



FRESNO HIGH
NEIGHBORHOOD
HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

— 2021 Holiday Tour Homes —

The map for the homes on this year's tour is displayed below. On the following pages you will find the home descriptions describing unique details and features of this year's homes.

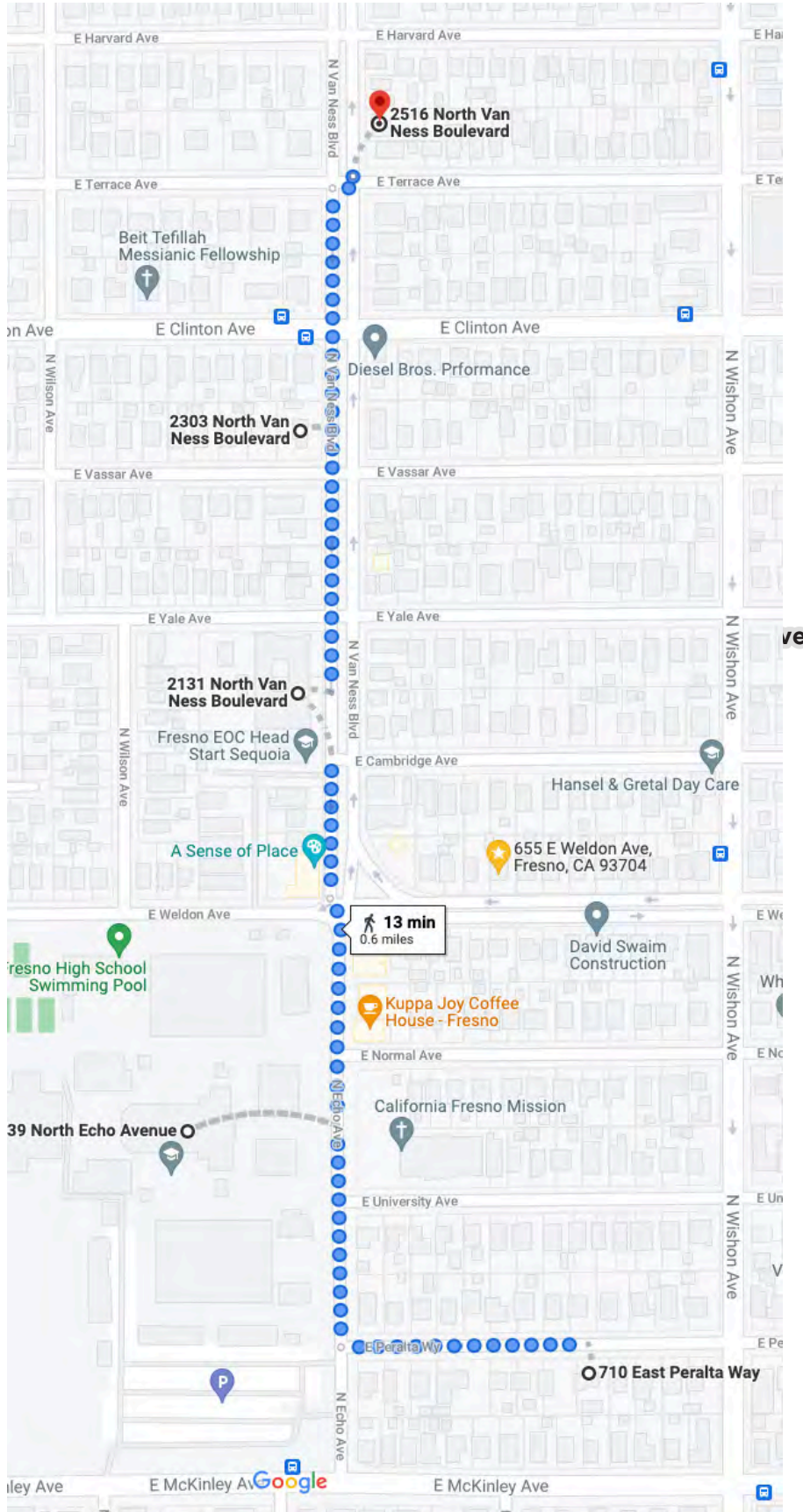
This document has been formatted to be printed out and carried with you on the tour for easy reference.

Enjoy the tour!

Tour Etiquette

- Your ticket will be validated at the entrance to each home please have your tickets ready to ensure entry.
- Getting Started: In order to see all the homes in the time allowed, please begin the tour promptly at 5:00 p.m.
- Be sure to wear comfortable, low-heeled walking shoes. All guests will be provided with paper booties to wear over their shoes – one size fits all.
- Please be careful with steps and stairs – because these are private homes, handicap accommodations may not be available. It is recommended that you bring along a flashlight.
- Children must have their own ticket and those under the age of 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Please hold small children by the hand while touring the homes. No strollers, please.
- No photos are to be taken inside the homes. Photos of the homes will be available on the website after the tour.
- No food, drinks or smoking will be allowed inside the homes.
- Restroom facilities will not be available in any of the homes.
- Please make every effort to complete your tour by closing time at 9:00 p.m. Remember, this event is staffed by students and held on a school night.

Tour Map





ROYCE HALL

—
1839 Echo

Fresno High School was founded in 1889. It is the oldest high school in Fresno. In 1922, the school moved to its present site at 1839 North Echo Avenue. It was designed by William Coates and H.B. Traver who also designed the A.G. Wishon home as well as Hanford High School and Porterville High School. Coates was also part of the firm that designed the Fresno County Hall of Records, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Royce Hall, the centerpiece of the high school, was named after Josiah Royce who became well-known as the first major American philosopher to be born west of the Mississippi.

Josiah Royce was a leading proponent of idealism who believed in an absolute truth and that human thought and the external world were unified. He believed in tightly binding oneself to others to benefit a noble cause, which would give direction as to what to do and how to live. Considered one of the great philosophical thinkers of his time, his leadership in scientific inquiry changed American higher education. As a tribute to his contributions, the first building at UCLA bears his name. It seems it was a fitting choice for Fresno High's Royce Hall as well.

Based on several accounts, Royce Hall was the first building—the first schoolhouse—-at 1839 Echo. In the 1970's, the buildings attached to Royce Hall were demolished and "bunkers" were built as wings to the main building.

Renovations to Royce Hall were completed for the 2018–2019 school year. The goal was to give the historic hall a modernization which included new carpeting, acoustic sound paneling, a sound booth located near the auditorium entrance and the removal and relocation of a handicap elevator to make more room for stair access to the stage. Royce Hall and the administration and media center buildings now recapture the original character of the high school. That includes not only mirroring the exterior of Royce Hall in the other two buildings, but also interior design as well. The wood is stained a dark mahogany color and the windows are multi-paned mullioned windows reflecting the same design used with Royce Hall.

There is a little known of a fallout shelter entrance at the rear of the handball courts, (in the middle where the metal grate is on the ground), that goes downstairs to a door that leads under "goat hill" and then under

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Royce Hall. Perhaps that is where the ghosts dwell. Rumor has it that Royce Hall might be haunted. It seems a janitor fell to his death sometime in the 1930's and there have been reports of whistling in the lobby and a shadowy presence on the north staircase. And the teachers' lounge may be haunted as well. The sound of keys jingling and footsteps late at night with the flickering of lights and whistling might be heard by those who believe.

Royce Hall is one of the most easily recognizable landmarks in the community and in Fresno itself. It seems as if the auditorium is always in use, even on the weekends. It is an important and vital part of the Fresno High community and one that makes us all proud.

Royce Hall will be open from 5-9 but the Fresno High Band and Chorus will only be performing from 5:30-8:30. We will also be selling t-shirts with the Fresno High neighborhood logo on it for \$25. Make checks out to the Fresno High Home Tour.



THE DOWNING HOME
—
2303 N Van Ness Blvd.

This house was built around 1928 by the owner of a lumber yard. It is a Taylor Wheeler and is particularly unique because of its Portland Cement exterior which has never been painted. The house was part of the Taylor-Wheeler St. Francis Woods subdivision. It is around 2500 square feet with a finished basement. Every window in the house is paned. Another unique feature is the sunken backyard.

In 1950 Dr. Downing bought the home. He made sure to retain the authenticity of the home. The mahogany woodwork has never been painted and the oak floors are original. The living room features include indirect florescent lighting in the ceiling. The cornice relief covers the lighting. The signature Taylor Wheeler fireplace is all tile with floral mantle supports.

Santas and snowmen can be found in every room although the living room is for Santas only and the dining room is for snow people only. The entire house is an eclectic mix of the décor the homeowner has collected for almost 60 years.

The dining room and breakfast room have parquet floors. The paned windows in the breakfast room look out onto the front yard. There is also a second entry door

which may have been used by servants. The small kitchen is reflective of an era of help before larger kitchens were built to accommodate women cooking for their families. There are also two bedrooms and a bathroom on the first floor. One of the bedrooms might have been used as a servant's quarters.

The Downing home was on the first Holiday Home Tour 25 years ago. A poster specially designed by Bebe Long was created for the event and one of those posters hangs in the office on the first floor. The first Holiday Home Tour house sign hangs in the window at the back door.

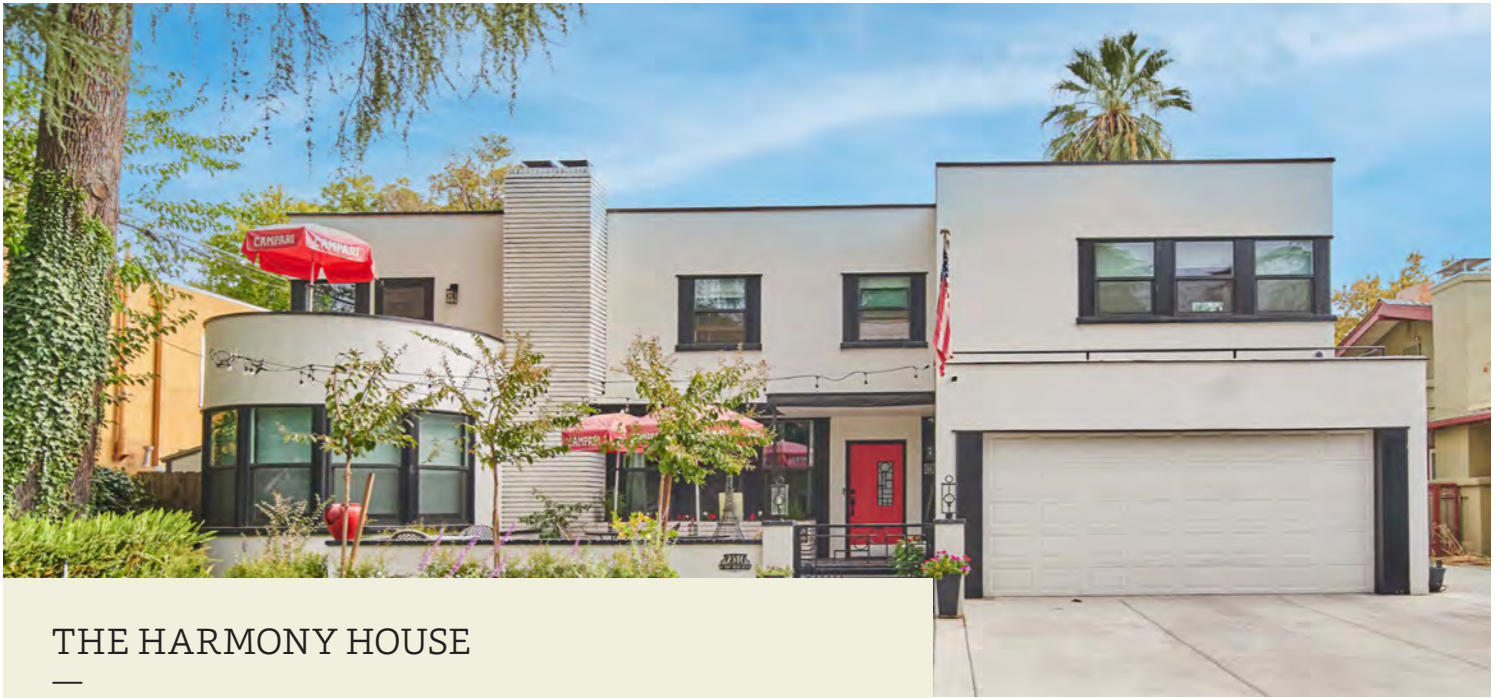
The beautifully curved banister leads to the second floor. The master bedroom and bath are located on this floor. The two other bedrooms are joined together by a jack and jill bathroom. The tile and tubs/showers are all original in the bathrooms. The guest rooms are an homage to the homeowner's girls and the kid in all of us. The fabric angels and red and green wreath are about 40 years old and were done by an artist in Visalia - Kathy Vidak. The master bedroom harkens back to the days of burgundy and hunter green Xmases giving

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the homeowner an opportunity to use some of her older pictures and artifacts.

This homeowner is only the fourth owner of the house since it was built. She started decorating in the second grade when she purchased a pink aluminum tree from Woolworth's. She started collecting seriously in her 20s and has been collecting ever since then. Her philosophy to decorating a home is to stay away from trends and stay with tradition. Every room in her house is reflective of that idea. It is obvious that she loves her home and all things Christmas. We are thrilled to be revisiting the home this year as we celebrate our 25th anniversary.



THE HARMONY HOUSE
—
2516 N Van Ness Blvd.

North Van Ness Boulevard witnessed much of its most sophisticated growth during the mid-1930s, when many of its most elegant Spanish Revival homes were constructed. The Harmony House, originally the Pudlin Residence, reflected the first truly modern style of its young designer, Ernest J. Kump, Jr. The son of one of Fresno's most talented and prolific classically-trained architects, Kump had just returned to Fresno after completing his studies at Harvard, when his employer, architect Charles Franklin (1891-1953) secured the commission to design a new home for Samuel Pudlin (1891-1953), his wife Lucille, and two daughters, Emma and Beverly. Pudlin, a self-educated Russian-born merchant, was an early proponent of German Modern Architecture. Before selecting Franklin and Kump to design the home, Pudlin made a trip to Chicago to see first-hand the modern case study houses at the 1933 World's Exposition. Pudlin and his family admired many radical residential features, including a semi-circular solarium, multiple roof decks, and a host of industrial fixtures.

Begun in 1935 and completed in 1936, the Pudlin Residence appears to have been Kump's first essay in residential form of the modern idiom to have been built in Fresno. Kump's career later led him to be

appointed as the Architectural Consultant for the Reagan Presidential Library on the Stanford Campus and Professor of Architecture Graduate School of Architecture at Columbia University.

In addition to being one of Kump's seminal works, the house represents a meeting of the architects' and the client's progressive outlooks. Pudlin was one of the first merchants to offer credit buying and to institute a minority hiring policy, he served as president of the International Institute and the Merchants Association, and he supported programs for individuals with special needs. He managed the Eastern Department Store, also designed in the German Modern idiom, from 1921 to 1959 located on the Fulton Mall. Pudlin was often quoted by the local press about his belief that modern design was the way of the future. He was the perfect client for Franklin and Kump.

This home met all qualifications for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. The home is a two-story, flat roofed, white stucco home commonly referred to as "Art Deco." Originally the home consisted of ten rooms and two baths, the

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latter located on the second floor. A small basement housed mechanical equipment and an attached two car garage provided one of the three roof decks which were designated as "outdoor living areas." The rear living deck and stairway to the yard below were abandoned in 1951, when a bedroom and bath were added on that level. Earlier alterations were made to an entrance hall closet converted into a powder room in 1940. The curiously tiny sink is original to that conversion. A utility porch was also removed to expand a breakfast room into a larger family room adjoining the kitchen.

The current renovation features a glossy red Bertazzoni Range, Espresso station and a large island for friends and family to gather round. The original butlers' pantry proudly displays a photo of Jeff Hall, the previous owner and inspiration for its name "The Harmony House." The burgeoning size of American automobiles dictated that a three' x 19' addition be made to the garage in 1955. There is still a vertical line in the stucco where the addition was made.

In 2018, the front courtyard was added, inspired by the homeowner's love of Italy and al fresco dining. It is perfect for enjoying morning coffee, evening sunsets, and visiting with neighbors. On occasion, local musicians have been invited to fill the air with their music as friends and neighbors stroll down Van Ness Boulevard. The home has a revolutionary open interior plan featuring interior walls finished in smooth white lathe and plaster lacking in ornamental embellishment. A classic black and white color scheme inside the home echoes the exterior aesthetic. Only a simple chromium band suggests the traditional fireplace surround in the living room. Tile was recently added in the entry as well as glass mosaic tiles as you ascend the staircase. A stairway railing of flat iron, originally coated with a chromium finish, completes the staircase design. Hardwood floors remain throughout the house. The otherwise strict rectilinear composition of the exterior is interrupted solely by a semi-circular solarium which projects from the living room.

In 2018, the black velvet wraparound bench was designed to complement the original shape. The chandelier is a whimsical likeness to a giant dandelion blossom. The original red brick chimney has been painted white and the fireplace surround is now wrapped in geometric tiles of black and white. The wood framed windows, simulating the industrial iron sash popular with early modern architects, were originally fitted to all windows. The Yamaha C6 grand piano is the centerpiece of the grand room. Concert photos are displayed as memorable reminders of the homeowner's international performances. Her beloved collection of Erte prints along with sumptuous fabrics bring vibrant jewel tones into this art deco infused home.

The dining room features bold black and white floral wallpaper, crystal wall sconces and a collection of Erte plates. The abundance of natural light and French doors lead to an oversized checkered patio for playing chess or use as a dance floor. Deck jet fountains have been added to enhance the pool. A cabana, fireside conversation area and pool house complete the ambiance of this backyard oasis.

Upstairs, you will experience the transition from the original 1936 outdoor living space converted in 1951 to add a bedroom, bathroom and laundry room. The original window openings still exist where the exterior wall was. You'll notice the step up into the "Tea Room." What once was outdoors is now the family's favorite place for curling up on the tufted burgundy velvet sofa to watch movies, and yes... for having tea.

The walls of the guest bedroom were once covered completely with brown paneling. The removal revealed decades old proclamations of love written on the old lathe and plaster walls to those the authors admired. There is a small hall bathroom with original built-in cabinets and tub. A new pedestal sink and decorative floor tile was added.

The master suite is a luxurious bedroom with rich sapphire and emerald tones, velvet tufted closet doors

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and dimmable chandeliers. Previously the walls were covered in paneling, including two north facing windows which were hidden. Removing these windows brought light into the room not seen in nearly 80 years! The door leads out to the outdoor balcony above the solarium with a magnificent view of the boulevard, especially the Christmas lights during the holidays. The balcony is also a favorite spot for a romantic dining table for two.

As the years went by, new families have made this neighborhood gem their home creating memories still cherished today. In the late 1980s, Jeff Hall, a talented guitarist and producer, made the house his home. In 2002 the homeowner Gina Lenee– a local composer and pianist– met Jeff and asked him to produce her first album, FROM THE HEART. Now an 8-time recording artist and an international award-winning performing musician, she credits Jeff’s compassion and belief in her music as the beginning of her musical career. In 2017, in a twist of fate, Gina discovered Jeff’s home was available for sale, and she jumped at the chance to buy and renovate it.

The homeowner started what would be a year-long renovation project while she and her daughter moved into the jobsite. One afternoon the name “The Harmony House” came to mind–a perfect name to embody what Jeff was all about: friendship, community goodwill and of course, great music. Gina hoped to support her neighbors and fellow artists, just as Jeff had.



THE BIG RED CHURCH

—
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.

This is the first time that the First Congregational Church has been included on the tour. Located at the corner of Van Ness Boulevard and Yale, it sits in the middle of the Fresno High Neighborhood. It was historically formed in October of 1883 and this is its third location.

In May of 1949 the Larson-Ratto Construction Company began work on the building. Plans for the First Congregational Church were drawn up by architect David Horn. The building was built in the Mission Style with terra stucco above the darker strips. With a small chapel at its southern border, the red, two-story sanctuary is affectionally known as "The Big Red Church." On the northern boundary the church is easily identified by its vibrant, multicolored dome. This structure houses some twenty-two magnificent memorial windows designed and executed by the world-renowned Judson Studios in South Pasadena. In addition, the church is home to a glorious Casavant organ which incorporates over 2,500 pipes and is easily described as the finest and most significant organ to be found between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The volunteer choral music program is directed by organist/choir master, Scott Horton, The musical offerings of the Casavant Pipe Organ, the many

talented instrumentalists contributing their talents in string, woodwind, and brass performances; the regular contribution of the Handbell Choir and special contributions of the sacred dance ensemble, Morningstar Dancers, and children's musicals – all contribute in music bringing comfort, joy, and a sense of understanding to the various worship settings.. The acoustic resonance of the church sanctuary makes it a prize performance venue to outside groups such as Fresno Pacific University Chorus, the Fresno Grand Opera Chorus, the Fresno Gay Men's Chorus, and the American Guild of Organists.

The Big Red Pantry serves the community by providing food and other essentials to all those in need. The shelf stable pantry is open whenever the church office is open: M-F 9am-3:30pm. No appointment or registration is required! Community members are always welcome to call the office to check on the availability of certain items or with any other questions. Donations to the pantry are accepted any time during office hours! On the last Saturday of each month, The Big Red Pantry partners with the Central California Food Bank to host a large free food distribution from 10:00am – 12:00pm.

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Food is given out on a first come first serve basis. If traveling to the location is a hardship, food delivery can be arranged in advance with the Pantry Co-Chairs, Randy Oftedal and Mike Gostanian.

Special annual events at the church include the Bachtoper Concert featuring Organist and Music Director Scott in an early October Sunday afternoon performance on the Casavant Pipe Organ. Thrills and Chills Concert has become a favorite event each Hallowe'en, as the Chancel Choir and other musicians bring music from both the sacred literature and the Broadway stage to evoke the thrills and chills of this time of year. A Celebration of Christmas has become a long-standing favorite concert of the community, with performances of the Chancel Choir and Hand Bell Choir, and musical artists from among the congregation. It is always offered the afternoon of the third Sunday in Advent.

The church campus also houses the Sequoia Head Start, which operates a week day program for children of the region. In addition, space is provided throughout the year for Fresno High School and its student testing program.

The Big Red Church will be open from 5-8 pm the night of the tour. Members of the church will serve as docents and tour goers will be entertained by the organist playing the church's famous Casavant Pipe Organ.



THE CONLEY HOME

—
710 Peralta Ave.

Though mortgage papers show the house being built in 1928, Theodore Ruschhaupt of the Ruschhaupt Brothers Fresno Soap Works, listed this address on his 1917 draft card. There was a fire at City Hall in 1928 effectively destroying all building records and making all records begin with a 1928 date. In 1928 the home was inhabited by Philip Conley, the son of William Conley, the youngest Superior Court Judge in California history. He was elected at just 27 years old in Madera County.

Philip Conley's first wife, Lucetta Conley, passed away and Philip remarried Phebe McClatchy. Phebe came from a long line of fiercely independent women. She was the granddaughter of Phebe Rideout Briggs, whose husband owned railroads, steamships, a lumber mill, a flour company, several farms and founded a chain of banks that ultimately became Bank of America. After his death Phebe Briggs became president of the bank — unheard of in those years. Her first husband, Carlos, was the son of CK McClatchy, who owned the Sacramento Bee and founded the Fresno Bee. Phebe's family was considerably wealthy and provided the \$100,000 to CK McClatchy to help him purchase the Fresno newspaper.

Phebe Conley attended Vassar as did her mother. She was a training teacher at Fresno State and her son,

James McClatchy, dedicated the Phebe Conley Art Gallery to his mother at Fresno State through the James B McClatchy Foundation.

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Phebe McClatchy (seated next to C.K. McClatchy on her lap)

The home stayed in the Conley family for three generations ending with Thomas and Marilyn Conley. They raised their 4 boys in this home. Marilyn Conley was also a very independent woman, having graduated from USC with a teaching degree. She taught in the Fresno City School district for 10 years and was instrumental in the creation of Fresno public television.

After Marilyn's death, the Conley family sold the home which was then bought and resold a few times. Several years ago a young art teacher finally bought the home and restored it beautifully. She created the secret garden out front for her toddler. There are several ceramic hearts and stars and painted rocks left here as

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gifts to the home by that little girl...see if you can spot any on your way out but please leave them be.

Much of the home is still original. The double hung windows in the parlor still work, using a rope pulley system and old latches. The woodwork is original, though it's been painted over throughout the years. The front door was replaced sometime in the late 30's as that's the year its hardware was on the market. In the dining room a push button was installed by a swinging door that would activate a bell to call for the servants.

The floor in the kitchen is likely original and the farmhouse sink very old. The heat exchange screen is also said to be original. The downstairs bedrooms were built for the servants and the door in the ceiling is where the bell was located for the pushbutton in the dining room. It isn't functional at this time but is on the table for you to see.

The library used to have its own bathroom but it was torn out in the last remodel. The light in the closet is several years old, and we were told it was one of the oldest fixtures in the house. The downstairs bedroom, bath and library were added in the 40's. The original house ended at the wall between the living room and the library. The laundry, downstairs bedroom, bathroom and library were added to house the help in the late 40's.

The house has a dramatic slant as 100 years of settling take their toll on the foundation. You can feel it in the master bedroom. The upstairs area includes the master bedroom and bath and the closet and gym.

The house has a very friendly ghost and the owners try to decipher if it's Marilyn or Phebe. Windows left open in an unexpected rain are closed when the owners return. Lights flicker and dim. Plants unexpectedly topple over. Playful footsteps can be heard from upstairs when no one is there. Overnight guests of the current owner report hearing laughter and bumps in the night. Whoever the ghost is, she likes to play tricks and hide and seek, once hiding an air pod in the guinea pig cage!

Whoever is haunting the house, the current owner has no problem sharing the home with an independent woman like herself...provided any shoes or dresses borrowed make their way back to the pièce de résistance—her closet. She is pleased to be the grateful recipient of such a beautiful home and intends to keep it that way until she haunts it herself someday.