

# ABOUT THE HOUSE



## From the Foundation President

Hello fellow foundation members,

Happy spring! Well, at least the almond trees think it's spring and time to get busy with the bees. At the time of this writing, mother nature has said "not so fast," and has seen fit for a drenching of rain. Rainfall deluges are not new to our locale. In winter of 1861-1862 it rained so much that the Central Valley was described as a "300-mile-long lake," and much of the flooding remained well into the summer. Wikipedia notes that the water submerged newly installed telegraph poles that connected San Francisco to New York and that communications were disrupted for a month.

Imagine no communication with the rest of the country for a month! Now, we're upset when the internet or our cell phones malfunction for even a few minutes. During the winter of this momentous event, Modesto was still wild grassland and valley oak trees as it wasn't a community until 1870. Can you imagine what our town would have looked like at a time when the Tuolumne and Stanislaus rivers converged? I found a picture of Sacramento; our

*Lee Heim and his bride Jacquelin married Valentines Day 2026 in the Mansion*

fair city may have looked similar. I'm sure thankful for the dams on these rivers to keep the flooding at bay.

Walking in the footsteps of history is what I imagine and what keeps me interested in organizations such as ours. If Modesto had existed during the 1861-1862 atmospheric event the mud accompanying those footsteps must have been phenomenal! Even during normal rainfall events, the lack of concrete sidewalks and asphalt roads must have made keeping the carpets clean quite a challenge.

Meanwhile, back to our time in history as guardians of our beautiful Victorian, thanks for listening to my history ramble. At our February board meeting, we learned that change may be

afoot. The Guild is one of the main fundraising committees of the foundation. Our Guild is exploring potential changes to events that have been our mainstays for many years. Change is never easy, but it may be necessary to continue our mission of supporting our mansion. Stay tuned for more information regarding Guild events.

Our spring project is shaping up to be re-gilding several picture frames in the house. Did you know this is done with real gold leaf so thin it's like cellophane? I didn't, until recently. I thought it was just real gold paint. We're in contact with the craftsman who has performed this service for us in the past and has completed much of the wood-graining in the house. He will also advise us regarding patching up several areas of the beautiful graining that needs touch up. For those that may not know, most of the vertical surfaces in the house have the wood grain "painted" on instead of showing the natural wood. This was done in Victorian homes so cheaper wood could resemble more expensive wood like oak or walnut.

The foundation's other fund-raising committee is our gift store. Please stop by to visit and the opportunity to peruse the new items arriving daily. The gift store team is doing a fabulous job purchasing and displaying the merchandise.

Looking back, this year has flown by. The 2025/2026 board has only 3 more regular meetings and then we'll be looking at our annual meeting in June. It has been an enjoyable experience to lead the foundation board this year. Thank you to the current board members for your time and experience. Thanks also go to the City of Modesto team for the cooperative atmosphere. To all foundation members, thank you for your continued support.

See you around the house,

*Steve*

President  
McHenry Mansion Foundation

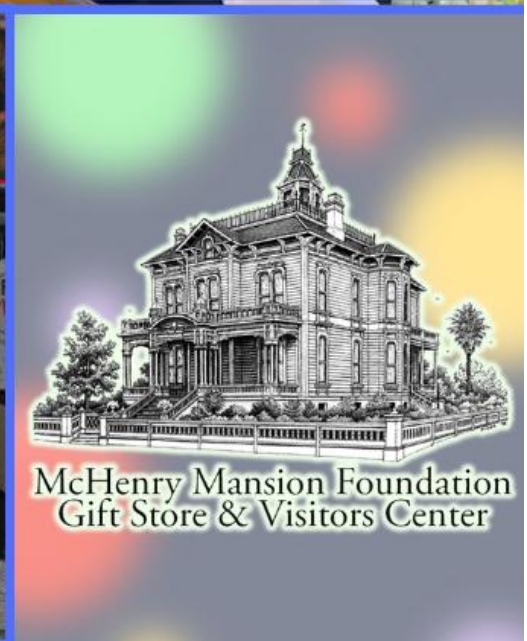


K. STREET, FROM THE LEVEE.

**INUNDATION OF THE STATE CAPITOL,  
City of Sacramento, 1862.**

## **NEW, NEW, NEW!**

There are too many new items at the gift store next door to the McHenry Mansion to list here. But we can confidently say you will be as excited about all the beautiful, whimsical and outright hysterical merchandise as we are! And our "Spring Cleaning" sale has begun! On sale now, all Children's Books are 30% off! Gorgeous crystal barware goes on sale, 30% off for a very limited time, March 8 - March 17. You don't want to miss the stunning, vintage melamine tableware gloriously decorated with hydrangeas and accessories in complementary colors. Remember to follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see new items as they come into the gift store! And of course; our exclusive hours; Friday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday's 12n-4p



## McHenry/Langdon Neighbors—William H. Hatton

By Wayne A. Mathes

The 1890s saw the construction of new homes in the neighborhood. We have learned that Phillip Latz began building his house at 15<sup>th</sup> and I Streets in 1891. Alexander Meyer's house, also on 15<sup>th</sup> Street between I and J Streets, was nearing completion in May of 1892.

One block over on the east side of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, also built in 1892, was the new residence of William H. Hatton, the attorney. The *Stanislaus Weekly News* Friday, Sep. 9, 1892 features an article about a surprise housewarming that had been held the night before. Cards and other games were played. A splendid lunch was served at 11 p.m. Twenty-three people were listed by name as having attended this event.



WILLIAM H. HATTON was born in County Wexford, Ireland, in 1856. *At the age of sixteen he came to America.* He stayed with relatives in Pennsylvania and Missouri while he completed his education. He began teaching school. He came to California in 1876 where he continued to teach school. In 1879 he came to Modesto where he was principal of the Modesto schools until the end of the school year in 1882. He then enrolled in the Hastings School of Law and graduated with the class of 1883. He formed a partnership with L. W. Fulkerth, a classmate, and established the firm of Hatton and Fulkerth. The partnership was dissolved in 1890 when Fulkerth was elected the District Attorney of Stanislaus County. In 1889, he had married Miss Ora Davis.

Wm. Hatton distinguished himself in the legal profession. He collaborated with C. C. Wright in drafting the legislation for the creation of irrigation districts. He was involved in litigation brought against the Modesto Irrigation District and served as a director of the MID for many years. He served as the attorney on many prominent cases.

The Hatton's loved to entertain. They were part of the social scene of the age group similar to that of the Oramil McHenry's.



**The W.H. Hatton house at 909 14<sup>th</sup> Street with Mr. and Mrs. Hatton at the Fence.**

The house is still standing at 909 14<sup>th</sup> Street, but it has undergone many modifications since this photograph was taken probably in late 1892 or in early 1893. (The deciduous trees seem to be without leaves.) One of the first major changes was probably done by the Hatton's themselves. Like many houses in the early 1900s a large wraparound porch with fatter round columns was added—similar to what Oramil did to the I Street porch at the Mansion. At some time, the second-story porch on the front of the house was enclosed as a multiwindowed sunroom.

When the house was finally sold out of the Hatton-Davis family in the late 1980s, it was turned into offices. To maximize the office space, the wraparound porch was enclosed for additional square footage. The fence has been long gone. The lawn area has been mostly paved over for parking. But the ironwork is still on the roof.





**Interior view of the W.H. Hatton house with Ora Hatton at the Piano.**

This interior view was probably taken in 1896 based on Ora's distinctive hairstyle with the topknot. This style was popular for about six months in 1896. This photograph is fabulous since it shows all the latest trends in interior decoration. Only lace curtains at the windows—no heavy over draperies. Wall to wall carpeting with area rug overlays. Hanging kerosene light fixtures. The house was not plumbed for gas like the McHenry Mansion. A portrait of Mr. Hatton is on a stick and ball easel in the front parlor. In the same room is an etagere in the bamboo style which was so popular then. The upright piano is also the latest trend—no more square grands. The placement of the piano partially in the large doorway was also the latest trend. This suggested its use would not be confined to just one room. Picture rails are still being used but the short distance to the ceiling would preclude the use of standard wallpaper friezes. Indeed, there are no heavy patterned wallpapers. Potted plants in jardinières are artfully placed in the rooms. Ora Hatton is also dressed in the latest fashion with the enormous puffed sleeves. To the extreme left is just a very small portion of lambrequin on the fireplace mantel. On the piano is an artfully draped shawl or scarf upon which sit a large collection of what appears to be family photographs.

*The house was the scene of many social activities* including the weddings of family friends. The paper ball in the foreground of this photograph is hanging from the kerosene light fixture here in the back parlor. This suggests the possibility of a decoration left over from one of these social events.



# MEMORIALS

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McHenry Mansion Docent Council

Carlotta Steele

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Seena Rhine  
Carlotta Steele  
Sandra and Robert Taniguche  
Marsha Waggoner  
Babette Wagner

## IN HONOR OF HER BIRTHDAY ELLIE RUSSELL

Doria Panvine

To make a memorial or honorarium contribution, make checks payable, and send to:  
McHenry Mansion Foundation, 924 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Modesto, CA 95354.

Include the name and address of the person or persons to receive a contribution acknowledgement.

## *The Janet Lancaster History Center* at The McHenry Museum



Janet dedicated many years to local history preservation and research as the Volunteer Archivist.

Footage courtesy of Elias Jackson. Filmed March 20, 2024

Janet Lancaster served as McHenry Museum's volunteer archivist for many years, helping countless individuals with historical research. She was an incredible woman with an unmatched knowledge of local history, and her loss has had a profound impact on the community.

The McHenry Museum hopes to honor Janet's passion for local history as we work toward establishing  
***The Janet Lancaster History Center.***

The Center will be home to the Museum's archive, a public research space, and a private staff workspace to allow for the proper preservation of our collection.

Museum staff are looking to fund a full remodel and conversion of the outbuilding and basement storage space to create the multilevel History Center.

Those interested in supporting the project can make donations payable to McHenry Museum, with the memo: 101479 JLancaster.

Please mail to:  
McHenry Museum  
ATTN. Jessica Flores, PRN  
PO Box 642 Modesto, CA 95353

For more information, please contact:  
Cultural Services Program Manager, Jessica Flores  
jeflores@modestgov.com or (209)961-5231.