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His Visions, Now Our History

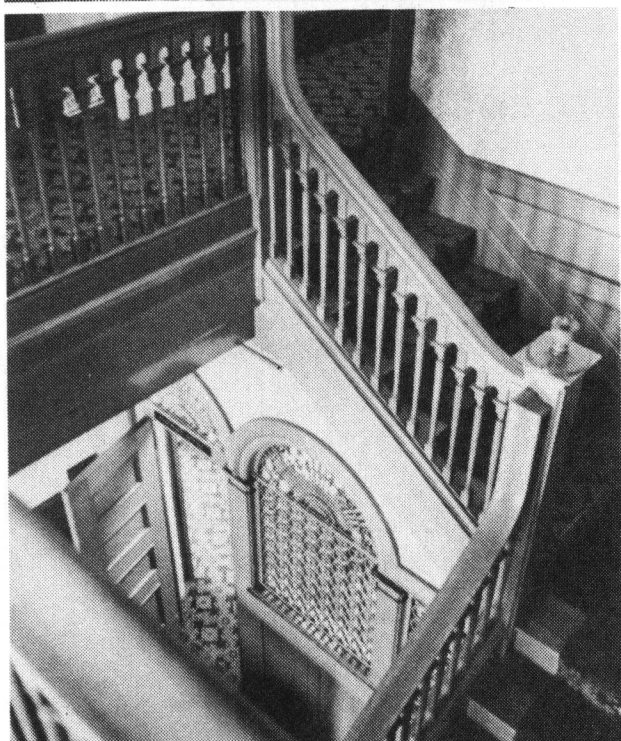


Local Architect— William Henry Weeks

by Betty Lewis
and Ron Lang



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF BETTY LEWIS



Photography/Diane Varni

What does the stately Tuttle mansion of Watsonville have in common with such diverse structures in Santa Cruz and Watsonville as St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Santa Cruz High School, the Watsonville bandstand, the Palomar Hotel, Branciforte Elementary School, and Branciforte Plaza? The answer is W.H. Weeks, architect.

William Henry Weeks designed everything from barns and bridges (he designed

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ltor®”

and Feeding

by Donald C. Burklo

William Henry Weeks

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a wooden footbridge over the Pajaro River) to impressive homes and public buildings.

Among his accomplishments were over 1200 schools, 50 churches, 50 banks, and at one time, all of the Carnegie libraries in central California.

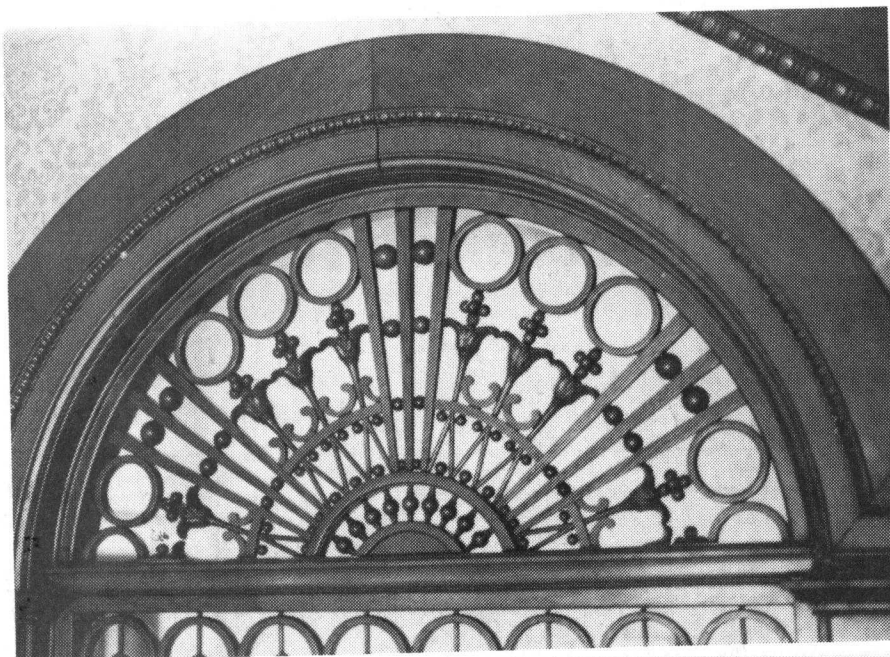
Fortunately for Morris B. Tuttle, an owner of 300 acres of apples and hops just to the east of Watsonville, architect Weeks had settled in Watsonville and began his career only a few years earlier (in 1892) when Tuttle decided to engage Weeks to draw the plans for his new home in 1898. For, by the turn of the century and beyond into the mid '30's Weeks was busy. The *Evening Pajaronian* observed,

"Weeks has the record—The Watsonville architect is a leader in his profession. Architect W.H. Weeks of this city now enjoys the enviable honor of holding the record for libraries and banks constructed over all the other architects in the State. Mr. Weeks is a man who plans for big things, makes good and then climbs higher until today he stands at the apex of his profession in the State."—*Evening Pajaronian*, May 13, 1908.

The home was completed in the winter of 1900. As the *Pajaronian* reported on January 18, 1900, "All branches of work in connection with construction and furnishing of M.B. Tuttle's handsome new home on Lake Avenue have been completed, and Mr. Tuttle and family are now occupying it. They have a home in which they can take pardonable pride, and which is one of the most finished and complete residences in this county or near-by districts..."

The home sported a rounded porch with stone pedestals and strange gargoyles; the circular tower, balcony, and many ornamentations around the plate glass

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windows. As one entered the house past the mahogany door and into the large entry hall, the beautiful inlaid oak floor caught the attention. To the right was the parlor whose walls were finished in rare crotch mahogany. The mantle over the fireplace was of special design by architect Weeks and the inlaid floor boasted of oak and rosewood.

Other rooms on the lower floor consisted of a bedroom, living room, library, lavatory, kitchen, servants room, pantry and porch. In the kitchen were speaking tubes which connected with the upper floor and in the dining room one could summon the servants by pushing the electric bell. Up on the second floor were six bedrooms finished in white cedar, pine and birdseye maple. There was also a lavatory, bathroom, plus medicine and linen closets.

"The attic has been floored over and is being used as one large room. It is a playroom for the children on unpleasant



days and a billiard table with complete equipment shows that the head of the family finds it a place for recreation . . ."

—the Pajaronian, Jan. 18, 1900

And how about the head of the family, the man who had this beautiful home built for his family? Where he could entertain his business associates and friends? Morris Burns Tuttle was born in Iowa in 1858 one of nine children born to Owen and Mary Burns Tuttle. The family came to the Pajaro Valley in 1872 by train just one year after the Southern Pacific had laid track from Gilroy into Pajaro across the river. A brother of Owen, Daniel Tuttle, met his relatives at the station and they all bundled into a hay wagon and made their way to Daniel's ranch out in the Beach Road district near the Pajaro River. Soon afterward, Owen purchased land out on East Lake Avenue and moved his family into a new home.

Morris, along with his brothers and sisters, attended local schools and was to become very knowledgeable on farming and horticulture. In 1878, at the age of 20, he went over to Hollister where he managed a farm owned by his father—two years later he married a Hollister girl by the name of Mary Ingles. The young couple moved back to Watsonville several years later and lived in a small home on East Lake Avenue, which was later moved to 21 Carr Street.

Morris and Mary Tuttle were the parents of Warren, Lee, Owen, Mabel, Gladys, and Adele. Mary Ingles Tuttle died in 1926; Morris Tuttle died in 1937 and the last of their children, Gladys Tuttle McSherry, died last year. At Tuttle's death the local paper noted:

"Morris Tuttle grew up here, watching the progress and development of a thriving community. He raised hops in the early days and was one of the first orchardists here. Mr. Tuttle also was for many years director of the old Bank of Watsonville . . ."

—Register-Pajaronian, Sept. 30, 1937

His son, Warren Tuttle, inherited the house and, in 1939, hired architect Ralph Wyckoff to draw plans for the remodeling of the interior of the structure making it into four "modern" apartments with a kitchen and garage for each tenant. Prior to this the house had been used by Dr. A. Ray Lawn, local chiropractor and diet specialist as a "Health Home."

The Tuttle house was to change hands several times after going out of the hands of the Tuttle family and, in 1974, it was purchased by the present owners, Oliver Realty and Oliver and Campos Builders with the interior being remodeled into office suites.

SQUARE NAIL ANTIQUES

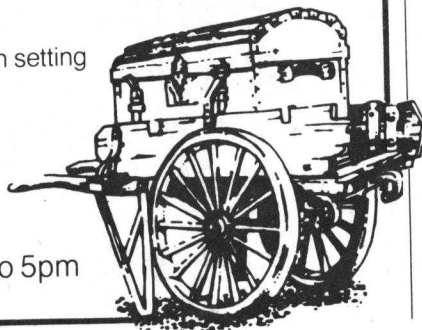
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Weeks, who went on to open offices in Palo Alto, Oakland, San Jose, and San Francisco, enriched the landscape of California with his architectural achievements.

He was honored in the May Issue of the *Architect & Engineer*, 1915, as the magazine was devoted almost entirely to his works and included numerous pictures. The same magazine, in 1922, gave the following report — "*Architect W.H. Weeks Busy—New work in the office of Architect William H. Weeks, 369 Pine Street, San Francisco, includes completion of working drawings for an addition to the Orland High School; addition to the First National Bank building, Exeter; shop building for the Willows High School; two-story brick high school building at Turlock; a \$50,000 addition to the Los Altos Grammar school; a two-story reinforced concrete garage at Gilroy; auditorium for the Fruitvale Christian church and an addition to the Grace Methodist Episcopal church at Palo Alto*"—the last two buildings were in association with Robert H. Orr.

In 1929, he won an award for his design of the Christian Church in Watsonville in the annual church building competition conducted by the *Christian Herald*—fifty churches throughout the United States and two foreign countries were entered. He also received an honorable mention for the First Christian Church of Oakland. Weeks died on April 19, 1936 at his home in Piedmont where he and his wife lived in a very lovely and spacious home he designed in 1924. His life can best be summed up by the following from the *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, 1937.

"Mr. Weeks enjoyed the profound respect of his associates in architecture, and his reputation in professional circles was widely extended. His gifts, however, were also appreciated by the public at large, as the general popularity of his work showed. . . . In the termination of his distinguished career, California architecture suffered a severe loss and the State at large was deprived of one of its most useful citizens. His work reflected high credit not only upon himself but upon the communities he helped to build, and has become an enduring part of the life of the Commonwealth."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Betty Lewis is the author of Watsonville, Memories That Linger. She is currently working on a biography of William H. Weeks.