

## Montgomery Way – the human landscape.

In a historic district the usual items of significance are the architecture, the architects, the developer and the sense of time and place that they evoke. At times though the stories of the people who lived there also evoke a sense of time and place. They are sometimes as distinctive as the architecture and the landscape they occupy. They are the human landscape.

### It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know.

In the decades before television, families filled their evenings and weekends with meetings, activities and events for various clubs, fraternities and charities. People who were in sales, or were in positions of influence, usually had a long list of organizations that they were involved with. Cutter and Carly were very adept at leveraging their friends and associates when it came to selling the first lots on Montgomery Way.

### Friends and Neighbors

In October of 1922 there was a small social gathering. Margaret Scheld held a dinner and bridge party to honor the engagement of her friends Mary Lou Heilbron and John Montgomery Roberts [2710 Montgomery Way]. Roberts was the general sales manager for the Carly Company. Some guests who attended were Thelma Schwilk, Harriet Moreland, Kenneth Watson [2640], Curtis Cutter and his wife Leita Carly Cutter[2757], Harry Seymour [3071 E. Curtis Way], John Quincy Brown [2750], Edward Bedell [2761], and Hall Moreland [2672]. All these people were friends and acquaintances. Hall Moreland's sister, Harriet, would marry John Quincy Brown. Thelma Schwilk would marry Kenneth Watson and the hostess, Margaret Scheld would marry Philip Wiggin [3071]. One thing they all would have in common is that they would all be early residents of Montgomery Way.



*Figure 1 - John Montgomery Roberts was the general sales manager for the Carly Company. The street was named after him.*

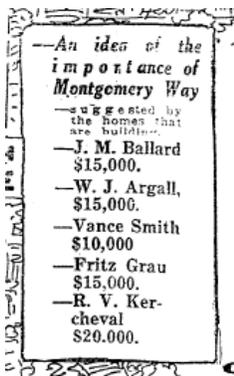


*Figure 2 - Figure 6 - Eight Montgomery Way residents served in the military in World War 1. Four homes were financed by the Veteran's Welfare Board.*

There were other commonalities that early residents would share: eight were World War I veterans; nine were members of the prestigious Sutter Club; nine were members of the Del Paso Country Club, ten were affiliated with one or more of the masonic orders; and seven were affiliated with the nearby Sacramento Children's Home. In 1934, six couples from Montgomery Way were cheering for UC Berkeley at the Big Game with Stanford: Cutter, Wiggin, Watson,

Seymour, Moreland and Brown. At a Sutter Club Ball in 1939 five couples from Montgomery Way were photographed: Cutter, Watson, Seymour, Brown and Grau [2730].

It wasn't enough to use their connections with important or well-known people to entice them into building on Montgomery way, the Carly Company used their names in



advertisements. One such ad proclaimed in a large headline, "Would You Back the Judgment of These Men---On Montgomery Way, who are among the most recent purchasers of lots and will build in South Curtis Oaks." In another ad they proudly proclaimed, "An idea of the importance of Montgomery Way---suggested by the homes that [they] are building." The ad went on to announce how much money each was spending on construction of their new home. In one of its articles on South Curtis Oaks the Sacramento Union referred to it as an "elite district."



Figure 3 - Curtis and Leita Carly Cutter enjoy a fancy ball at the Sutter Club.

**Edwin and Audria Bedell [2761].** The Bedells purchased the Carly house and lived there from 1935-1959. It was designed by Dean & Dean. Edwin Bedell's step-father owned the Clunie Hotel at 9<sup>th</sup> and K Streets. Eddie got his start in the restaurant business by opening a coffee shop in the Clunie Hotel. He would eventually become the owner of the Clunie. In 1939 he opened his signature restaurant at 1117 11<sup>th</sup> Street. Bedell's was fine dining at its best.



Figure 4 - Eddie Bedell

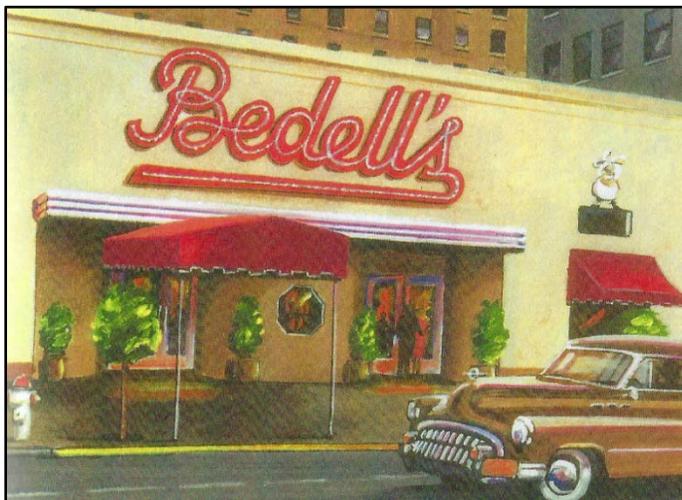


Figure 5 - Figure 10 - This illustration of Bedell's Restaurant is by artist Bob Miller.

*"Bedell's was packed three-deep at lunch and dinner by Capitol staffers, lobbyists, politicians and tourists...a combination cocktail lounge and fine dining restaurant offering superior food and ambiance, top notch service, and capable, discreet bartenders, making it a powerful draw for political notables and Hollywood celebrities."* [Burns]

Audria McKim Bedell was no stranger to Sacramento “old money.” She was a member of a pioneer California family. Her father, Samuel Warder McKim, was president of the Weinstock & Lubin stores for some 30 years. She grew up in a large neo-classical house at 2015 H Street. She and Eddie donated \$120,000 in 1965 to the building fund for Methodist Hospital. In her 1996 obituary she is credited with being a co-founder of that hospital.

The Bedells retired from the restaurant business in 1959 and moved to Pebble Beach.



Figure 6 - Audria McKim Bedell

**John Q. and Harriet Brown [2750]** The Browns had their house designed for them in 1937 by architect Fred Harrison and it was constructed by popular builder Frank Williams. John was a prominent attorney in Sacramento and also served as District Attorney and as a Superior Court Judge. Both his father and grandfather served as Mayors of Sacramento. Historian Reed referred to Brown as “among the leading members of the legal profession in Sacramento.” Brown was a graduate of UC Berkeley.

Harriet Brown was active in community affairs with memberships in the Opera Guild, Tuesday Club, Junior League and the American Women of Radio and Television. She was also active with the Sacramento Children’s home.



Figure 7 - Harriet Brown



Figure 8 - John Quincy Brown

Harriet was a member of all Saints Memorial Episcopal Church. She was a graduate from the National Cathedral School in Washington, DC, a college operated by the Episcopal Church. Her father had been the organizer of the Episcopal Diocese in the Sacramento Region and her brother lived down the street at 2672 Montgomery.

The Browns were part of that group of residents who all knew each other before the neighborhood existed. They often socialized together at the Sutter Club or Del Paso Country Club. Harriet Brown died from injuries she suffered in an auto accident in 1958.

Judge Brown had been an ensign in the Navy Flying Corps in 1918 and was a member of the American Legion. He was also a member of the Native Sons of the Golden West. John Quincy Brown died in 1971.



Figure 9 - Mitchel "Jack" Ballard

**Mitchel and Hazel Ballard [2770].** The house at 2770 Montgomery Way was built for Mitchel “Jack” and Hazel Ballard in 1924. Their lot had housed a billboard that directed potential home buyers off Franklin Blvd. and onto Montgomery Way. In 1924 it must have been determined that the billboard was no longer needed. An advertisement for the development in June of 1924 names Ballard as one of the recent prominent people to start to build in South Curtis Oaks. Ballard was one of those well-known Sacramentans whose name was used in

advertisements for South Curtis Oaks. A long-time Ford auto dealer in Sacramento, Ballard was an exclusive distributor for Lincoln motor cars in the Sacramento Valley. Ballard had some twenty dealers that he was supplying with cars and parts. He also had investments in several other businesses and in agricultural land. In 1926 Ballard sold his Lincoln distributorship to the Lincoln distributor in San Francisco. He stayed in the auto business, selling Fords and used cars, but by 1929 he left Sacramento for Los Angeles—where his wife’s family lived. Ballard was a member of the Sutter Club, Elks, Rotary and Del Paso Country Club.



Figure 10 - A 1924 Lincoln

**Donald and Thelma Wachhorst [2649].** Their house was built in early 1923 by the Carly Company as one of its demonstration (model) homes on Montgomery Way. It was designed by Dean & Dean. Thelma and Donald Wachhorst were the first occupants in 1924. They lived there through 1968—a period of 44 years. Donald died in 1968 and Thelma in 1988.

The Wachhorst family was an early Sacramento family. Donald’s grandfather Herman, a third-generation jeweler and watchmaker, came to California in 1849 to prospect for gold. After experiencing the rigors of the mining life, in December 1850, he went to Sacramento and opened a Jewelry and Watchmaking business. He was so successful that he sold out in 1854 and moved to San Francisco where he studied vocal and instrumental music and led what was described as “a life of cultural leisure.” He soon spent two years traveling in Europe. Herman returned to Sacramento in 1861 and opened a jewelry and watchmaking store. He was considered an expert in diamonds and precious stones.

His son Eugene had a varied education and early business career, but he eventually began to study law and in 1899 he became an assistant district attorney. In 1906 he was chosen District Attorney of Sacramento County and was reelected in 1910. His son Donald Eugene Wachhorst spent some time as a young man learning the family jewelry business. However, he soon enrolled at UC Berkeley and graduated from the Boalt school of law. He started his practice in 1912 and joined his father in private law practice after Eugene finished his second term as District Attorney in 1914. Donald and his father practiced law together until Eugene died in 1924.

Donald Wachhorst continued to practice law for some 50 years. He was also associated with the ownership and management of the family jewelry store which operated until 1960.

Even more impressive was Donald Wachhorst’s 43-year tenure as a director of the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD). He was involved in the decision-making that took SMUD from an idea to the company that it became. Wachhorst was involved in the district’s early efforts to buy the Sacramento electric system from PG&E. He was a leader in the group that supported a bond election

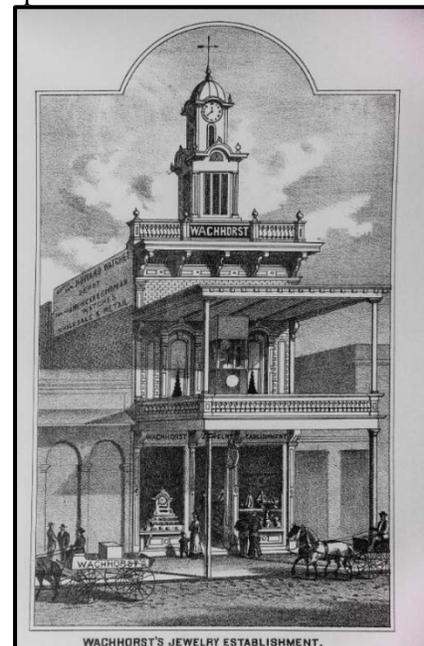


Figure 11 - The Wachhorst jewelry store as depicted in the 1885 book, *The History of Sacramento County* by Thompson & West.



Figure 12 - Donald Wachhorst

which raised some \$11.6 million that enabled the proposed utility to buy PG&E's local system in 1934. SMUD became a reality. He was also among those who launched SMUD's venture into power production with the construction of the \$200 million Upper American River Project which was completed in 1971. It constituted three hydroelectric dams in the Sierras west of Lake Tahoe.

In addition to his 43 years on the SMUD board, Wachhorst served as its vice president from 1933 to 1971. He was president of the board from 1971 until his retirement in 1973. Wachhorst was active in civic affairs. He was a charter member and past president of the Grandfathers Club of America. He was a member of the Masonic Union Lodge no. 58 and the Scottish Rite. Wachhorst was a member of the Sutter Club.

**Chinn and Hveem [2681].** The house was owned and occupied by the Chinn family from 1925-1941. The owner was Frederick H. Chinn the president of Chinn-Beretta Optical Company at 901 K Street. Chinn established the company in 1898. While most opticians at that time were small businesses, Chinn was one of the first to open a chain of locations. In his 1913 History of Sacramento County, Willis, stated: "...the optical company...has the reputation of being one of the largest firms of the kind in the world." The company was operating stores in Sacramento, Oakland, San Francisco, Vallejo, Fresno and Stockton.

In 1930 Frederick Harold Chinn sold his interest in Chinn-Baretta and went into business by himself. He occupied an office in the Medico-Dental Building at 11<sup>th</sup> and L Streets. The Chinn's owned and occupied the house for sixteen years.

In 1942 the Chinns sold the house to **Evelyn R. and Francis N. Hveem**. When this couple first occupied the house, Francis Hveem was an Engineer working for the State Department of Highways (now Caltrans). In 1951, the government of Mexico invited Hveem to Sonora as an advisor. He returned in 1952 to lecture at three universities.

A 1956 article in the Sacramento Bee concerning roadbed and materials testing for highways mentions Hveem: "Testing of structural materials is conducted at Sacramento headquarters where much of the lab techniques and some of its equipment was invented by F.N. Hveem, a materials and research engineer."

In May of 1958, a new \$1.4 million Materials Research Center building was completed. It was located at 5900 Folsom Blvd. and had 65,000 square feet of laboratory, office and utility space. The article in the Bee stated that: "The head of the department is Francis N. Hveem, internationally known authority on highway research, who has been a division of highways employee since 1917 and was appointed material and research engineer in 1951."

In the Fall of 1958, Hveem was sent to Egypt for two months as part of the United States technical assistance program. In June of 1961, Hveem addressed a public meeting sponsored by the United Nations Committee of Sacramento. He spoke on Argentina and Brazil. In June he had recently returned from Brazil, The Bee reported "...where he was requested by the Brazilian Government to help establish a



Figure 13 - Francis Hveem (on the left) was honored by his fellow engineers in 1964 for his lifetime service to the profession.

highway research system similar to California's materials control and research." In April of the same year, Argentina "...requested his assistance at the University of La Plata for highway planning. He also had advised the United Arab Republic's Department of Inland Transportation and Highways through the technical assistance board of the United Nations." By 1959 Hveem was the Engineer in Charge of Highway Design and Materials Testing.

A 1963 article in The Bee was titled, "Francis N. Hveem Has Won Acclaim As Inventor, Lecturer, Highway Expert." In the article, The Bee states: "The processes and devices developed by Hveem or under his supervision have made his name familiar to highway engineers across the country and in many foreign lands." The article goes on to note that Hveem was retiring from state service at the end of September 1963 after 46 years as an employee of the Division of Highways. In 1964 Hveem was awarded the "Service to the Engineering Profession" by the local chapter of engineers.

Evelyn Hveem was active in local service organizations. She appears to have been an avid gardener and was an officer in the local Azalea Society. The Hveems owned and occupied the house almost half a century until their deaths in 1990 (Francis) and 1991 (Evelyn).



Figure 15 - Philip and Margaret Wiggin

**Wiggin and Seymour [3071 E. Curtis Drive].** The house was first occupied by Philip and Margaret S. Wiggin in late 1929 or early 1930. They were the 1930s version of a "power couple." As a graduate of UC Berkeley, Wiggin came to Sacramento as a fruit buyer for the Pratt-Lowe canning company—which had four canneries in northern California. Wiggin was known as a prominent valley fruit grower and an asparagus canner. He was well connected as a member and board member of the Sutter Club. He was also a member of the Del Paso Country Club.

Margaret Scheld Wiggin was the daughter of Adolph and Leila Scheld. Leila's parents, the Carrolls, came to Sacramento in 1849 and were among the earliest merchants. Leila was born in Sacramento in 1869 and Adolph in 1861. Adolph's father purchased the Sacramento Brewery in 1853 and the family, Adolph included, was known for banking and brewing. When his father became president of the Bank of Sacramento in 1901, Adolph became involved in

banking. When the bank was sold to Bank of America, Adolph was appointed to the advisory board for the branch at 6<sup>th</sup> and K Streets and had an office in that building. Adolph was a member of the Sutter Club and an organizer of the Del Paso Country Club. When Leila died in 1936, Philip and Margaret moved to the family home at 2120 V Street to help the elderly Adolph. Margaret was a board member of the Children's Home.

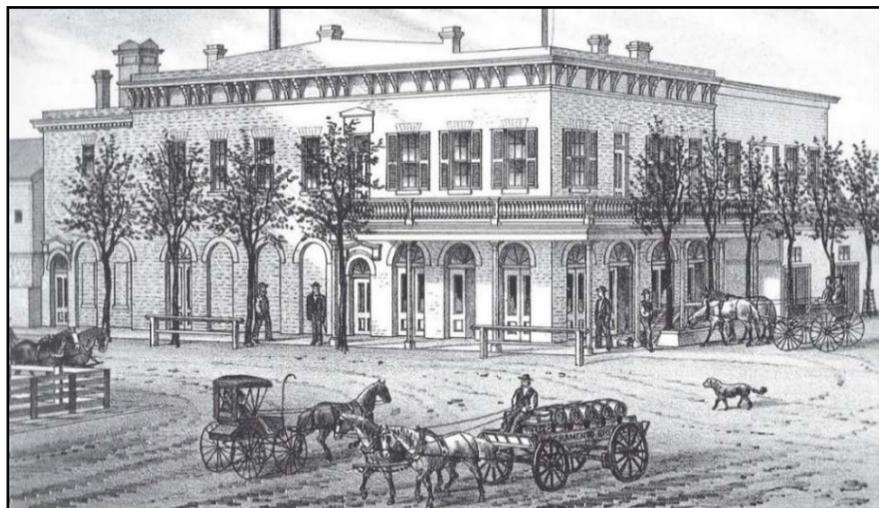


Figure 14 - The grandfather of Margaret Scheld Wiggin purchased the Sacramento Brewery in 1853 and the family operated it for many decades. When it was merged with the Buffalo Brewery, the family went into banking.

Margaret and Philip divorced in 1944. She married Ransom Cook later that year and moved to San Francisco. In 1960 Cook became the President of Wells Fargo Bank.

Philip married a Pennsylvania heiress. A Bee article mentioned their home in Pittsburgh, a summer home in Hyannis Port and an apartment in London.

**Harry and Alita Seymour** moved into the house after the Wiggins left. He had acted as an attorney for Philip and they knew the Wiggins socially. He had formed a law firm in 1926 with Stephen Downey and Clyde Brand. The firm Downey, Brand & Seymour, and its successors, has been one of Sacramento's most prestigious law firms for many decades.

Seymour served in WWI in the American Field Service as a truck driver for the French Army. He was later commissioned as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Seymour was a UC Berkeley and Boalt School of Law graduate. He was a former member and president of the City Board of Education, a member of the Sutter Club, Del Paso Country Club, Symphony Association and Grandfather's Club. He was a past president of the Sacramento County Bar Association.

Alita was a charter member of the Charity League—which was the forerunner of the Junior League. She was also a supporter of the Children's Home. She died in 1966 at the age of 70. Harry continued to live in the house until his death in 1977 at the age of 81. They occupied the house for more than 40 years.



Figure 16 - Harry and Alita Seymour at a Sutter Club Ball.



Figure 17 - E. Raymond Cato receives his certificate for his 25 years of service to the Highway Patrol.

**E. Raymond Cato and W. Howard Jackson [2641 Montgomery Way].** E. Raymond Cato moved into the Montgomery Way house in 1936. Cato, was the first Chief of the California Highway Patrol and spent 23 years in that office.. He was a leader in the creation of the State Police. He also helped organize the Sacramento Sheriff's Posse. He was general chairman of the International Association of Police Chiefs and a member of the Peace Officers Association of California. He was the first president of the retired California Public Employees Association.

His civic activities included a Rotary membership and 50 year member of a Masonic lodge, a Shriner, the Royal Order of Jesters and Grandfathers Club.

In his role as chief he was the main interface between the Highway Patrol and the Press. During the brief time he occupied the house, 1936-38, his name appeared in the Bee hundreds of times. He wrote brief articles on safe driving, authored a regular question & answer article and made many statements to the press regarding the CHP and its officers.

Ruth E. and W. Howard Jackson occupied the house beginning in 1939. Jackson no doubt knew the previous owner, Cato, because he was the Executive Manager of the California Association of Highway Patrolmen—a position he attained in 1942 and was considering retiring from at his death in 1969. As part of his official duties, he was managing editor of the monthly magazine *The California Highway Patrolman*.

Jackson was also very active in local organizations. He was an advisor and aide to various programs of the California State Fair for 53 years. In 1967 Governor Reagan appointed him a director of the

California State Fair. He was chair of the board's Intergovernmental Relations subcommittee. He was also a member of a seven-member management subcommittee.

As an avid golfer, Jackson was a member of the Del Paso Country Club and he was considered instrumental in the establishment of the Bing Maloney golf course. Jackson was a fund raiser for the Boy Scouts and the local Junior Museum. He had memberships in the Sutter Club, the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco and the Sacramento Historical Society.

Ruth Jackson continued to live in the house until her death in 1990. The Jacksons occupied the house for more than half a century.

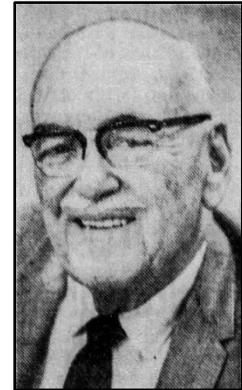


Figure 18 - R. Howard Jackson

**Gunnison and Wallace [2666 Montgomery].** Frank was a manager and the treasurer for the Hale's Department Store in San Francisco. In 1926 Weinstock, Lubin & Co. went public. In a secret move, Hale's purchased the controlling interest in Weinstock's. In early 1926 Hale's transferred Frank Gunnison to Sacramento to become the Controller for Weinstock's. Gunnison immediately plunged into civic life in Sacramento and soon held important positions in several civic organizations. He was on the board of the Chamber of Commerce, head of the Chamber's Finance Committee, President of the Exchange Club, Chair of Sacramento's Home Modernization Week, Director of the Community Chest, Treasurer of the Silver Creek Pure Water Bonds Committee, and VP of the High Twelve Club. In 1930 Gunnison resigned from Weinstock & Lubins due to health issues. Frank Gunnison died of a sudden heart attack in Mill Valley in 1936 at the age of 58.



Figure 19 - This Weinstock's store, built in 1923, was located at 12th & K. Frank Gunnison was the controller for Weinstock's.

Up until the 1990s the house occupied a double lot. The space to the west, now occupied by 2654 Montgomery was part of the gardens of 2666. That space was developed by Laura Gunnison. A 1928 picture in the Sacramento Bee shows the elegant *Sunken Gardens* that occupied that space.

After the Gunnisons left Sacramento in 1930, the house was vacant for about two years. In 1932 Whittier W. and Gladys M. Wallace purchased the house from the Gunnisons and lived there at least into

the early 1960s. Whittier was a teacher in local schools and later was both a math instructor and counselor at Sacramento Junior College. Gladys was employed as part of the administrative staff of Sacramento JC.



Figure 20 - Gladys Wallace

Gladys Wallace was also an avid gardener and the presence of the *Sunken Gardens* probably had something to do with their purchase of the property. Under Gladys management the gardens were highly regarded in garden shows and were a key location for social and charitable events. Gladys was president of the Fluer-De-Lis Circle of the Mayflower Garden Club as well the executive for the Sacramento Girl Scouts.

**Smith and Keck [2701 Montgomery].**

E. Vance and Ona Smith were the first owner/occupants (1924-1926). He was the manager of the California Theater in Oak Park and later Godard's Theater on J Street. In the era of the 1920's a theatre manager was more of an impresario who would book multiple acts such as movies, vaudeville and musical performances. On the opening of the California Theatre in 1925, the Carly Company ran a large space advertisement touting the theatre as "recreational feature" of South Curtis Oaks as being just a five minute ride or ten minute walk away.

During the late 1920s the house was occupied by Floyd & Rosamond Keck. Floyd was a branch manager, meat dept. in Piggly Wiggly grocery stores. At the time the grocery chain had eight stores in Sacramento. The chain was one of the innovators in the grocery business introducing self-service stores and the first use of the grocery cart.



Figure 21 - The California Theatre was located on 35th Street in Oak Park.



Figure 22 - The Public Market Building, at 13th & K, was the location of one of the Piggly Wiggly stores.

These are just a sampling of early residents on Montgomery Way. The people who occupied these homes in the Gateway District are as interesting and significant as the homes they lived in. The DPR523 forms have a significance section and a complete history of the residence—at least as far as 1959. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic libraries are closed and online directories and other resources are all that is currently available. However, in some cases, information was gleaned from other sources.