



Historic Homes

A Downtown Vacaville Walking Tour

Original research and writing by Glenn Ovitt and reprinted courtesy of the Vacaville Museum

TAKE A STROLL BACK IN TIME AND SEE THE HISTORIC HOMES OF VACAVILLE!

Start from the Vacaville Museum, located at 213 Buck Avenue, and enjoy a leisurely walk through the finest of old Vacaville.

213 BUCK AVENUE

Now the site of the Vacaville Museum, this was originally the location of the J.H. Rogers house, built in 1892 by George Sharpe at a cost of \$5,000. It was later sold to the Stevenson family who built the Vacaville Valley Railroad. The house was demolished in 1963, but it was not until 1982 that construction began on the Vacaville Museum, which was completed a year later.

225 BUCK AVENUE

The house known as the Buck Mansion was built by George Sharpe in 1891 for Frank H. Buck and his bride, Annie Stevenson. Buck was one of the valley's most prosperous ranchers and served as president of the Bank of Vacaville in 1906. The Buck family controlled large portions of oil and lumber companies throughout California. Originally, the house was finished with wood. The brick veneer was not added until 1930. Eighty year old Chinese Wisteria lines the original croquet court that is enclosed by gazebos and trellis work.

301 BUCK AVENUE

This is the William Henry Buck house. George Sharpe built it in 1892 for Frank H. Buck's first cousin at a cost of \$5,000. Upon W.H. Buck's death in 1921, the house was sold to Tina Mowers. The old carriage house behind the main house has been converted into apartments.

312 BUCK AVENUE

This shingle-style Craftsman bungalow was built in 1914 for Ed Fisher, cashier for the First National Bank.

306 BUCK AVENUE

George Sharpe built this house for himself in 1896. It was sold in 1907 to W.E. Lawrence, of Schroeder and Lawrence Hardware. In 1914, it was sold again to George Akerly, who was the proprietor of Akerly's General Merchandise Store with the popular slogan, "If you can't find it at Akerly's, there's no use looking anywhere else."

300 BUCK AVENUE

Built circa 1905, this next house is the Chubb house. Mr. Chubb was a rancher and wood worker. He is credited for the staircase in San Francisco's famed Palace Hotel (burned in 1906), the woodwork in the W.W. Smith house, and the staircases in many of the homes on Buck Avenue.

ABOUT DOWNTOWN VACAVILLE

- The land that is now Buck Avenue was owned by Luzena Stanley Wilson, an early Vacaville pioneer who settled here in 1851 and operated a successful hotel called the Wilson House. Leonard W. Buck and his son, Frank H. Buck, purchased the 147-acre parcel from Wilson in 1887. Frank divided the land on either side of the road into smaller parcels and sold them as homesites.
- The sidewalks on Buck Avenue were poured in 1893 at a cost of 11 cents per square foot.
- With the annexation of the Buck Western Addition, Kentucky Street, still only a small dirt path, replaced West Street as the western border of the town.
- Most of the larger homes on Buck Avenue cost approximately \$5,000 to build. Many were built by one man, George Sharpe. In addition to these homes, Sharpe also built the Vacaville Union High School (1898-1952), the Vacaville Grammar School (1909-1951), the Presbyterian Church (1891-1963), the Harbison house (1907), and the Carnegie Library (1915, now the Vacaville Chamber of Commerce).
- The commercial block across Cernon Street once contained single-family housing and the Presbyterian Church. The entire block was demolished in 1963 for the construction of a Safeway store.
- Kentucky Street was named after the home state of Annie Stevenson, Frank H. Buck's wife.

230 BUCK AVENUE

The Frank B. McKevitt house, built in 1930, replaced an earlier McKevitt house that burned in 1915. McKevitt was a co-founder of Pinkham & McKevitt Fruit Co. and mayor of Vacaville from 1907-1908. His son, Frank Jr., served as a Town Trustee in the early 1910s. His name can be seen on both downtown bridges.

224 BUCK AVENUE

This was once the site of the Pinkham house, built circa 1893. It was sold in 1913 to W.W. Smith then resold in 1930 to Tina Mowers and divided into apartments. After restoration had begun in 1979, a faulty electrical system caused the house to burn down. The present house was constructed in the early 1980s.

218 BUCK AVENUE

This house was built by George Sharpe for Mr. Derby, the ranch manager of the Buck company. It cost \$3,500 to build in 1903. Derby developed the popular Derby Apricot. G.C. Linn, found of G.C. Linn Insurance Agency purchased the house in 1917.

212 BUCK AVENUE

The Hewitt house was built in 1892 by F.M. Gray (who also built Old Town Hall) for Sam Hewitt. Hewitt's uncle was Charles Tiffany, the New York jeweler and Hewitt's son, Trent, was a jeweler on Main Street.

118 BUCK AVENUE

This house was built for H.D. Chandler, a rancher and business man, in 1892. Chandler Lumber Co. operated in Vacaville until it was bought out in 1920. The house was lowered and remodeled in 1924 following a kitchen fire that burned the top section.

100 BUCK AVENUE

This Spanish Colonial Revival house was built in 1922. It belonged to Clement Hartley who directed Hartley Orchard Co., which later merged with the Vacaville Fruit Co. He also managed the Bank of Vacaville from 1917 until his death in 1929.

101 MAIN STREET

Built in 1893, this was Hartley's first home. Notice the hitching post near the street.

107 MAIN STREET

Another Hartley family home, this house belonged to Clement Hartley, Jr. who managed the Vacaville Fruit Co. after his father's death. He later managed the local California Fruit Exchange and served as mayor of Vacaville from 1944-1950.

113 MAIN STREET

This bungalow was built in 1912 by Charlie and Emma Neil on property believed to have been purchased from Thomas Wilson, son of the Gold Rush entrepreneur Luzena Stanley Wilson. Note the use of misshapen brick, known as "clinker" brick. These bricks were typically discarded until Pasadena builders Charles S. and Henry M. Greene popularized their use.

119 MAIN STREET

Mrs. L.M. McKinney built this classic box-style house in 1906. After her death in 1930, Jack and Molly Duncan purchased the house. In the late 1980s, the house was restored, but much of the original moldings, hardware, doors, glass, and hardwood floors remain. During restoration, a horseshoe was found under the front porch, placed there in bygone days as a good luck charm.

125 MAIN STREET

This house was built for Willis Linn Jepson's mother circa 1914. Jepson became the first Ph.D. from Vacaville (1899). He studied botany at the University of California. A charter member of the Sierra Club (1892), he helped found the Save-The-Redwoods League (notice the redwood on the corner) and helped to organize the Department of Forestry at UC Berkeley where he served on the faculty for over 40 years.

124 MAIN STREET

This house was built by the Price family circa 1903 at a cost of \$800. It was occupied by Misses Mamie and Leila Price for many years. A handsome side porch is visible from the Cernon Street side.

118 MAIN STREET

Built in 1897 for James Koford and Irene Moore, the house was purchased by George Gates in 1903. It remained in the Gates family until 1977. The guest house in back was originally a two-story barn.

112 MAIN STREET

This was the site of the Godfrey house, which burned in 1975. The Godfreys owned the Vacaville Theater. The present house was constructed in 1988 and designed by Vacaville architect Brian Johnston.

106 MAIN STREET

The Shaefer house was built in the 1920s for the proprietors of Shaefer's Big Country Store.

100 MAIN STREET

The Christian Science Reading Room was originally built as the Episcopal Church in 1915.

300 WEST STREET

On the present site of the Episcopal Church once stood a turn-of-the-century house owned by Maury Robinson. The property was sold to the Episcopal Church circa 1950 and used as a manse (a house occupied by a minister) until the house burned. The church was built in the 1960s.

113 BUCK AVENUE

The Mundy house was remodeled and enlarged in 1935, but the original structure appears much older (not the chimney at rear). Carroll Mundy was a high school teacher and very active in Future Farmers of America.

119 BUCK AVENUE

Built in 1905, this house was the home of Harry Chandler's sister. It was sold in 1917 to Charles and Amelia Peters for \$4,000.

125 BUCK AVENUE

This is the Charles Fotheringham house, built in the early 1890s. Fotheringham was the bookkeeper for the Buck company. The house later belonged to Frank Steiger, a county engineer who designed the Main and McClellan Street bridges, the city sewer system, and the Old Town Hall. The house was remodeled and enlarged in 1987.

201 BUCK AVENUE

The George Washington Crystal house was built in 1893 by George Sharpe. Crystal operated a dry goods store at Main and Dobbins Streets.



THE BUCK MANSION
225 BUCK AVENUE



THE HITCHING POST
101 MAIN ST

Vacaville Museum



A Center for Solano County History

213 BUCK AVENUE
VACAVILLE, CA 95688
(707) 447-4513

GALLERY HOURS:
WEDNESDAY - SUNDAY FROM 1:00PM TO 4:30PM

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