

# School's architect had statewide fame

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**W**HEN WATSONVILLE architect William H. Weeks began his career, he couldn't have envisioned the monuments he would leave behind throughout the state of California.

From the late 1800s to the 1930s, the prolific architect took on jobs large and small — from designing the two-room Carlton School in the Pajaro Valley to high schools (including Santa Cruz High), courthouses, hotels and other major structures in large cities.

Weeks built Carlton School in 1908 and, still structurally sound, it remains in use today as a private residence.

In 1985 Watsonville historian Betty Lewis wrote his biography, "W.H. Weeks, Architect."

The book is an eye-opener for those unfamiliar with Weeks and his work.

Born on Prince Edward Island in 1864, he later moved with his family to Wichita, Kans., then to Tacoma, Wash. After his marriage, he moved to Oakland and began his flourishing career.

A life-long member of the Christian Church, he was asked to design the Christian Church in Watsonville in 1892. A series of fires destroyed, or nearly destroyed that church and subsequent remodelings. Later, Weeks was asked to design a new structure, opened in 1928 and in use today.

In 1894, Weeks had opened an office in Watsonville and, a few years later, moved his family to a home there.

Perhaps the largest of his tasks was building the huge Spreckles sugar factory in Salinas. The smallest may well have been Carlton School.

In Watsonville, along with a number of residences still in use today, Weeks designed the Resetar Hotel, St. Patrick's Church, Watsonville High School, the original Ford's department store and dozens of others.

In Santa Cruz, he designed Branciforte School, the Boardwalk Casino, Santa Cruz High School, Laurel School, the original Leask's



**William H. Weeks**

Carlton School was smaller work

department store, the Palomar Hotel and dozens of other public buildings and residences.

Weeks' work can be found from Taft, in Southern California, to Willows, in Oregon and Nevada.

Weeks lived his last years in Piedmont, and died in 1936.

Grace and delicacy of line typify his work and certainly from the way his buildings survive the years, so does sound construction.

Would Weeks have been pleased to see his Carlton schoolhouse used as a home?

A quote from Lewis' book gives a clue. Weeks shared his philosophy in an article for the magazine "Architect & Engineer" in 1907, the year before he built Carlton School:

"Happy is the man who looks at life through the right window and witnesses the necessity of providing the proper environment for those dearest to him. Then let the home be artistic and comfortable and finished in keeping with the means at your disposal. Provide a home for your family that will be in keeping with the best attributes of your nature, a home that will not only be a credit and pleasure to you but also to those depending on you."

John and Dixie Keith have reflected this sentiment about their Weeks-designed schoolhouse-home for the past 25 years.