Historic 1910
Santa Rosa Post Office and Federal Building
Self-Guided Tour

425 Seventh Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95401
www.museumsc.org | (707) 579-1500

Changing Times
In 1967, after postal services moved to the new Santa Rosa Main Post Office on 2nd Street (1965), the building was sold to the County of Sonoma and was used as a data processing center for the school district. Following a major earthquake in 1969, the building found itself on the list of structures to be demolished as a part of the Santa Rosa Urban Renewal Agency’s plan for a regional shopping center.

National Register of Historic Places
In April 1974, Santa Rosa architect, Dan Peterson, nominated the Old Post Office to the National Register of Historic Places, citing the integrity of the structure, its renowned architect, and stating that it "represented the pride the community had for its high quality craftsmanship by local people." On May 2, 1974, California State officials recommended the Old Post Office be placed in the National Register of Historic Places, saving it from demolition.

Museum on the Move
In 1979, a team led by Dan Peterson took on the impossible task of rolling the 1,700-ton building two blocks, from 5th to 7th Street, adopting the slogan, "They said it couldn't be done!" By raising the structure and using a bed of rails and a network of pulleys and cables, the building moved an average of 36 feet per day. 800 feet and 75 days later, the Old Post Office was successfully relocated to its new home on Seventh Street. After a remodel and expansion, the Sonoma County Museum officially opened its doors on January 12, 1985.

About
Located in Downtown Santa Rosa, the Museum of Sonoma County welcomes visitors to experience regional history and contemporary art. The Seventh Street campus includes two buildings, multiple galleries, and a sculpture garden. With multiple changing exhibitions per year, there is always something new to experience at the Museum!

Hours
Tuesday-Sunday
11:00-5:00pm
Closed Mondays
Please visit website for holiday hours

Admission
$10 General
$7 Seniors, Students, and Disabled
Members Free
Children 12 & Under Free

This self-guided tour is presented in celebration of the 110th anniversary of the Santa Rosa Post Office and Federal Building. Information provided by "Santa Rosa’s Old Post Office and Federal Building” by Dan Peterson.

1906 1910

James Knox Taylor: The National Architect
The Santa Rosa Post Office and Federal Building was designed by James Knox Taylor, Supervising Architect for the US Treasury Department. Taylor was known as “The National Architect,” due to his efforts to improve Federal buildings across the country with designs that were compatible with the building’s surrounding environment, rather than imposing a grand Federal-scale design.

From Design to Reality (1906-1910)
Congress introduced a bill to construct the Post Office on March 9, 1906 and eventually passed the bill on June 28, 1906, following the devastating 1906 earthquake that hit Santa Rosa (April 18). The Post Office became part of the Santa Rosa rebuilding effort and was the city’s first federal building. Constructed by the local Hoyt Bros. contracting firm of Santa Rosa, the building is a great example of Roman Renaissance Revival, with Spanish terra cotta tile roofing, a style that was popular in California at the time. The cost, when completed, was approximately $60,000, or about 31 cents per cubic foot.

The Old Post Office
Postal employees, including Postmaster H.L. Tripp, moved into their new post office on March 9, 1910. The actual move took place at night, after the distribution of the evening mail, as to not disrupt postal delivery. Tripp and about a dozen postal carriers served the city, which at the time had a population of less than 10,000. The postal workers were given use of the first floor, with the Registry Department to the right, and the Internal Revenue Offices upstairs to the left.
Santa Rosa Post Office and Federal Building

Main Floor

1. **Portico**
The front of the building features granite steps, leading up to the terrazzo floor. The four Indiana Bedford Limestone columns are topped with a composite style cap. The pendant light fixture and the iron light fixtures flanking the building were made to operate on both gas and electricity.

2. **Lobby**
The first floor was used by the postal workers. The public lobby extended into the gift shop. The floors are terrazzo with marble dividers and borders. In the doorways between the lobby and main gallery area (the workroom), there were the counters. Can you see/feel the depression in the floor in the middle doorway, where customers would frequently stand?

3. **Workroom**
The workroom occupied the center portion of the first floor and was two-stories high (same as the lobby) as the mezzanine was not added until the 1980s remodel.

4. **Assistant Postmaster and Superintendent of Mail’s Private Office**

5. **Postmaster’s Private Office and Toilet Room**
The Postmaster’s office (now a kitchen), featured a private toilet room, vault, and a ladder to access the secret viewing corridor in the attic (see 9 for more). No public access.

6. **Money Order and Registry Department**
See label near vault for more information.

7. **Toilet Room**
All of the original toilet rooms have terrazzo floors and marble wainscoting.

Second Floor

8. **Staircase**
The main stair is an open-well boxed stringer with a “U” shaped plan. The newel post, railing, and turned baluster members are oak, stained and varnished. The bottom treads are curved in a bullnose fashion. The office at the top of the stairs was added in 1927.

9. **Secret Viewing Corridors and Attic**
At the top of the stairs is a door to the boardwalk and the secret viewing corridors in the attic. A series of shafts and ladders allowed the Postmaster or Postal Inspector to perform routine inspections without being seen. See label at top of staircase for more information. The attic also features a steep staircase to the roof of the building, allowing access to the flagpole that was installed on the ridge. No public access.

10. **Internal Revenue Service Offices**
The west offices were for the Deputy Collector of the IRS. Along the west wall was a toilet room. From outside, you can see a small window between the two larger windows (image below). This is where the toilet room was. It was covered to allow for more wall space. See label near vault for more information.

11. **Mezzanine**
The mezzanine, back staircase, and elevator were added in the 1980s, when the building was renovated for the museum. When facing the elevator, you’ll notice the top of the large window to the right, that extends from the first floor. The symmetrical window on the left is missing. This window was covered in the early 2000s. The wall and metal supports can be seen from outside.

12. **Store Room**
Storage area. The entire east side of the second floor is now office space for museum staff (No public access).

13. **Swing Room**
Lounge area for postal workers, connected by a staircase from the downstairs workroom. This area was also visible from the secret viewing corridors.

14. **Toilet Room with Showers**
Postal workers enjoyed instant hot water in the lavatories and showers, thanks to the hot water heating apparatus, powered by an automatic oil burning plant.

We hope you enjoyed the tour! Questions? Visitor Services is happy to help.