

William Weeks

He left his imprint on Watsonville

"There has been a marked building boom on E. Fourth (Lake) St. this year. The cutting up of the Waters nursery tract and erection of cottages thereon has stimulated the march of improvement on that street. Chas. Khulitz's handsome two-story residence on the corner of Fourth and Carr Streets is almost finished. Joe Albright's attractive and modern designed home on the opposite side of Fourth Street is near completion. E.F. Wyckoff's roomy and substantially built home on the nursery tract is finished, and Nic Burten's home is well underway. On Third (Beach) Street, the Watters cottage is approaching completion. All of these buildings are out of the beaten track of local architecture and are well made and intended for homes. W. H. Weeks is the architect of most of them."

The Pajaronian, Oct. 10, 1894

Perhaps when history sorts everything out, the single individual who had the greatest impact on the city of Watsonville, it will be found, was not a politician, not a farmer, nor businessman nor investor, but an architect.

At least, from the standpoint of the city's physical appearance, the choice overwhelmingly would have to go to William

Betty Lewis of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association has been researching the life and times of William Weeks for the past three years, and owns a home designed by the early day architect. She prepared the material in this article which she wrote in collaboration with Ward Bushee, managing editor of this newspaper.

Weeks, a newcomer who at the turn of the century designed virtually every residential, business and public structure of any consequence in Watsonville.

You cannot drive down a major street today without finding his stamp. Among his credits are the Appleton Hotel, St. Patrick's Church, Masonic Temple, Porter Building, Lettunich Building. More important, and lasting perhaps, are the homes he designed which bear his own architectural identity — an odd blend of late Victorian, Moorish, Queen Ann and Gothic. His homes today have become collector's items.

William Henry Weeks, a native of Prince Edward Island, who rose to prominence at a period when American architects were still borrowing freely from their European

counterparts, was lured to Watsonville from Oakland by his affiliation with the Christian Church. He was hired by local church members to design a church in 1892 for a site at Main St. and Fourth (Lake). He came here to oversee construction. Just before the church was to be dedicated, it burned. It was rebuilt using the same Weeks' plans and then, on July 4, 1902, burned again, perhaps helped by the fact that the fire department was out of town competing in hose races so popular in those days. (The Christian church continued to be jinxed by fire. The new church built in 1903-04, this time at Alexander and East Lake, with plans drawn by Weeks, burned in 1927. Weeks again was architect when the present church was built — at a cost of \$95,000 including lot).

Weeks' first contacts through the church project brought him to Watsonville. The architect opened an office in the Peck Block in 1894 about the same time the Pajaronian was reporting that he had been hired to design a high school on East Beach, at the site the present high school occupies. (It was finished in 1895 at a cost of \$25,000; six years IT burned to the ground).

The earliest house known to have been designed by Weeks was built in 1894, what was called a "charming cottage" for Julius Lee, a local attorney. Reported the local paper: "Up to date in every way and entirely new to this section in its architectural design. The foundation is a solid structure and far superior to wood or brick." Two molded plaster figures of women adorned either side of the front door.

By 1895, Weeks had a thriving business, having designed the Cooper building at Main and West Beach Sts. as well as many homes for prominent citizens of the day. "There has been a distinct advance on architectural lines in Watsonville during the last two years, and it is a pleasing change," the Pajaronian reported in the Spring of 1895. "The credit for this improvement is largely due to architect W. H. Weeks. His plans are up to the times."

Charged by his success, Weeks branched out. He won, in 1896, a competition for the design of new buildings the state planned to erect at Agnew Insane Asylum. The next year, the prolific architect opened an office in Salinas, which he then visited two days a week. That year, too, saw construction of the Alexander and Mundhenk buildings, as well as the Charles Palmtag home at Front and Rodriguez St., later moved to 316 East Beach St. Meanwhile, Weeks moved his office to the second floor of the Stoesser building across from the city plaza.

Early records show that Weeks first bought property on Jefferson St., in 1896, paying \$10 in gold coin for a lot. Two years later, he bought a house at 17 Jefferson, a structure that still stands. This property was part of the Waters subdivision which



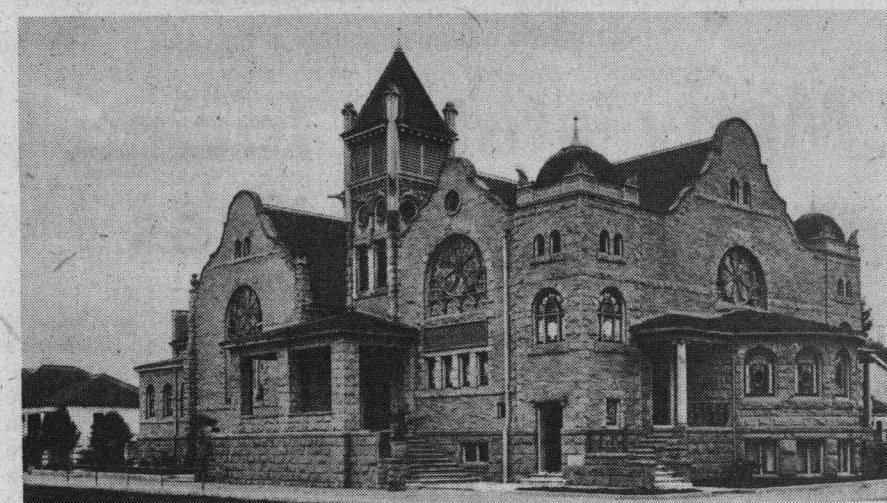
Peculiar style of Weeks is evident in design of Charles Palmtag home, built in 1897 at Front and Rodriguez and later moved to East Beach St.

Early-day homes designed by Weeks

Among the homes designed by architect Weeks:

1894-1899

- Charles Kuhlitz, two story, Lake and Carr
- Joe Albright, Lake Ave.
- E. F. Wyckoff, Waters tract
- Nic Burten, Waters tract
- Watters cottage, East Beach St.
- Julius Lee, attorney
- County supervisor Jim Linscott, E. Beach and Alexander.
- Owen Tuttle, 100 E. Beach
- Mintie White, 104 E. Beach, teacher
- George Seitz, E. Beach (across from high school)
- James Ingham, 517 Main St. (remodel)
- H. H. Cowles, Green Valley Road
- Mateo and M. N. Lettunich, Maple Ave.
- Charles Palmtag, Front and Rodriguez (later moved to 316 East Beach.
- Charles Rodgers, Lake Ave.
- Mr. Ceschi, Sudden St. (2 cottages)
- James Redman, Beach Road near Lee
- R. A. Rodgers, Pajaro
- Andrew Beck, 41 Jefferson
- Antone Faustino, Maple Ave.
- Annie Nugen, East Lake
- A. N. Judd, East Lake and Lincoln



Weeks designed several Christian churches here during his career; this one, built in 1903 at East Lake and Alexander, shows elaborate, mixed style of Weeks; it burned in 1927.

He was busy elsewhere, too

Among the works in other parts of Calif. —First National Bank, Palo Alto



William Weeks, photographed in his mature years at his ranch in Aromas, purchased after he left here.



Home of Mateo Lettunich, 110 Maple, built in 1895.

was bounded by East Lake, Sudden, Pajaro and Lincoln.

As his reputation spread throughout northern California, Weeks further expanded his activities, opening an office in San Francisco in 1905, two years before the earthquake and fire. When the quake hit, on April 18, 1906, Weeks was asleep in a hotel in San Francisco. The building was heavily damaged and Weeks narrowly escaped injury and death.

Although much is known of his works, little is known today about the personality and style of the man. People who remember him say he was intelligent, religious and very hard working. Six feet tall, with blue eyes that revealed a sense of humor, he was a conservative dresser. He loved to read and enjoyed riding his bicycle, but found little time for either. And he must have had a little ham in him, for he rode a decorated bike in the 1899 Fourth of July parade. He took second place.

After his birth in Canada, Weeks' family moved to Denver where the architect spent his boyhood. Upon his graduation in architectural design from Brinker Institute, he became a draftsman. Several years later, while living in Wichita, Kans. where he designed buildings, he became acquainted with his next door neighbor, a man named Haymaker. The friend introduced Weeks to his sister, Maggie, of Charlestown, Ind., an event that led to the altar, in 1891. The newlyweds came West, first to Tacoma, Wash., then to Oakland, and finally, to Watsonville.

Maggie and William Weeks had nine children, five of whom — three boys and two girls — lived to maturity. The three sons, Harold, Foster and Arthur, are dead, but the two girls, Alice and Margaret, live today in the San Francisco area. Weeks had a brother, Hammond, who lived here. He died in Oakland in 1950. Too, there were two sisters, Jean and Ida, who married local men, Jean to Elliott Steinhauser, and Ida to a Mr. Boyd and later, John Covell.

Weeks' close relationship with Watsonville came to an end in 1911 when he moved his main office to Palo Alto, leaving his brother Hammond in charge of the local office. It's not known why, but a good guess was he felt the need to be closer to the San Francisco metropolitan area where he did so much of his work, and to look after his projects which extended as far north as Eureka. He subsequently returned to the Oakland area, in 1914, settling in Piedmont. But he still held a fondness for the Pajaro Valley, demonstrated when he purchased a home in Aromas where he brought his family for many summers.

Weeks died in Piedmont in 1936, at the age of 71. The ranch in Aromas was sold by the Weeks' heirs in 1943. But his stamp remains in Watsonville, indelibly.

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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 big things, makes good and then climbs higher until today he stands at the apex of his profession in the state.

The Pajaronian, 1909

- Willets, Rodriguez
- George Martin, East Lake (later moved to Airport Blvd.)
- Morris Tuttle, East Lake
- P. K. Watters, East Beach
- Kelly - Thompson, remodel
- John T. Porter, remodel 1900 - 1911
- J. Grimmer, East Lake
- J. Hopkins Jr., Sudden
- Warren Porter, East Beach
- Dr. R. E. Campbell, Blackburn
- John Johnston, East Beach
- H. F. Blohm, East Beach (moved to White)
- R. H. Pearson, East Beach (museum)
- Charles Buckhart, Jefferson
- J. A. Waugaman, West Beach
- Edward Kelly, 50 Sudden
- Eugene Martinelli, 220 East Beach, moved to Beck St.
- William O'Brien, East Beach
- G. S. P. Cleaveland, Green Valley
- F. S. Austin, 63 Brennan
- M. T. Rowe, San Juan Road
- Peter Storm, Pajaro
- M. Quirk, Kilburn
- Matt McGowan, Fifth St.
- C. F. Langley, E. Third
- Peter Jensen, Jefferson
- Sherman French, Rodriguez
- Grace Barney, Rodriguez

fornia of William Weeks:

- Eureka High School
- Hotel Glen, San Francisco
- Bank of San Leandro
- Hotel Vendome, San Jose
- State Polytechnic School, San Luis Obispo
- Carnegie Library, Santa Cruz 1904
- Masonic Lodge Building, Gilroy
- Hotel Leamington, Oakland
- Durant Hote, Berkeley
- DeAnza Hotel, San Jose

- Presbyterian Church, Monterey
- High school, Santa Rosa
- Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital, Hollister
- Melrose branch library, Oakland
- Santa Barbara High School
- Jim Bardin Hospital, Salinas
- Masonic Temple, Palo Alto
- Christian Church, Santa Cruz 1898
- Hotel Palomar, Santa Cruz 1929
- High school, Santa Cruz 1915
- Casino at Boardwalk, Santa Cruz 1907
- X weask STORE " " 1907

Commercial buildings

Commercial and public buildings designed by William Weeks (partial list):

- Christian Church (1892, 1904, 1928)
- Watsonville High School (1895).
- Cooper Building (1895).
- Alexander Building (1897).
- Mundhenk Building (1897).
- Railroad School (1899).
- Green Valley School (1899).
- Addition to Charles Ford store (1899).
- Footbridge over Pajaro River.
- Moreland Notre Dame Academy (1899 — torn down in 1966).
- Bandstand in city plaza (after 1900).

- San Monte Fruit Co. packing house (after 1900).
- Appleton Hotel (1911).
- Apple Annual Building (1910).
- Carnegie Library (1904).
- St. Patrick's Church (1903).
- Masonic Temple (1913).
- Second High School (1902).
- Porter Building (1903).
- YMCA Building (1912).
- Primary School (1909).
- Lettunich Building (1915).
- Maxim Gas Co. Building — upper Main.
- Roach School (1903).



Former home of A. N. Judd at East Lake and Lincoln was built in 1899 at a cost of \$7,000; it was torn down in 1966 to make way for a gas station.