

PH 0111848

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Butte	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAR 24 1972	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Bidwell Mansion

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Bidwell Mansion

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
City of Chico

CITY OR TOWN:
Chico

STATE: California	CODE: 95926	COUNTY: Butte	CODE: 007
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET AND NUMBER:
1416 "9" Street, Resources Agency Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Sacramento

STATE:
California

CODE:
06

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Butte County Courthouse, County Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Oroville

STATE:
California

CODE:
06

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Feasibility Study - Department of Parks and Recreation

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET AND NUMBER:
1416 "9" Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Sacramento

STATE:
California

CODE:
06

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **California**

COUNTY: **Sacramento**

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bidwell Mansion is a composite structure of brick masonry and wood frame construction. The main building has three stories with a four-story-tower structure. It has a two-story rear wing with a partial basement. A one-story portion has been added to original building.

This pre-Victorian Mansion, built during 1865-66 is a fine example of the "Italian Villa" style of architecture. Fanciful millwork details of the interior and exterior adorn a sturdy wall bearing masonry structure. The architect responsible for the original design was a Mr. Henry W. Clearland of San Francisco. A "Carriage House", carriage platform, and a servants' quarters complete the historic complex.

Located adjacent to the Campus of Chico State College in Chico, California, the Bidwell Mansion commemorates two outstanding Californians.

Dedicated as a State Historical Monument, May 7, 1966, and since reclassified as Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, much has been accomplished in a restoration program intended to bring the mansion back to the physical appearance of its heyday. Open daily to the public as a home museum, the interior decoration and furnishing today reflect the occupancy by General John Bidwell and Annie K. Bidwell. Many original family heirlooms have been returned to the premises.

The exterior walls and the interior supporting walls are of fired brick. The interior walls finished with glaze and plaster. Flooring throughout is grooved Douglas Fir with full 2 x 12 floor joists. The foundation is a full-running brick foundation, about three feet wide and narrowing to the structural wall thickness of about nine inches. Exterior molding and trim is Redwood. The exterior colors, pink and two tones of brown, were chosen from the traditional exterior colors characteristic of the Gothic castles in Old Europe. Original gas jets for lighting are in place in many of the rooms, and several of the original gas chandeliers are still in place; however, some chandeliers have been converted to the conventional electrical wiring systems.

The first floor is dominated by the nine foot wide hallway, which runs the complete length of the building. The four rooms off the hallway are the sitting room, John's den or office, the library, and the dining room. There is a side entrance which also forms the stairwell to the two upper floors. Each of the floor main rooms has an Italian marble fireplace with a relatively small hearth, evidently designed for small pieces of wood. At that time, oak was the usual fuel. Each of these rooms also had several dents set into the floor to aid in keeping the house cool during the hot summer months. The twelve foot high ceilings in all the rooms on the first and second floors also aided in this cooling process, which it was designed specifically to allow the cool air under the house to displace the warmer air as it moved up the stairwell into the third floor, where the skylight

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1860s

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Depicts and interprets the life and times of General and Mrs. John Bidwell and their influence on the social, cultural, economic and political events of their day. Mr. Bidwell, pioneer since 1841, made major contributions to agriculture and economic growth of California, subsequently he served as a State Senator, a major general in the State Militia, ran for President of the U.S. on the Prohibition Party in 1892. Building was subsequently used as a school. Now part of the State Park System.

John Bidwell was one of the leaders, in 1841, of the first American overland company arriving in California with the expressed purpose of settlement. Employed for a time by John Sutter at Sutter's Fort, Bidwell early became prominent in the affairs of California. He was a signatory of the first State Constitution in 1849, a State Senator and later in life a candidate for President of the United States. He acquired much property, the most extensive being Rancho Chico which he purchased from the original Mexican grantees. On this ranch he founded the Town of Chico in 1860, later donating land for public schools, and setting aside a plot of ground for each of several churches. A large section was designated for use of the Northern Branch State Normal School (A State Teacher's College) now the Chico State College.

Beginning as early as 1847 and continuing until his death, John Bidwell maintained experimental orchards on the rancho. Some 1800 acres were devoted to this enterprise, with more than 400 varieties of fruits represented in the orchards and vineyards. Raisins, wine and olive oil were among the early products of Rancho Chico. Later the vineyards and wine making were given up. In 1886 Bidwell donated 30 acres of land to the State of California for a forestry experiment station. This portion is now owned by the City of Chico.

The Bidwell Mansion was built between 1865 and 1868 for his wife Annie K. Bidwell. The architect and builder was H. W. Cleveland. Here Mrs. Bidwell taught the Indian women and children to sew clothing and to speak and read English. Arithmetic and other subjects were taught.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rensch - Historic Spots in California
 Bidwell - Echos of the Past
 McGowan - History of the Sacramento Valley
 Wells - History of Butte County

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 43' 59"	121° 50' 31"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5.0

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Allen W. Welts, State Park Historian III**

ORGANIZATION: **Department of Parks and Recreation**
Resource Management and Protection Division

DATE: **2/30/70**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1416 "g" Street - Resources Agency Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Sacramento** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Ben M. [Signature]*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date August 3, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ewert A. Connelly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAR 24 1972

Date _____

ATTEST: *William [Signature]*
 Keeper of The National Register

Date MAR 9 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE California	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description

allowed this moving air to escape; thus the circulation of cool fresh air was maintained.

On the second floor are eight bedrooms, of which the two towards the rear may be considered as servant's quarters. Each of the bedrooms has its own commode. The water system still works, along with the drains; however, the pipes are lead and water from the pipes should not be drunk. The master bedroom has a private restroom with bath and adjoining closets for husband and wife. A restroom was also placed off the hall for the use of the guests. The servants also had their separate facilities. The master bedroom and three of the larger bedrooms contained Italian marble fireplaces on the second floor.

The third floor consists of a large central room, surrounded by seven guest bedrooms and one large restroom. The central room is said to have originally contained a snooker table. However, as the sport lost some of its respectability, the table was taken out.

The middle front bedroom is reduced in size and contains the tower stairwell. The tower, or cupola, is one room with windows on all four walls and a staircase leading to the willows walk, with its flagpole high above everything.

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8. Significance (Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

Bidwell himself maintained a paternalistic regard for the Indians living on and in the vicinity of his large estate. The Bidwell's treatment of the Indians, intended for their general benefit in a changing environment and social condition, represents almost a unique chapter in California American-Indian relations. While the Bidwells benefitted greatly by their labor, he vigorously protected and defended their interests throughout his lifetime.

Annie Bidwell's school continued at the Mansion from about 1875 to 1888, when she found it necessary to stop, transferring its management to a missionary society who continued it until 1892, when Indian children were admitted to the local public schools. Religious instruction also was given the Indians and a chapel built for their use near and later in an Indian village on Rancho Chico, which continued to function as a church until it burned in 1961. Through the support and encouragement of the Bidwells the Indians of the vicinity participated to a relatively unusual degree in Chico community festivities, parades and other local gatherings.

Following the death of John Bidwell in 1900, Annie Kennedy Bidwell subdivided much of the rancho property. From 1868 to 1918 the Mansion was the Bidwell residence. From 1919 to 1921 it was owned by the Presbyterian Church, being transferred in 1921 to the State of California for use of the Normal School. In 1964 it was acquired by the then State Division of Beaches and Parks.