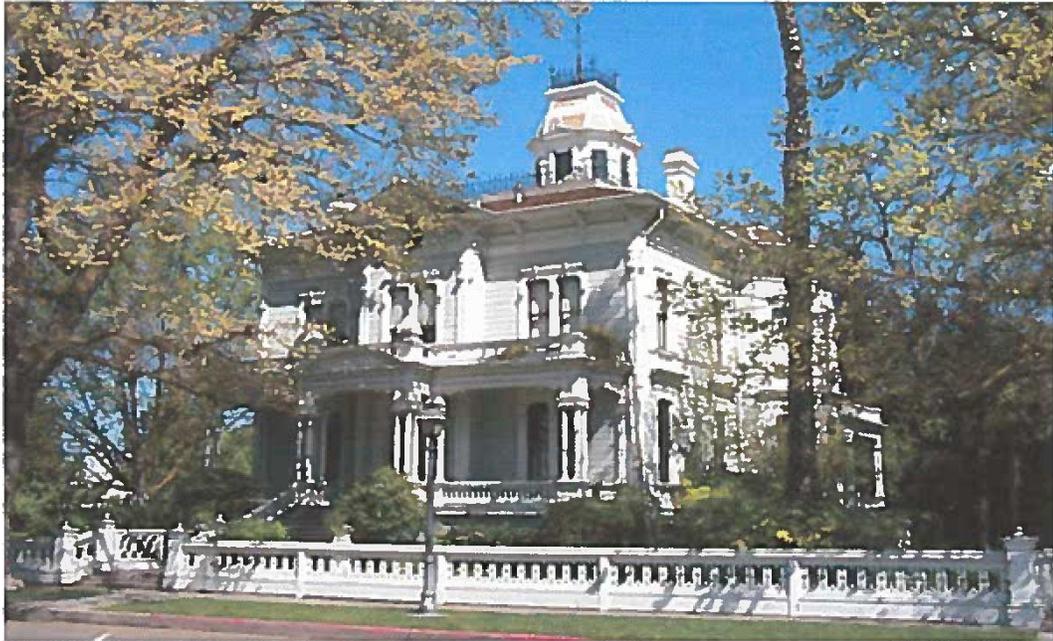


1. McHENRY MANSION

906 15TH St. Street (1883)



Landmark Preservation Commission Resolution: August 21, 1989

Designated by City Council: December 5, 1989

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places: April 4, 1978

Description: This Italianate style mansion is a rectangular, 2-1/2 story building with V-groove rustic siding, a truncated hip roof with six chimneys, and a boxed cornice with brackets going down to the paneled frieze. Rising from the center of the roof is an octagonal cupola which has eight windows with a pediment over the four that are parallel to the house walls. The octagonal roof tapers to a square at the top with an iron crest around the edges, topped by a weathervane. Pronounced moldings and details accentuate the formal balance of the house.

Historic Significance: Built in 1883, by Robert McHenry, the mansion had 23 rooms. Robert McHenry was one of the more notable pioneers who paved the way for Modesto's future development. McHenry was born in Vermont and came to California at the time of the Gold Rush in 1849. After living in Stockton for six months, he moved to Stanislaus County and purchased 2,640 acres of land five miles north of what was later the City of Modesto. This holding was later increased to 4,000 acres and became known as the Bald Eagle Ranch. In 1878, he moved to Modesto and entered the banking business as the cashier of the Modesto Bank. In 1884, Robert McHenry became president of the newly incorporated First National Bank of Modesto.

McHenry built his town house at 906 15th Street in 1883 for a reported cost of \$10,000. The house was entirely hand constructed and became a showplace and source of pride in the small farming community of less than 2,000 residents. Robert McHenry lived in the house with his wife, Mathilda, and son, Oramil, until his death in 1890. Oramil inherited his father's multimillion dollar estate and carried on the tradition of business and cultural leadership in Modesto.

In 1923, the Mansion was divided into apartments and remained so until 1976. In that year, Julio and Aileen Gallo purchased the home from the estate of L.W. Crabtree for the sum of \$150,000 and donated it to the City of Modesto.

Today the Mansion is decorated and furnished with antiques appropriate to the period when Robert and his wife, Matilda, inhabited the Mansion (1883-1896). Two rooms on the second floor, a

bedroom and adjoining sitting room, reflect the period when their son resided in the Mansion (1896-1906). Today, the Mansion is open for tours and is the site of many weddings, receptions, and special events. Architectural Significance: Tall and stately, the Italianate house is easily identified by its pronounced vertical lines. The Italianate style is a California adaptation of stone structures built in seventeenth century Italy. The Mansion is an excellent example of this style, showing how architectural elements are translated from stone into native redwood and Douglas fir.

