



Monrovia's First Houses – Still Remaining

Prepared by the Monrovia Legacy Project

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Monrovia's First Houses – Still Remaining

In 1886 – the year Monrovia was ‘born’ - fewer than ten buildings existed here. By the end of 1887, 220 buildings had been built! Of these, at least 66 homes and four commercial buildings remain. Just 10 are protected by landmark status.

Homes built for banker Joseph Sartori (on cover), implement manufacturer J.I. Case, Pacific View Tract developer C.A. Campbell, and other historic figures are among those unprotected.

The attached list details these ‘first houses’ still in existence, giving their address, original owner, cost or tax value, and landmark status. There may be other homes not on the list that are still with us. Some homes were moved and records are not complete about their original location. In addition, not all homes built on spec by the Venderink Improvement Company (29 homes built), LeMars subdivision (20), and Stevenson subdivision (7) have been identified.

This material has been prepared by the Monrovia Legacy Project to help in the preservation of Monrovia's historic heritage.

Note: Unless otherwise noted, each listed structure was built in 1887. House histories on many of these properties will be in the repository available through the Monrovia Public Library being created by the Monrovia Legacy Project.

Sources

- 1) *Monrovia Planet* December 31, 1887 - excerpted by former City Historian Myron Hotchkiss
- 2) 1888 Tax records transcribed by current City Historian Steve Baker
- 3) Monrovia Historic Preservation Group list of landmarked structures

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PRE-1888 BUILDINGS - STILL STANDING

RESIDENCES	Street	Owner	Cost to build (in Planet)	Land-marked?	Listed in Planet Dec. 1887	1888 Tax records improvement value (est. 50% of cost to build)	Notes
211 S	Alta Vista	Venderink Imp. Co.?		No	As a group	\$250	Assessed to W.N. Monroe
227 N	Alta Vista	Mrs. Abbott	\$3,000	No	Yes	\$1,500	
232 N	Alta Vista	P.G. Hull	\$3,500	No	Yes	\$1,500	
406 S	Canyon						Grandview Subdiv. Block 2 15
210 W	Colorado (Orange)	A.H. Johnson	\$1,500	Yes	Yes		
222 W	Colorado (Orange)	Mrs. M.J. Tollbert		No	No	\$800	Built 1886?
226 W	Colorado (Orange)	Annie Bowerman		No	No		
626 W	Colorado (Orange)	C.Z. Culver	\$3,500	Yes	Yes	\$1,800	Owner Mrs. C. Wilson in tax records. Originally at 101 N. Myrtle. Moved to about 116 W. Foothill
122 N	Encinitas	A.L. Brown	\$2,500	No	Yes	\$500	Heavily remodeled. Built 1888 per LA Co. tax Assessor
210 N	Encinitas	A.C. Hinters	\$2,000	No	Yes	\$150	Modified by 2nd floor addition
344 N	Encinitas	Venderink		No			
429 E	Foothill	L.H. Field		No	No	\$1,000	
222 Grand		Wm. Mills	\$2,500	No	Yes	\$1,000	Originally at 120 E Foothill
206 S	Heliotrope	C.A. Campbell	\$3,000	No	Yes	\$1,800	Assessed to Campbell, Sartori & Myers
224 S	Heliotrope	Samuel Beach	\$4,000	No	Yes	\$2,800	Moved from 203 S. Heliotrope
232 S	Heliotrope	J.F. Sartori	\$3,000	No	Yes	\$1,000	Moved from about 206 S. Jasmine
141 E	Hillcrest (Banana)	Levi Harris		No		\$400	Changed to Craftsman ca 1908
240 W	Hillcrest (Banana)	G.W. Dumbell	\$3,500	Yes	Yes		Moved from 332 N Magnolia
404 W	Hillcrest (Banana)	S.P. Metcalf	\$5,000	No	Yes	\$1,600	Originally 275 N Alta Vista
447 W	Hillcrest (Banana)	J.I. Case	\$10,000	No	Yes		
147 N	Ivy	J.S. Keefer		No	Built <1887	\$800	
336 N	Ivy	S.R. Palmer ("Zerell House")		Yes	No		Like 415 W Palm; maybe built by Venderink. 1888?
508 S	Ivy	L.R. Blair	\$3,500	No	Yes	\$1,500	Built at 147 E Olive, interim location at 319 W. Duarte
512 S	Ivy	J.F. Brossart	\$2,300	No	Yes	\$750	Moved from 323 S Heliotrope?

RESIDENCES	Street	Owner	Cost to build (in Planet)	Land-marked?	Listed in Planet Dec. 1887	1888 Tax records improvement value (est. 50% of cost to build)	Notes
610	S Ivy	William Steinmeier		No	No	\$750	Originally 602 S Ivy
227	E Lemon	L.J. Newland	\$1,800	No	Yes	\$300	
240	E Lemon	T.W. Watson		No	No	\$300	Built 1886
312	E Lemon	John Wilde	\$9500/5 houses	No	As a group	\$500	
316	E Lemon	John Wilde	\$9500/5 houses	No	As a group	\$600	
330	E Lemon	John Wilde	\$9500/5 houses	No	As a group	\$600	
215	E Lime	J.C. Anderson		No	No	\$900	
233	E Lime	J.C. Rowley		No	No	\$800	Bought by Crandall later
314	W Lime	Unknown		No	?		1887? Not in tax records
324	E Lime	Unknown		No	?		1887? Not in tax records
419	W Lime	Venderink		Yes	As a group		1887? Not in tax records.
431	W Lime	Venderink		No	As a group		Assessed to W.N. Monroe
432	W Lime	Venderink		No	As a group		Assessed to W.N. Monroe
314	Linwood	W.N. Monroe		No	No	\$250	Assessed to W.N. Monroe
117	N Magnolia	C.H. Stewart	\$4,000	No	Yes	\$2,500	
219	S Magnolia	??		No		\$600	Built 1888? Moved behind 402 E Colorado
257	N Magnolia	F.M. Monroe	\$5,000	No	Yes	\$2,000	
273	N Magnolia	G.W. Sevier	\$1,200	No	Yes	\$700	Heavy additions
255	N Mayflower	W.A. Pile	\$12,000	Yes	Yes	\$5,000	
329	Melrose	M.S. Monroe	\$10,000	Yes	Yes		Moved from 329 W. Hillcrest
225	Monroe Place	C.O. Monroe	\$4,000	Yes	Yes	\$2,700	
161	N Myrtle	E.W. Page	\$2,000	No	Yes	\$900	
167	N Myrtle	L. Barnes	\$5,000	No	Yes	\$2,000	
320	N Myrtle			No	?		
422	N Myrtle	G.T. Hall	\$2,000	No	Yes		Originally at 101 E Hillcrest
216	E. Olive	F.M. Baugh		No	No	\$150	
224	W Olive	Dr. Wm. Stevenson	\$2,000	Yes	Yes	\$1,200	Originally in JD Bicknell's Addition Lot AF ca 420 W. Walnut
228	W Olive	Dr. Wm. Stevenson		No		\$750	

RESIDENCES	Street	Owner	Cost to build (in Planet)	Land-marked?	Listed in Planet Dec. 1887	1888 Tax records improvement value (est. 50% of cost to build)	Notes
307	E Olive	Heirs of Wm. Monroe		No	?	\$100	
328	W Olive	Old Duarte School		No	No		Built 1874 by Henry Graves. Oldest building in Monrovia. Moved from Duarte.
332	E Olive	Mrs. Alden P. Field	\$1,800	No	Yes	\$950	
415	W Palm	Assessed to Monroe					Finished in 1888 per tax records. Like Zerell house. Reroofed after a fire.
436	W Palm						About 1887
327 &							
323	E Palm	Rev. D.H. Colcord	\$3,500	No	Yes	\$2,000	Tax record shows as 319
112	N Primrose	L.F. Gay	\$7,000	No	Yes	\$2,200	Moved from 145 W. Foothill
113	N Primrose	R. Mullaly	\$2,000	No	Yes	\$900	Moved by Dr. Stewart from Walnut
136	N Primrose	Charles H. Brown		No	No	\$800	LA County Tax assessor (often inaccurate) says built 1910.
159	N Primrose	Rev. J.H. Reider	\$3,000	No	Yes	\$450	
250	N Primrose	W.N. Monroe		Yes	No	\$5,100	Built in 1885
703	S Primrose	W.J. Huntley	\$600	No	Yes		
823	S Shamrock	U. Zimmerman	\$3,500	No	Yes	\$1,500	Originally 146 E Olive
416	E Wildrose						Moved? Built 1900 per tax assessor; seems earlier.
OTHER BUILDINGS							
132	E Colorado (Orange)	G.W. McCabe		No	No	\$1,600	Lodging House.
210	W Lime	J.T. (or J.F.) Tuttle	\$3,000	No	Yes	\$2,400	"Villa Belmont" - a rooming house built for Bowerman
424-426	S Myrtle	Barnes Hall		No	No	\$2,000	
418	S Myrtle	Chess Bros. office	\$1,000	No	Yes	\$450	Moved to 148 N. Ivy

Note: Unless otherwise noted, each structure on this list was built in 1887.

Appendix

The following excerpts are from the December 31, 1887 edition of the *Monrovia Planet*, as recorded by former City Historian Myron Hotchkiss.

The full searchable document of excerpts will be in the Monrovia Public Library's digital repository created by the Monrovia Legacy Project.

ONE YEAR'S GROWTH

We present to our readers this week, on the first page, a tabulated list of the buildings constructed in Monrovia during the year 1887. In preparing this list we endeavored to be as accurate as possible, both in securing all the buildings and in giving the correct cost of each. We may have missed some, for it is a difficult matter to make an accurate list without a great deal of time being devoted to it. In some cases the cost may have been placed a little high, but to offset this other building may be estimated too low, which will about make the aggregate equal.

According to our figures, there has been upwards of half a million dollars put into buildings in Monrovia during the year 1887. It is a grand showing. There is no other town in Southern California that can compare with Monrovia for its age. It is only nineteen months since the first lot was sold here. Building operations were rather slow at first, and it is only during the past eight or nine months that a real building boom has taken hold of the citizens. During the past four months a large number of elegant buildings, among them the two bank buildings; the Granite costing \$25,000 and the First National \$18,000. These are exceedingly creditable buildings, and surpass the banking houses of many of our neighboring cities. The brick blocks erected by Messrs. W.N. Monroe & Son and J.P. Spence, are also handsome buildings; likewise the brick block of Messrs. Wilde, Brossart and Campbell. Then there are the frame blocks; Badeau's, Johnson & Parker's and those erected by John Wilde.

To the elegant Grand View Hotel, opened at Christmas last year, have been added the Windsor, the Belmont, an addition to the Monrovia Hotel and Central, the Dew Drop, the Monrovia House, Mrs. Carter's and other boarding houses.

The churches will compare favorably with many of the city churches.

Our school house would be a credit to any community. It cost \$18,000. There are six rooms, four of which are now filled, while one year ago there were only a dozen pupils.

The Vanderink Improvement Co. constructed 29 buildings at an aggregate cost of about \$70,000.

Many new buildings are being figured on for 1888, among them stores and handsome residences. If the past year has been considered one of rapid development, the year to be ushered in tomorrow will at its close be called marvelous.

From a scattered little village of 300 one year ago, Monrovia has grown to be a city of over 2000 inhabitants. It has grown at the rate of over one hundred per month since the first lot was sold. New people are arriving every day. Men with their families who have pulled up stakes in the east and come to this land of sunshine and flowers, some of them to better their condition financially, some to make homes here and invest their capital and others in search of a climate in which they can regain their lost health and vigor. Here are mingled together people from all states and countries.

Almost every class of mercantile business is represented here. Our merchants carry good stocks, and all are doing a large business.

set aside recently ten acres of land, which he will devote exclusively to the propagation of fruit trees, shrubs and flowers. He has now in stock 5,000 pepper trees one year old, 20,000 two-year-old bearing fruit trees of different kinds, a few hundred choice Washington Navel orange trees, various kinds of palms and rose bushes, besides a large selection of deciduous shade trees, such as sugar maple, slippery elm, ailanthus, red bud and others. The large hot house is tastefully arranged and is filled with thousands of young plants of different kinds, which we would not begin to name. The nursery is situated at the corner of Buena Vista and San Gabriel avenues. Those who are in need of anything to make their homes beautiful should not fail to give the Pioneer Nursery a call. Mr. Wilson will open a depot in Monrovia, to be put under the charge of Albert Robbins, on Orange avenue.

A regular old fashioned dinner will be given at the Monrovia Hotel on Christmas Day. The bill of fare will include turkey, chicken, plum pudding, mince and pumkin pies, etc.

MONROVIA PLANET December 31, 1887. Vol.II No.7.

OUR BUILDING BOOM

Over Half a Million Dollars for Buildings in Monrovia in 1887.
A Few Plain but Interesting Figures.

Below will be found a tabulated statement of the buildings erected in Monrovia during the year 1887.

RESIDENCES			
J.M. Studebaker	\$10,000	L. Barnes	5,000
J.I. Case	10,000	G.A. Lawrence	1,200
A.H. Johnson	1,500	Mrs. Pomerene	500
M.S. Monroe	10,000	Mrs. Fletcher	2,500
J.P. Spence	600	Mrs. Hutchinson	3,000
P.G. Cartter	1,500	C.C. Hotchkiss	3,000
Geo. W. Monroe	2,000	E.P. Large	4,000
G.T. Hall	2,000	C.Z. Culver	3,500
W.A. Pile	12,000	Dr.W.S. George	2,500
E.W. Little	6,000	W.J. Huntley	600
S.P. Metcalf	5,000	D.P. King	2,000
G.W. Dumbell	3,500	Dr. Edgren	1,500
E.F. Spence	12,000	L.X. George	500
Mrs.P.M. Pomerene	2,000	Nadesu Estate	5,000
Vanderink Improvement		S. Bowerman	3,000
Co. 29 buildings	70,000	G.W. Cooper	700
Mrs. Abbott	3,000	Wm. Mills	2,500
P.G. Hull	3,500	J.M. Rodgers	2,500
D.W.C. Sawyer	800	I.B. Page	2,000
J.W. Harvey	600	Rev. Robinson	500
R.Andrus	500	Soon Lee	400
G.W. Sevier	1,200	Rev. D.H. Colcord	3,500
F.M. Monroe	5,000	H.Sykes	1,000
C.H. Stewart	4,000	C.S. Winters	1,000
J. Patten	8,000	L.G. Wilson	500
A.G. Miller	5,000	H.T. Parker	1,000
A.S. Baldwin	7,000	Rev. J.H. Reider	3,000
Wm. Smith	3,500	W.A. Anderson	2,000
Dr.D.D. Jay	3,500	J.W. Newland	1,800
L.F. Gay	7,000	M. Anderson	4,000
A.L. Brown	2,500	A.B. Tomlinson	4,000
Dr. McDonald	800	Mrs. Griffith	500
C.O. Monroe	4,000	Wm. Rohde	250

RESIDENCES

A.C. Hinters	\$2,000	Mrs. Field	1,800
W. Harris	600	U. Zimmerman	3,500
Mr. Gregory	1,000	L.R. Blair	3,500
Mr. Wheeler	600	Mrs. Carter	1,500
W. Gary	1,000	Dr. Stevenson	2,000
E.T. Hargrave	2,500	H.L. Green	300
Fred Lindo	1,000	Smith & Parker	2,200
N.S. Williamson	1,500	H.C. Traylor	400
Mr. Rexford	400	F.O. Miller	400
V.F. Wilby	900	J.O. Matthewson	500
S. Longstreet	700	7 houses on Stevens	
A. Boddy	900	subdivision	7,000
J.M. Fix	600	R. White	1,200
Mrs. A. Nye	1,200	J.D. Slemons	1,000
Mr. Affleck	400	W.P. McCall	750
A.S. Park	400	Fred Schutenhealm	300
T. Doherty	1,200	John Doe	400
20 houses in the LeMars		C.A. Campbell	3,000
subdivision, total	10,000	J.F. Sartori	3,000
R. Lamont	600	John Wilde (5 houses)	8,500
Z.W. Faunce	1,200	F.N. Myers	2,300
Dr. Wheeler	1,200	G.W. Perkins	2,300
R.J. White	1,500	J.F. Brossart	2,300
R. Mullally	2,000	S. Besch	4,000

OTHER BUILDINGS

School House	\$18,000	S.D. Savage, block	\$5,000
Monroe & Armstrong		M.E. Church	9,000
stables	5,000	Baptist Church	7,500
J.P. Spence, brick block	11,000	F.M. Shrode, blacksmith	
W.N. Monroe & Son,		shop	200
brick block	13,000	W.H. Ames, planing mill	
Granite Bank	25,000	and residence	5,000
J.B. Nichols, carpet		Windsor Hotel	5,000
store	1,200	L.L. Bradbury, office	500
N. Spoo, billiard hall	800	Santa Fe depot	700
J.S. Keefer, barn	2,500	Combs & Banning, shop	400
Johnson & Parker, block	3,000	Bray & Erbes, shop	400
Buck & Campbell, office	200	Morse & Rodgers, livery	1,500
F.E. Perham, addition to		J. Sackett, plumbing	
store	1,000	shop	1,200
C.H. Stewart, 3 offices	2,500	H. Zerell, bakery	1,200
Baxter Bros., addition to		Nelson Smith, store	1,500
stable	1,400	San Pedro Lumber Co.,	
L. Barnes, offices	1,100	office	1,000
Chess Bros., office	1,000	Kerchkoff Lumber Co.,	
Col. Baker, addition to		office	1,000
hotel	2,500	E.T. Hargrave, store	2,500
I.A. McCrary, office	300	Badeau block	6,000
L. Beer, butcher shop	3,000	City reservoir	4,000
A. McAlonan, addition to		Combs & Banning, store	2,000
hotel	1,500	Wilde, Brossart & Camp-	
R.H. Poor, restaurant	2,100	bell, brick block	10,000
C.F. Ford, barber shop	200	J. Wilde, 3 stores	7,500
First National Bank	18,000		
John Patten, harness shop	400		
Holiness Church	1,000		
A.W. Holtzkorn, harness			
shop	200		