Watsonville was settled in 1852, incorporated in 1868, and came under a city charter in 1903. The first mayor was Richard Quinn. Watsonville’s history is based in agriculture, growing such products as strawberries, apples, bush berries, lettuce, mushrooms, cut flowers, and much more. The City has a diverse ethnic community that has contributed heavily to the growth and well-being of Watsonville and the beautiful Pajaro Valley.

The city is named after Judge John H. Watson who came to the valley in 1851 with D.S. Gregory and set up an “adverse claim” on a portion of the Bolsa Del Pajaro, a land grant belonging to Don Sebastian Rodriguez. John Watson left for Nevada in 1861 and died at Elko, Nevada in 1882.

Watsonville City Plaza, 19th Century
350 Main. The Plaza, bounded by Main, East Beach, Union, and Peck Streets, was deeded to the City on June 4, 1869 for the purpose of a “public town plaza.” The Plaza is located in the historic downtown center of Watsonville, and has been developed and utilized as a public meeting place, including a translated, walkways, trees, cannons, and plaques commemorating various persons and events. The City Plaza is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

3 THE CITY PLAZA

406 Main Street. Designed by William H. Weeks in 1914. Commercial Style of architecture with a three part, four story “L” shaped building, with a base, shaft, and capital. The building has a flat roof, stucco siding, and terra cotta and sheet metal decoration on the two street facing elevations.

The original entry on Main Street was a terra cotta triumphal arch garnished with images of local produce. A major alteration to the original building was the infilling of the first floor glass curtain walls with heavy ground floor piers during a 1928 remodel. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

4 THE LETTUNICH BUILDING

420 Main. Built in 1871 by Thomas Beck. Originally located at the corner of Main and East Beach Street, the building was moved north to accommodate the new Lettunich Building in 1913 and modernized.

The Mansion House originally contained sixty-five rooms on the second and third floor. The ground floor accommodated a wide staircase, ballroom and bar room, dining room, reading room, office parlor and three stores, Wells Fargo, a barber shop, and a drug store. The building is constructed of redwood, with a wide porch at the front with a veranda above, and a beautiful mansard roof.

5 THE MANSON HOUSE

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5 THE MANSON HOUSE
The Potter building was part of the 1903 building boom in Watsonville. During this time, the Ford block, Jefferson block, the San Monte Fruit Packing House, the Simpson Hank Fruit Company Building, the Harris building and the new high school were completed. This building was constructed for John F. Potter, one of the early pioneers of the Pajaro Valley. When the Potter building was first completed, it housed the new post office. It was also the first building to have a central steam heating system.

208 MAIN. PORTER BUILDINGS

255 MAIN. BREWINGTON BLOCK

Built in 1927, designed by William Weeks. This Spanish Colonial Revival style building replaced the Wall Street Inn (Appleton Hotel) as the premier Watsonville hotel when it was constructed. The first floor storefronts have been remodeled, however the upper stories contain the original double-hung windows, with extensive parapet terra cotta relief work.

248-450 MAIN. HARRIS BUILDINGS

Constructed in 1910. Mission Revival style. The twostory building is faced in terra cotta and has 2 projecting bay windows. The first floor storefront has been remodeled.

242-434 MAIN. BREVINGTON BLOCK

Renaissance Revival style by William Weeks, and built in 1914. The first story storefronts have been remodeled. Renamed the Kalich Building. It was originally known as the Brevington Block. It housed a first class hotel known as the Hotel Ames, with a movie theater that seated approximately 468 people, together with other stores and offices which constituted the main attraction for businesses during the 1920’s and later.

253, 529, 531 MAIN. HOLGERSON & SCHMIDT BUILDINGS

Constructed in 1925. Designed by William Weeks. The Spanish Colonial Revival style building replaced the Wall Street Inn (Appleton Hotel) as the premier Watsonville hotel when it was constructed. The first floor storefronts have been remodeled, however the upper stories contain the original double-hung windows, with extensive parapet terra cotta relief work.

Watsonville

One of the most prolific architects of his time in Northern and Central California. Weeks’ designs included school buildings, libraries, churches, office buildings, residences, and the City Plaza Bandstand. Born in 1864 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, his family moved to Colorado, Kansas, and then to Oakland, California. He opened an office in Watsonville in 1894 and built a house here soon after. Weeks called Watsonville home for seventeen years, and designed numerous commercial, residential and institutional buildings. Weeks opened a branch office in Salinas in 1897, and another established in San Francisco in 1906, which later would become his main office after moving from Watsonville in 1911. Weeks was almost killed in San Francisco during the 1906 earthquake, and his work subsequently focused on building safety and engineering. Many of Weeks’ buildings survived the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake due to additional construction measures to ensure that the buildings were structurally sound. Weeks died in Piedmont in 1936.

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