

Antioch Sesquicentennial History Walks
By the Antioch Historical Society Museum
May 14, 2022

1. **200 H Street.** The previous **City Hall** built in 1919 was on the southwest corner of this block. Police and fire departments were part of the building. It was torn down after the current **City Hall** was completed in 1981. Remodeled council chambers opened in November 2021.
2. **Parking lot SW corner 3rd and I Streets.** Kitty-corner from the city hall block is a parking lot. Previously there were houses there: the McGuire house on the corner and the DeWitt house next to it. McGuire was one of Antioch's early blacksmiths, and DeWitt was a doctor. The house on the corner at one at one time in the mid 1970s was occupied by the Nadeaus, the owners of the Potatoe Barge Restaurant. It was destroyed by fire in 1986.
3. **NW corner 3rd and I Streets.** The building on the northwest corner of 3rd and I was Antioch's second bowling alley, **Antioch Bowl** . At one time there was a small two or three lane alley on 2nd street, shorter in length, smaller pins and balls than standard. Antioch bowl featured 8 lanes and was open from the late 1930s until the 1980s. The Wood Pile was the alley's very popular lounge. For a number of years Antioch Bowl co-existed with Delta Brunswick Bowl on Delta Fair. Antioch Bowl is now several shops including Indigo Skin Design and Kirby Vacuum Cleaners.

In Antioch's earliest days the site had been a livery stable. It burned in the Great Antioch Fire of 1871. The "**Main Street Livery Stable**" as it was known, built by John Chase, used to provide horse-drawn transportation from the Arlington Hotel on 200 2nd Street to the Southern Pacific Railroad Station out A Street.
4. **The vacant lot on the southwest corner of 2nd and I Streets** once accommodated a hotel, most recently the Town House Hotel that burned in 1998. In the Museum you can see one of the street lights that melted in the blaze. Originally built in 1905 by Joseph Arata,, it was called the Commercial Hotel, then the Antioch Hotel, and finally the Town House Hotel. It was slated to be renovated as part of a proposed Historic District in the 1980s.
5. **The vacant lot on the southwest corner of 1st and I Streets** once held the Tyler Hotel, built from local brick by N.A. Tyler. It was later the El Dorado Hotel. It was purchased and the lower dining room remodeled into the Marchetti Club in 1949, one of Antioch's most popular restaurants in the ensuing years. Next door and facing First Street was the Santa Fe Club with an apartment upstairs. In its early days, old-timers called the Tyler Hotel the Bucket of Blood Saloon; a bordello may have been on the 2nd floor. PG&E offices now occupy part of what was Marchetti's. See photo.
6. **809 W. 1st Street. The Lynn House**, built in 1905, first belonged to descendants of Roswell Butler Hard named Lynn who sold it to the city. It is currently an art gallery and location for art classes and artist space. The city is leasing it to a local artist/art instructor. Previously it was the home of the city-funded Arts and Cultural Foundation. The Lynn House in 2021 was one of several filming locations for Anthony Ferrante's most recent film, "Nix," to be released this summer. Other locations were the Historical Museum, the El Campanil, and Solar Swim and Gym.
7. **815 W 1st Street.** The large red brick house in disrepair and surrounded by chain link fence is **the Hard House**, the home of Antioch's first mayor, Roswell Butler Hard, previously a county supervisor and sheriff. It is one of Antioch's oldest historic structures and was built in 1869 of local brick, one of the most elegant in its time. It was the location of the first meetings of city

government after Antioch's incorporation on February 6, 1872. The city has plans to renovate it and turn it into city staff offices.

8. **100 I Street.** The site is Antioch's **Amtrak Train Stop**, formerly the Santa Fe Station. The original 1902 frame train station burned down in 1979, The concrete structure replacing it was recently removed. Southern Pacific (originally Central Pacific) along Railroad Ave. came to Antioch in 1878, Santa Fe not until 22 years later.
9. **Across H Street. from the train stop** is what used to be Jack Wolfe Hardware. The store had almost everything in it. Earlier it was Carman and Israel Groceries, founded in the 1870s.
10. **Out over the water** is the new-this-year Monica's at the **Riverview**. For many years it was the Riverview Lodge Restaurant, a seafood destination, and before that it was the **Antioch City Wharf**. The entire surface was wood. There was a dock at one time on the river side, where boats could tie up while occupants dined at the restaurant. One year a ship being turned ran into the wharf causing much damage.
11. **The river** you see is the **San Joaquin River**. It drains the southern part of the Central Valley. Antioch is in an especially auspiciously prime location, at the confluence of two long rivers (the other being the Sacramento that drains the northern part of the Central Valley). It is the gateway to a vast inland delta formed by the two rivers with over 1000 miles of waterways. Antioch has a clear view of the visually dominating Mount Diablo. More can be learned about the Delta at Big Break Regional Park in Oakley. Mt. Diablo is the site of Mt. Diablo State Park. The river was basically early Antioch's highway; it was the main source of transportation..
12. **Looking across the river one sees Kimball Island**, named for Antioch's first permanent European-American resident, George Kimball, who landed at the foot of F Street in 1850. While legal issues concerning his land in Antioch were resolved, he and his family lived on Kimball Island, rowing or sailing across. His family grew produce and raised dairy cattle on the island. Others have farmed it over the years, asparagus in particular. The back part of the island at one time was the site of a floating bordello. Some time before 1970, WWII officer's quarters, four in all, had been barged to the island from Mare Island. People rented them from the island's owner. They have all burned or been removed. Today Kimball Island is a restored wetlands.
13. **The north side of 2nd Street between H and I Streets** at one time was the home of several bars: Blu's, the 639 Club, the Alibi for instance, and a pool hall. They and others were popular watering holes for factory workers at the end of a long day - or night if they worked graveyard. The bars would open at 5:00 a.m. for these workers.
14. **H Street north of 2nd Street.** The grassy open area is called **Waldie Plaza**, named for Jerome Waldie, Congressman from Antioch who served from 1966-1974. He was the first member of congress to call for Nixon's impeachment. An underground water fountain has been removed. The Plaza has been the site of city sponsored summer concerts.
15. **Both sides of 1st Street between H and I or G and I** have been tagged as **Antioch's Chinatown** in the 1870s. Most of the homes burned in the Great Fire of 1871. Replacements were burned in 1876 when Antioch tried to run Chinese prostitutes out of town.
16. **101 H Street on Waldie Plaza** is the location of **The Casino Building**. The lot originally was a lumber yard warehouse for the Gallaway and Boobar Lumber Company that later became the Antioch Lumber Company after it moved east to E Street. The building then became the Pavilion roller skating rink in 1906. For a time vaudeville acts and one-reel silent movies were shown at

the rink. In 1911, Ferd Stamm and Ralph Beede built the Casino Theatre for silent movies and vaudeville. In the process an Indian burial ground was discovered. Many years later in 1975 after larger movie theatres were built, the Casino became home to multiple shops. Access to presumed Chinese tunnels was reported to be in the basement. Today the building houses the Chamber of Commerce, apartments upstairs, and a walk-up coffee business. Note: evidence of a second location of an Indian Burial ground was found at Rodger's Point, originally called Smith's Point by European Americans.

17. **NE corner of 2nd and H Streets. The Bank of Antioch** established in 1891 moved into this building in 1923. In 1934 it merged with Bank of America, staying a bank until the bank moved to 4th and G Streets. It has been a hobby store, the Rivertown Arts Center, and an event center.
18. **The parking lot between the bank building and the El Campanil Theatre** was once the site of the **Arlington Hotel** (called the Dickerson hotel when it was first opened in 1890), Antioch's grand hotel with three stories and over 40 rooms. It was torn down in 1939 for a new post office that was never built in this location.
19. **608 2nd Street** was the site of the first **Antioch Ledger Office**. It was established in 1870 and remained in continuous operation - with a variety of Ledger names - until 1990 when it combined with the *Pittsburg Post Dispatch*, becoming the *Ledger/Post Dispatch*. Eventually it was absorbed by the *Contra Costa Times*, until the *Times* merged with other east bay papers to form the Bay Area News Group and became the *East Bay Times*. Print and microfiche copies of the *Ledger* are available at the Antioch Historical Society Museum. For many years it was an afternoon paper and its paper routes provided a popular first job for Antioch's young people.
20. **604 ½ 2nd Street** for many years in the 1970s and 80s was the site of **Mercado's Barber Shop**. Brothers Frank and Bill Mercado cut the hair of many Antioch men. It drew many who would hang out on fall Saturday mornings to discuss the previous night's football game. Thus was born what would later become the Antioch Sports Legends which resides in the Antioch Historical Society Museum. A replica of the barber shop is one of the Legends displays. When Frank died, Bill filled his chair with Frank's daughter Tricia Mercado. Women began to have their hair cut at Mercado's, too. Mercados cut hair there from about 1948 until
21. **NW corner 2nd and G Streets**. Here stands Antioch's magnificent art deco theatre, the **El Campanil Theatre**, which opened on November 1, 1928, to great fanfare, including an automobile parade. The builders of the Casino Theatre, Ferd Stamm and Ralph Beede, also built the El Campanil, at a cost of half a million dollars. The Casino could only handle single reel silent films, but the state of the art new theatre could handle multi-reel films. Within a year, however, Stamm and Beede invested in the equipment to handle talkies. Like the Casino, the theatre presented vaudeville shows, too. Famous performers of the past left behind their signatures and even poetry, and included Sally Rand, Donald O'Connor, Louis Armstrong, Roy Rogers, Al Jolson, and Edger Bergen and Charlie McCarthy. The talkies led to the demise of vaudeville. The Stamms operated the theatre until 2003. It then became the property of the El Campanil Preservation Foundation who restored it and reopened it. (Thank you, Rick Carraher.) In 2018, the theatre's 90th year, the Foundation was awarded the Eclectic Architecture Award by the Art Deco Society of California. The bell at the highest point of the theatre's facade was the school bell from the Antioch Grammar School that was demolished in 1926.
22. **South side of 2nd Street between G and H**. In Antioch's earliest days the block featured in the **Meinken Building**, built in 2005, a saloon with rooms to rent above. Closer to G Street was a doctor's office and a drug store. There was a hall upstairs used for meetings. In the years since numerous businesses have come and gone, including restaurants, bars, gun stores, and stamp

and coin shops. Today the block sports three restaurants (one just opened in late April 2022) and a bakery, part of Antioch's growing dining district.

- 23. SW corner 2nd and G Streets.** The original site of the First National Bank of Antioch, built in 1910. This location, too, has had a succession of occupants. It has been a travel business, a stained glass workshop and craft store, and currently medical supplies.
- 24. NE corner 2nd and G Streets.** A succession of four different hardware stores occupied this building before it became Famous Fashions in about 1948, closing in 1987. Most recently it has housed 2nd hand stores that help veterans in need.
- 25. SE corner 2nd and G Streets** has belonged to the **Antioch Masonic Lodge** since 1923. When it was first built in 1905 as the **Belshaw Building and Theatre**, the three story brick structure replaced a wooden building, The Antioch Cash Store, also owned by Charles Belshaw. The third floor is a theatre that hosted Riverview High School graduations as well as school dances and basketball games. The Masonic Lodge has met in the theatre area for almost 100 years. The ground floor has held various businesses over the years, at one time Geddes Music, and currently the Willow Park Mercantile. It is rumored a speakeasy was in the basement floor during prohibition. The walkers on May 14, 2922, are invited to go inside. Upstairs features photos of early Masonic leaders who were also Antioch's leaders.
- 26. 517 2nd Street.** The **Ledger** moved here in 1882. In the last 50 years the location has held PG&E offices, and for too short a time, a delicious European style bakery/coffee house, and others businesses.
- 27. F Street parking lot south of 2nd Street** A **mural** covering the east wall of what used to be Fontana Stationers was commissioned by the Antioch City Council and the Civic Arts Commission in 1997 to commemorate **Antioch's 125th birthday**. The mural, painted by artist Charlotte Downs-Siska and her daughter, was finished in 1998. It depicts the 4th of July picnic in 1851 when Antioch's name was agreed upon and changed from Smith's Landing. The mural includes William Wiggan Smith with other Antioch residents on the far left, Captain Kimball and his daughter Adelia on the right, sailing ships, coal trains, the Beede Lumber Company, and three endangered species. The picnic was at William Smith's house.
- 28. NW corner of 2nd and F Streets.** Fifty years ago a house still stood here. One historian calls this the bluff on which Antioch founder William Smith built his house and that it is where the naming picnic was in 1851. Another says William Smith's house was behind where the El Campanil is now, and the picnic was held there. According to that historian, this site held the **house of S. B. Joslin**. His Saddle and Harness Shop was downstairs that had been moved from 2nd and G. A photo at the Contra Costa County Historical Society says it was the Pitt house.
- 29. Foot of F Street** The plaque here commemorates the landing in 1850 of a sailing packet of people from Maine led by **Captain George W. Kimball** and his family who became the first permanent residents of Antioch. We will see the house he built later that year. He was a leader in the young city, being its first postmaster, school trustee, notary public and justice of the peace. The old name for F Street used to be Kimball Street. Next to the monument used to be a piece of remaining track from the Empire Railroad that brought coal from the more eastern coal towns (Judsonville, Stewartville, and West Hartley) to the wharves on the river here to be shipped for heating both San Francisco and Sacramento.
- 30. NW corner 2nd and F Streets** In fall of 1974 a restaurant opened in the downstairs of this building called the **Potatoe Barge**. Its construction included ship's knees from barkentines sunk

across the river and stained glass windows from the first Holy Rosary Church. The restaurant was a little bit of Berkeley in Antioch, with poetry nights, open mike nights, and live music plus delicious homemade food. Many who gathered there in its early days are still friends today. Since then a succession of restaurants have occupied the spot, most recently the Solid Rock Cafe.

31. **South side of 2nd Street between F and E Streets** - At one time this site held the yards for the Empire Railroad, storing supplies for building its rails. Fifty years ago the site was occupied by the Sears Roebuck department store. It has since been remodeled into the Nick Rodriguez Community Center which includes a theatre that is the home of the Drama Factory, the Senior Center, and the offices of the Antioch Recreation Department.
32. **340 W 2nd** The iconic green building, built in 1864 was originally the Grange, an association of farmers. **The Antioch Lumber Company** was originally known as Gallaway and Boobar Lumber Company located in what became known as the Casino Building. In 1883, with Henry F. Beede, Sr., as a partner, the company moved into this location, putting their lumber yard across the street. The parking lot to the west was the location of the company horse barn. A large U-shaped dock allowed ocean going vessels to bring logs from Oregon and Washington to be unloaded here. The logs were planed into boards which built many homes and businesses in Antioch and Pittsburg. Many were shipped to San Francisco.
33. **Large dirt lot, 2nd to 3rd Streets, E to C Streets.** As recent as 50 years ago the **Yard** held a large lumber shed that had at times stored between 1½ to 2 million board feet of lumber. Today there is a movement to convert the empty yard into a town square for Antioch, a location for community gatherings, concerts, farmer's markets, and other events.
34. **SE Corner 3rd and F Streets** - now a parking lot for the downtown post office on 4th Street, until 1956 it held the **home Captain George Kimball** built soon after his arrival here in September of 1850.
35. **415 3rd Street.** This house was originally the home of George Kimball's daughter Adelia Kimball Schott, right next door to the home her father had built.
36. **NE Corner of 6th and F Streets** Antioch's first library building was a **Carnegie Library** which opened in 1915, thanks to the efforts of the Antioch Women's Club. Previously the Club hosted a lending library in their building on G Street. They had joined the county library system and purchased the land for this building, winning a grant to build it. It was the first home of the Antioch Historical Society Museum which quickly outgrew it. It is one of only two remaining Carnegies in Contra Costa County.
37. **SE Corner of 6th and F Streets** - The oldest continuously used church building in Antioch first was the home of the **First Congregational Church**, first built in 1869, then torn down and replaced by this building in 1891. It's church bell was the first rung in Antioch and is now owned by the Antioch Historical Museum. In 2021 the church donated all of its records and the bell to the organization. Thomas Gaines, Antioch's first Black resident, was a member as was George Kimball and William Smith. The church school educated the children of Chinese levee workers.
38. **509 G St.** Even though women could not vote in the early 1900's, women have always been able to exert influence. Antioch's **Women's Club** built this meeting place in 1910. They were credited with bringing about Antioch's first water system to individual homes and first sewer system. They worked to gain women's right to vote. A list of other accomplishments by the organization is lengthy.

39. **West side of G Street between 5th and 6th Streets** - This block has been the site of Antioch schools ever since 12-year-old Adelia Kimball became Antioch's first permanent teacher with six students learning in a galley that had been removed from a sailing ship and placed on this site. A sequence of three elementary schools were built here, the third and final being the brick John Muir School closed for earthquake safety. Now the block holds the AUSD Administration Building.
40. **SE corner of 4th and G Streets.** Here was the house of Charles Marsh, son of John Marsh and a Native American woman. Fifty years ago the house still stood, although in dilapidated condition. Charles Marsh spent ten years tracking down his father's killer.
41. **NW corner of 4th and G Streets.** The mural here, **The Telephone Operators Mural**, celebrates Antioch's first regional telephone office in its heyday in the 1940s. The 2nd mural in a downtown series, it too was commissioned by the Antioch City Council and the Antioch Civic Arts Commission. Charlotte Downs-Siska finished it in 1998. Included in the mural are Bob Beswick, Helen Meagher, and Dr. Dozier. Dr. Dozier's offices were in the brick buildings on the north side of 5th Street between F and G.
42. **H Street from 4th to 5th Street.** Four large houses were built here at about the same time. The ones on each end are in the Edwardian style. The one furthest from 4th was built to be a lying in hospital for wayward girls, according to its current owner. The one on the other end is its mirror image. The one next to the lying in hospital is in the Victorian style and was built for the builder's relative. The one 2nd from 4th suffered a fire and has been remodeled in a different style.

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