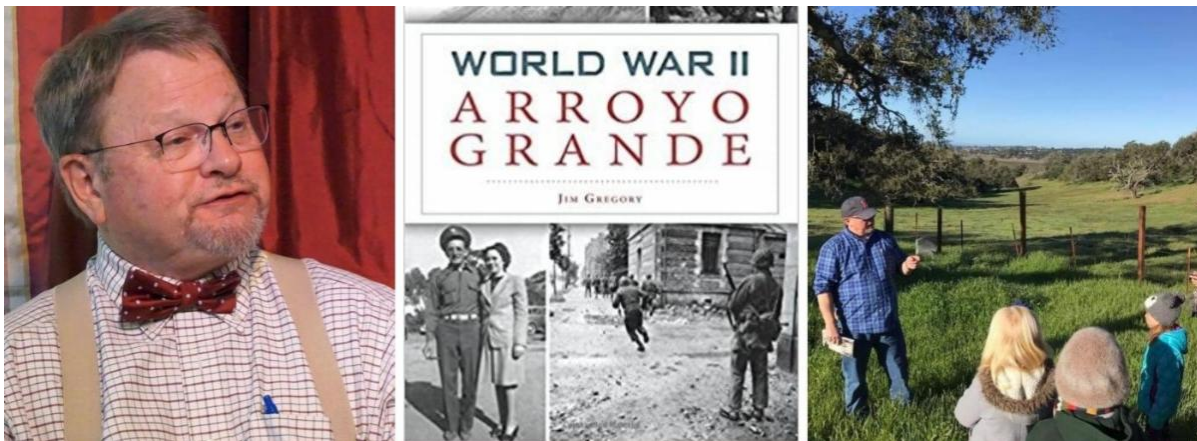
The men implicated in the attempt to break jail will be found out after the sheriff finishes his investigation.





The old Paso Robles Jail, located next to the railroad tracks, would have advertisements painted on its side.

{ed. note: Attempting to escape from prison is not punishable in Germany, as the law considers 'freedom' to be a basic human instinct. However, a prisoner who damages property, murders, or assaults someone while escaping will be guilty of those crimes.}



Arroyo Grande's Place in American History

In 1869, Arroyo Grande consisted of one school, one store and one smithy. As late as 1940, the town's population was only 1080. But every American town, including Arroyo Grande, has ties to the great themes of American history.

Author, teacher, and historian extraordinaire Jim Gregory will be teaching a six-week course through Cuesta College - planned for in-person at Arroyo Grande High School - on Thursday evenings from March 3 through April 7.

[Click here to learn more or to register.](#)

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Sun., Feb. 20th, 2-3:30 p.m. SLO Historic Walk: The Mission, Chumash, and Gold-Rush Renegades. Come on an easy, guided stroll past the Mission courtyard, three adobes, the old stagecoach stop, and other landmarks to hear stories of the early days of San Luis Obispo. Meet under the clock at the corner of Monterey and Osos Sts. No reservations, free. Masks required if not vaccinated. Rain cancels. Leader: Joe Morris, 805-549-0355.

Thomas Kessler
Executive Director



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