

(continued from other side)



I Power Rental — 1273 Lincoln Way

Built between 1898 and 1899, this house was part of the large real estate holdings of Isaline M. Power. Mrs. Power was part owner of the extremely successful Hidden Treasure Mine in Foresthill.

J Vogler Rental — 1293 Lincoln Way

Designed and built by Eugene Vogler in 1906 for a rental, the first tenant was Nathan J. Cohen and family. Cohen had a dry goods store in Old Town and one in Downtown.

K Chapel of the Hills — 1331 Lincoln Way

This mortuary was built in 1935 for Colin Hislop. The architect was Ray Yelland. It has been in continuous use as a mortuary since that date.

L James / West House — 1373 Lincoln Way

Built in 1905 by businessman Thomas James, this house was sold to George C. West in 1911. West was the owner of the American Hotel and later was the County Treasurer.



For more information about Auburn's history:

**Placer County Visitor's Bureau
California Welcome Center**
1103 High Street (530) 887-2111
visitplacer.com

Placer County Historical Society
placercountyhistoricalsociety.org

Placer County Museum
101 Maple Street
placer.ca.gov

Auburn Joss House Chinese Museum
200 Sacramento Street
placer.ca.gov

Bernhard Museum
291 Auburn - Folsom Road
placer.ca.gov

The Gold Rush Museum
601 Lincoln Way
placer.ca.gov

The Benton Welty School Room
1225 Lincoln Way
placer.ca.gov

Old Town Auburn
Oldtownauburnca.com

Auburn Chamber of Commerce
Auburnchamber.net



SCAN ME

Published by the City of Auburn - © 2017

Composed by City Historian April McDonald - Loomis,
John Knox and Arthur Sommers. Historic photos
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Our special thanks to the Placer County Archives
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Layout by Stewart Feldman Consulting.

A Walking Tour of HISTORIC OLD TOWN AUBURN est. 1848 CALIFORNIA



Auburn • 1857

UNLIKE MOST OF THE BOOM AND BUST

Gold Rush towns, the story of Old Town Auburn is one of survival. Never a major gold site itself, it was located in the middle of prime gold fields; it survived by becoming a supply and trading center. Devastated by a series of major fires in the 1850's, destroying scores of wooden buildings; it survived and rebuilt in brick.

After the lines for the new county of Placer were drawn and Auburn, which had been the County Seat for Sutter County, was faced with the loss of this designation; it survived by having more votes cast for the Auburn location than there were voters in the area. When the railroad chose the site for the first depot a mile from the town center; it adapted and survived. When highway construction took out one third of the Old Town structures; it survived.

Old Town survived but fell on hard times over the years. The trend toward "modernization" that led to the destruction of the Orleans Hotel and the County plans to demolish the Courthouse spurred citizens to begin the renovation and restoration of Old Town that we see today.

The Auburn area was originally home to the Nisenan Indians. The Nisenan, in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, lived a peaceful lifestyle until the discovery of gold in 1848. Over the subsequent years the Native-American population was nearly wiped out. Those who survived had lost their land, homes, hunting and fishing grounds and suffered the near obliteration of their entire culture.

Claude Chana, a Frenchman, was the first to find gold in this area in May of 1848. Chana's find is generally believed to be on the Auburn Ravine south of the site of Dr. Kenneth Fox's statue depicting Chana panning for gold.

The new Gold Rush camp was known by several names before they settled on "Auburn" in August of 1849. Sometimes called North Fork Dry Diggings or Wood's Dry Diggings, the name Auburn was supposedly taken from the poet Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*

"Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain."

Auburn's primary significance in the Gold Rush was as a center for goods, services and entertainment, a place for miners to "winter-over" and most important as a transportation hub. Merchants were just about as common as miners in the early days and mining supply stores and general provision stores popped up as soon as the influx of miners arrived.

The miners who came to the foothills in the first years found that they couldn't mine at all during the wet winters and Auburn was a convenient central location to wait until the water in the rivers and ravines receded in the summer.

Most important however, was the central location of the town in relationship to the more established Sacramento City and the remote gold areas.

Auburn was a primary stop-over on trips between Sacramento and the many mining camps and boom towns located throughout the region. Wagon roads were established quite early. Although the trek through the steep and dangerous canyons oftentimes required wagons to be attached to ropes and lowered down the sides of the canyons to reach the gold fields and streams further up in the mountains or down in the canyons. Material and goods were also moved by pack mule or on men's backs.

Auburn itself did not prove to be a major long term gold mining site after the "dry diggings" were exhausted. However gold did continue to be found in isolated spots around Old Town for many years after the Gold Rush.

In 1856 gold was found under Palmer's wagon shop; in 1866 Robert Gordon found a ledge behind the Placer Herald building; in 1885 Mr. Burnett was mining in the road by Crandall's corner; in 1896 Sheriff John Boggs filed a claim for a ledge on Maple Street and as late as 1907 Mr. Hines found a ledge in the ruins of the "new City Hall" building.

The very earliest non-native structures in Auburn were hastily built make-shift affairs constructed of logs and canvas. By 1855 the crude structures had been replaced by more carefully built wooden frame buildings. The great fire of 1855 swept away most of the town, eighty buildings, in one hour and twenty-five minutes. The townspeople rebuilt within weeks, some using local brick.

In 1859 a slightly less devastating fire hit town destroying fifty-eight buildings. It was noted that the brick structures helped mitigate greater losses. More brick structures arose after this fire. In 1863, 1877, 1880 and 1893 Chinatown along Sacramento Street burned. The ornate "new City Hall" building went up in flames in 1905 and Chinatown burned again in 1921. After each fire, the town rebuilt.

Placer County was carved out of the counties of Sutter and Yuba by the State Legislature in 1851 and Auburn became the County Seat. Over the years the importance of being the County Seat influenced the growth of the town. In 1860 the census reported 17 lawyers and 13 government employees. Citizens from all over the County came to record deeds and attend to other official business.

When the much anticipated Transcontinental Railroad reached Auburn in 1865, the citizens were dismayed that the depot was established nearly a mile from the town center. This decision was perhaps dictated by terrain or by the desire

of the railroad planners to locate the station closer to the convergence of wagon roads on the east side of town.

Hotels and warehouses quickly arose near the depot but most established businesses stayed in the old part of town. Those traveling to Auburn by train to attend to business at the County Seat, were faced with a long and dismal trip from the depot through muddy, sidewalk-less streets to reach the Courthouse. It took an additional twenty-five years for the upper and lower parts of town to merge together around Central Square where Lincoln Way and High Street intersect.

Old Town's decline took place slowly but steadily as businesses were attracted to the upper part of town by the train depot and the newly available land generated by the break up of large land holdings. Interstate highway construction over four decades greatly impacted the town. About one-third of the Old Town buildings and homes disappeared to accommodate the expanding highway system.

The catalyst for Old Town Auburn's renewal began with a series of events in the late 1950s. The historic Orleans Hotel was demolished and replaced with a service station; the iconic Firehouse #2 was slated for demolition but was saved and moved after public outcry; The Traveler's Rest Hotel/Bernhard House (just above Old Town) became the object of community led restoration; the plan to level the 1890's Courthouse was met with dismay and activism from the community, leading to a retrofit instead of demolition. It seemed that all these events awoke in the citizenry the need and desire to retain the town's heritage. All of Old Town was now seen as a valuable resource and underwent it's own renewal and preservation.

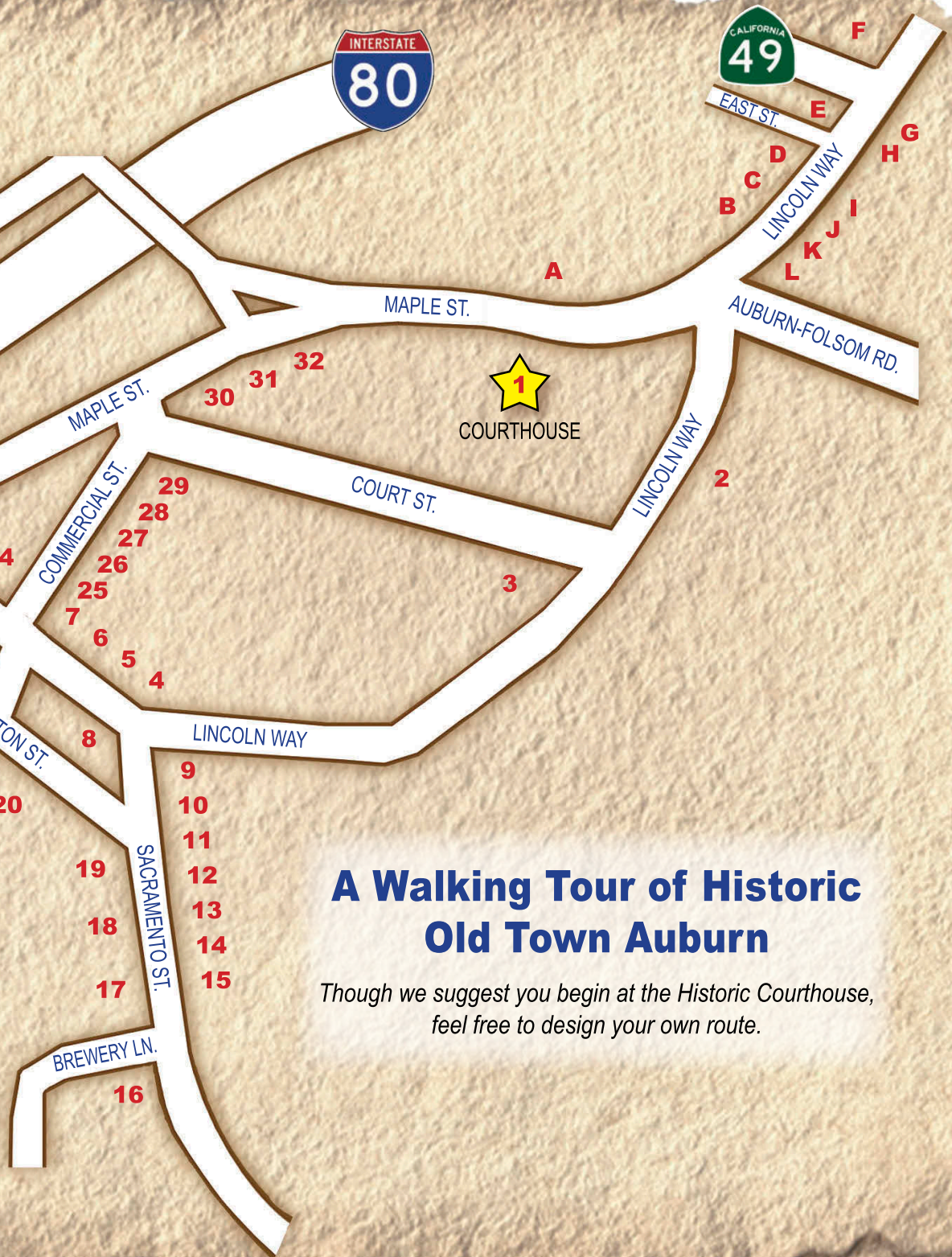


M. Fred Knox

Today Old Town is a vibrant, charming place that attracts both local citizens and tourists to its shops, restaurants, museums, and such colorful events as Cinco de Mayo, the Christmas Festival, the 4th of July Celebration, the Antique Street Fairs and weekly Farmer's Market.



Claude Chana Statue (#22)



A Walking Tour of Historic Old Town Auburn

Though we suggest you begin at the Historic Courthouse, feel free to design your own route.

(continued from other side)

over the years. The Hop Sing Laundry was here from the 1890's to 1944. The alley between stops 14 and 15 was used by the Chinese for gambling.



15 Chinese Cabins / Steam Laundry — 157 Sacramento St.

This structure is on a large lot that has had a succession of owners. A cluster of wooden cabins used by the Chinese were here for many years. The left portion of the building is the older section and the right was added between 1894 and 1898. It was also the site of the Holle Bakery and a steam laundry.

16 Joss House — 200 Sacramento St.

This is the Ling Ying Association building built in 1921 by Charles Jung Yue and his brothers. It has served as a social and religious headquarters as well as a Chinese school, boarding house and the association's meeting place. Inside is a vintage altar.

17 Kee Chinn's Store — 180-198 Sacramento St.

This lot was once owned by Sheriff John Boggs. A grouping of wooden structures used by Chinese merchants was on this site for many years. After the fire of 1893 Kee Chinn, known as the "Boss Chinaman," replaced the wooden buildings with these made of brick.

18 Chinese Grocery — 160-164 Sacramento St.

As early as 1865 Thomas Shanley owned this lot with a "Chinese house" on it. The saloon-keeping Betton family held this property from 1887 to 1940. It appears that they stored their saloon stock here and rented part of the



elaborate "new City Hall" built in 1892 by private investors. It never served as a City building, rather it housed the Crowell and Safford Undertaking business and Hancock's Hardware at the time it burned in 1905. The current building incorporates some of the brick walls from the ruins of the original structure.

22 Chana Statue

Frenchman Claude Chana and his party discovered gold in the Auburn Ravine in 1848. When news spread, hundreds of miners were drawn to this area and the town of Auburn had its beginning. This colossal statue is one of several created by local dentist Kenneth Fox.

23 Firehouse # 2

This distinctive landmark was saved from destruction in 1957 by moving it from one end of the block to the other. Built in 1891, it was the home of the volunteer fire department. All the money for its construction was raised by the community.



24 Gas Station — Stevens Drug / Orleans Hotel



drug store. It later became part of the large Orleans hotel

The original brick building on this site was erected in 1853. S. M. Stevens bought it in 1881 and remodeled it into this ornate

30 Lawyer's Row — 299 Commercial St.

Attorneys Mills and Anderson built a small brick building here after the fire of 1855 specifically for law offices. Despite its historical significance, the building was dismantled in 2016. Efforts to replicate it, as promised, have so far failed to materialize.

31 Jacobs Building — 219 Maple St.

In 1880 photographer James Monroe Jacobs built this house for his residence and photography studio. When Dr. S. P. Thomas was named the first county physician



in 1853 he had his house and medical office on this site. That building was known as the first County Hospital. Over the years several physicians had their residence and office here.

32 Keehner House — 215 Maple St.

This house was built in 1900 for the Keehner family. The family was involved in many businesses in town including a brewery, a bakery and a saloon. This house is on the site of the printing office of various newspapers over the years including the Auburn Whig, the Placer Press, the Democratic Signal and the Stars and Stripes.

— Walk to the crosswalk by the steps to the Courthouse to cross Maple Street —

A White House — 130 Maple St.

In 1875 blacksmith John M. White, reputedly the strongest man in the County, bought this lot with a house on it from W. B. Lyon. The older brick portion on the right and the frame portion were joined together in 1900.

B Pioneer Methodist - Episcopal Church — 1338 Lincoln Way

It is reported that in 1858 the church ladies marched from saloon to gambling house to raise money to build this church. The lovely stained glass window was added and dedicated to John





building out to various Chinese merchants. In later years it was a Chinese grocery, complete with stories of an opium den and gambling hall in the basement.

19 American Hotel / Shanghai Restaurant — 289 Washington St.



The American Hotel, "the best house in the mountains" was on this site from 1855 until the fire of 1905. The ruins of that building still form some of the walls of the current building.

In 1925 the Yue family purchased the property and moved their Shanghai restaurant from the adjoining building on the left. The Shanghai was an Auburn institution, it drew an eclectic combination of local families, tourists and hard-drinking bikers. The Shanghai closed its doors in 2005. The current owners have remodeled this old building.

20 Empire Livery Stable — 218 Washington St.

There has been a livery stable/blacksmith shop here since 1852. Sheriff Charles Chase Crosby bought the stable in 1875. He purchased a large "bus" once owned by railroad tycoon W. C. Ralston and ran an express and passenger service between Old Town and the depot. The livery burned in 1905 but this building was rebuilt by Charles' son Walter.



21 New City Hall Site — 210 Washington St.

The restaurant complex on this site was once home to the

drug store. It later became part of the large Orleans hotel that was demolished in 1959. Charbonneau, the son of Sacajawea, was a clerk at an earlier Orleans Hotel in 1861. It was located at Stop 21.

25 Newman's Store — 351 Commercial St.

The pattern of frame buildings destroyed by fire and replaced with brick continue with this building. This brick building was erected after the 1855 fire for Jake Newman's Clothing Emporium. For a while E. C. Snowden had his drug store and residence here before he moved his store to the corner lot.

26 Armory / Placer County Bank — 343-345 Commercial St.

49'er William Parkinson had a brick building here after the 1855 fire. The Auburn Greys, the local militia were formed in 1861 and had their armory here. In 1887 the Placer County Bank was organized and built this home for the new institution. This original bank location remained open until 1918.

27 Star Bakery — 337 Commercial St.

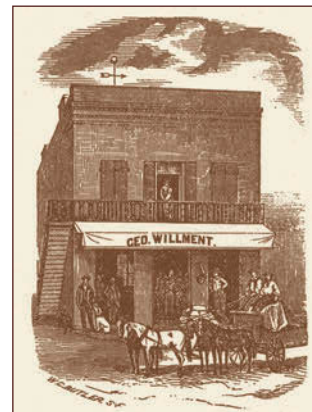
As early as 1851 the Star Bakery was on this site. J. C. Baker had this brick building erected after the fire of 1855. Miles Furness ran the bakery and a restaurant here from 1856 to 1866. This building was owned by the pioneer Walsh family from 1866 till the 1940's.

28 Miner's Drug Store — 321 Commercial St.

Built shortly after the 1855 fire this building was occupied by Dr. Kinsey's Miner's drug store in 1856 then by attorneys Hale and Smith in 1859. Hale was a County Judge and a State Senator. The Lubeck family bought the building in 1881 and used it as a residence. In later years they rented it to a variety of lawyers.

29 Willment's Store — 301 Commercial St.

A one story brick building was built on this site for George Willment in 1860 after the 1859 fire. He was a merchant who sold everything from mining equipment to oysters. In that same year the Masonic Fraternal Order began work on the second story to use as their hall. David and Julia Lubeck had their dry goods store downstairs from 1871 to 1896.



and dedicated to John and Harriett Crandall in 1908. The Crandalls were benefactors and members of the church since its founding.



C Sampson / Willment — 1328 Lincoln Way

This house dates back to 1858. Francis Sampson sold this lot and house to George and Mary Willment in 1862. Willment was one of the few 49'ers who put down roots and stayed in Auburn. One of the first merchants in town, he had a store on the corner of Court and Commercial streets. Arthur and Mary Fleming lived here for many years. Fleming was the County Clerk.

D Radcliffe / Keena House — 1308 Lincoln Way

Built by Capt. Alden Radcliffe, this house dates to 1861. Dry goods merchant George Morgan lived here in the 1880's. Sheriff Charles Keena bought the house in 1900. Keena was the county assessor and supervisor as well as owner of a livery stable and an undertaking parlor. Keena raised and raced thoroughbred horses.

E Odd Fellows Hall — 1226-1296 Lincoln Way

This fraternal organization was in Auburn as early as 1852. This grand hall was built in 1894. The upper floor houses the lodge hall meeting rooms while the lower story is used for retail space.

F St. Joseph's Catholic Church — 1162 Lincoln Way

Dedicated in 1911, this church replaced the smaller St. Teresa's built in 1859. It was named by William Wilson, a Newcastle fruit rancher and chief campaigner for the new church. The land was donated by the pioneer Edward Walsh family.

G Auburn Grammar School — 1225 Lincoln Way

This lovely Beaux-Arts building was designed by noted architect W. H. Weeks in 1915. Originally the home of the Auburn Grammar School, then the Auburn Union Elementary School District office and now the Auburn Civic Center.

H Lincoln Highway Marker

These distinctive markers designated the route of the Lincoln Highway. Many street names in Auburn were changed to Lincoln Way when this highway came through town in 1915. This marker was donated by Marie and Les Hammond. It was dedicated on this site in 1991.

(continued on other side)



Michael Loomis

START ★ 1 Courthouse — 101 Maple Street

Auburn became the Placer County Seat in 1851. This is the third Courthouse and the second on this site. It was completed in 1898. As well as housing the County Museum, court is still “in session” in this majestic building.

2 Full Gospel Tabernacle — 1439-1445 Lincoln Way

This simple structure was built in 1927 by local contractor George Herdal. The Herdal Brothers were responsible for many of the more ornate buildings in town including the Masonic Hall and the downtown Placer County Bank.

3 Brye Mansion — 1522 Lincoln Way

Built in 1882 for local saloon keeper Charles L. Simons, this house was in the Fred Brye family for many years after 1901. Brye, a local butcher, was an active citizen involved in many mining ventures and the expansion of the race track grounds.

4 Union Saloon — 1568 Lincoln Way

This building was built after the fire of 1859 by John Van Mater

for his tin and hardware shop. In 1866 Hollis and Gardiner



were first in a succession of saloon owners here. By the time of prohibition in the 1920's it was a soft drink establishment run by Fred Yocum and Sam Dependener, brother of Sheriff “Big Dip.”

5 Cigar Store / Factory Site — 1580 Lincoln Way

This building was erected after the 1929 fire. It was the site of the Young America Cigar Store and the Empire Saloon. Several years before the fire, Ernest Burns’ Cigar factory was here specializing in the Auburn-made “General Gomez” cigar.

6 Testa Building — 1582-1586 Lincoln Way

This is the site of the earliest Wells Fargo and Co. express office with 23 year old John Q. Jackson in charge of the vast amounts of gold being funneled through Auburn and shipped to the San Francisco Mint. Built in 1922, this building stayed in the Testa/Procissi family for many years.

7 Hyneman / Snowden Building — 1590 Lincoln Way

Nancy McCormick, one of the first white women in Auburn, ran a hotel and a saloon here in 1850. The brick building on this site was built after the fire of 1855 by Sam Hyneman. Hugh Burns had the Grand Exchange Saloon here from 1869 to 1882. Edmund Snowden had his drug store here from 1882 until 1900.

8 Post Office Block — 1585 Lincoln Way



These three separate buildings share walls and an outside brick façade. It was built almost immediately after the huge fire of 1855. The post office moved into the east end of the block in 1878. The post office had been in continuous service here from 1878 to 2023. Postal service began in Auburn in 1851.

9 Herschel Young Park — 101 Sacramento St.

The wall at the back of this park was part of the 1859 brick building on this location known as “Hardy’s brick.” That building was torn down after a fire in 1921 and the City bought the lot. This pocket park was named for Police Chief Herschel Young.

10 Tsuda Grocery — 103 Sacramento St.

Although this building has been remodeled, some of the brick walls may well be part of Anton and Alise Adrian’s restaurant and lodging house that was here from the 1860’s to the 1880’s. In the 1920’s this building was used by the local Japanese community for a Buddhist Church and a Japanese language school. After the Tsuda family was released from the internment program during World War II, they purchased this building and opened their grocery store here in 1951.



11 Butcher Shop — 107 Sacramento St.

This building is also on the lot originally owned by Anton And Alise Adrian. In 1890 they sold it to butcher Fred Brye. He sold it to the Waddle family in 1904. The original building burned down in 1932. This one was built for the Kato family in 1939.

12 Gold Rush Plaza — 111 Sacramento St.

This building was built in 1935 by Louis Wold for Charles Yue. In the early days it was the site of Fisher’s Undertaking and Carpenter shop, the Holle Bakery and the Betton Saloon.

13 Hines Blacksmith Shop — 127-135 Sacramento St.

The site of Peter Hoin’s Lafayette Saloon in the 1850s and a bicycle repair shop in 1899. That building was remodeled by the blacksmith Joseph Hines in 1908.

14 Levy & Gillespie — 147-149 Sacramento St.

Built immediately after the 1859 fire for merchants Levy and Gillespie, this building was part of Auburn’s Chinatown. It was owned by several Chinese merchants

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