



22 TEXAS STREET AT UNION AVENUE, 1911, SOLANO COUNTY COURTHOUSE. Situated prominently at the end of palm-lined Union Avenue, this imposing civic building is the center of Solano County government. Designed by architects E.C. Hemmings and W.A. Jones in the Neo-Classical Revival style, it has an exterior facade and broad stairway in granite, and interior paneling and stairs in marble. The symmetrical composition features a central entrance with three doorways, and a long Ionic Colonnade with narrow end pavilions. Elaborate iron lamps on pedestals flank the staircase. The lawn with its central statue and flower beds enhance the frontage.



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DOWNTOWN FAIRFIELD WALKING TOUR

GUIDE & MAP

Walking Tour Guide and Map

Since its inception in 1856, Fairfield has grown from a quiet town of a few hundred persons to a bustling city of almost 100,000 citizens. Despite the exceptional development, downtown Fairfield remains the heartbeat of the city, from the simplistic beauty of the early settlers' houses, to the majestic grandeur of the Solano County Courthouse. The sites on the walking tour in downtown Fairfield represent example of historic residences and commercial buildings, as well as government buildings which serve residents of the city and entire county.

The Walking Tour of Downtown Fairfield is sponsored by CityArts Fairfield and the Heritage Society of West Central Solano. Special thanks to local historian Tim Farmer for his expertise and research done to make this tour possible. Special thanks to Clyde Low and Gail Parker for their contributions. Photography by Mark Pynes & Dee Dee Donaldson. Graphic design by Angie Phillips of Garson Design Services.

1 TEXAS STREET, BEHIND THE COUNTY JAIL, Ca. 1925, WATER TOWER. A reinforced concrete water tower in Gothic Revival style. The design features suggest opening and projections used in medieval Europe to discharge missiles on attackers below.

2 BEHIND COUNTY JAIL, PARKING SHED, Ca. 1915-1930. An interestingly engineered parking shed with a light steel angled frame cantilevered out from central supports. The hip roof is corrugated metal laid in overlapping strips.



WHERE IS FAIRFIELD?

3 720 TEXAS STREET, Ca. 1910. A two-story commercial box with hip roof and angled bay. Originally sheathed in shiplap, the front facade has been stuccoed and the storefronts have been modernized. In the 1920's and 1930's, the building served as a restaurant for the Fairfield Hotel, established and managed by John and Emma Scholl. The simplicity of this building is typical of Texas Street as it originally developed.

4 726-30 TEXAS STREET, Ca. 1920. This Neo-classic Revival building was originally the First National Bank of Fairfield. It has a projecting metal cornice and polychrome brickwork. Composite pilasters with terra cotta capitals separate the second story windows. The storefronts have effaced the original ground floor design.

5 740 TEXAS STREET, Ca. 1920. An Art Deco building with painted sculptural embellishments over the doorway and windows. Formerly the Solano County Title Company Building.

6 800 BLOCK OF TEXAS STREET, Ca. 1925, "FAIRFIELD" SIGN. An arresting sign, "Fairfield, County Seat Solano County", frames Texas Street in the heart of downtown Fairfield. Such gateway signs of metal and neon decorate many communities throughout California and are symbols of the period.



7 825 EMPIRE STREET, Ca. 1925. An U-shaped house whose window treatment and half-timbering in the steeply-pitched gable roof make it a Tudor Revival Cottage. The walled entrance patio is ornamented with French doors.



8 744 JACKSON, Ca. 1926. The Freitas house, designed by Louis Nielsen, is a large bungalow with Tudor Revival features. Mr. and Mrs. John E. Freitas came to Fairfield in the mid-1870's from the Azores. This appealing house combines the charm of the half-timbered English cottage with forms of the California bungalow. The pruned formal shrubbery and careful planting heighten its dollhouse character.



9 745 JACKSON STREET, Ca. 1915. The treatment of the flaring gable tops and eaves lends a Japanese air to the bungalow. The multiple gables all have exposed rafters. A wrap-around glass sunporch contains small panes in the upper sash and a brick string course. The house was originally located on the Sheldon ranch, Chadbourne Lane, in the Sacramento Northern Railroad right of way, and was moved to its present location about 1933.

10 844 EMPIRE STREET EARLY 1900's - perhaps Ca. 1919. An example of a simple box where slightly decorative forms occur in the steeply-pitched gable roof. The house steps in from the top as it moves from the top gable, past a diamond bay in a recessed plane, to a deep-set porch. The asbestos siding may originally have been dark wood shingles. David Weir hired Luther Burbank to plant trees, which are still in existence in the front and side yards.

11 928 EMPIRE STREET, Ca. 1900. A one-and-a-half story wood frame building with a raised basement. The hip roof has cross-gabled wings which are shingled. Porches have been inserted in the angles and contain stickwork railings.

12 CHURCH OF GOD, EMPIRE STREET (next to 928) 1893, remodeled 1917. A California version of the Gothic Revival with brown shingles, originally built for the Methodist Church. It was remodeled in 1917. It has a multiple-gabled roof with overhanging eaves and curved brackets. The main entrance is located in the polygonal corner tower. There are lancet shaped, stained glass windows, and this Gothic arch form is repeated in the ventilators in the tower. The corner buttresses are shingled. A one-story wing is located behind the church. Pruned hedges and tree-lined streets complement this prominent corner building.



13 1010 EMPIRE GOOSEN MANSION 1905-1910. One of the outstanding examples of residential architecture in Fairfield, the Goosen Mansion is a beautifully detailed Colonial Revival house set in a large and appropriately formal yard. The most notable feature of the house is its giant pedimented portico with Ionic columns. The house itself, has a hip roof with broad overhanging eaves and paneled soffits, giant Ionic corner pilasters and a delicately handled, Adamesque doorway. The house originally had a copper roof which was



replaced in the 1950's because of leakage. The original architects were McCullum, McDougal, and Cameron.

14 935 MISSOURI STREET, Ca. 1880. This simple well-maintained cottage is typical of many of the earliest houses in Fairfield and Suisun City. The simplicity of these houses befitted the circumstances of many of the early residents of the area. As the population prospered, some of these houses were replaced by larger and more stylish ones. Others were remodeled and additions made. This house was built on Texas Street, relocated on Madison Street and moved again in the 1940's to its present location.

15 836 R DELAWARE, Ca. 1905. Originally this building was a shoe repair shop on the 900 block of Texas Street. When the downtown was "modernized" in the 1950's, this quaint little building with a Western false front was moved to the alley behind 836 Delaware and turned into a home.



16 925 DELAWARE, Ca. 1895. A common late Victorian cottage with Stick-Eastlake details. The form combines a hip-roofed square and a projecting gabled angled bay. It probably had a porch at one time. The very lacy gable decoration distinguishes this otherwise typical cottage.

17 927 BROADWAY STREET, Ca. 1910. A simply detailed, shingled box in a carpenter's version of the Shingle Style. The steeply-pitched gable roof, with shed dormers, overhangs the front angled bay and recessed entranceway. Flash glass decorates the upper sashes. The chimney of this house was damaged by the Port Chicago blast in the mid-1960's.

18 747 BROADWAY, Ca. 1913. A good example of a simple house type, the square cottage, which is found all over the country, but most commonly in Fairfield. Features of the square cottage are a hip roof and full or partial porch under the main roof. The earliest examples of the type, dating from the 1890's, were sometimes simply ornamented in the late Victorian details. The majority of them, built between 1900 and 1915, contained no decorations or only a slight suggestion of the Colonial revival. This example is the best in a prominent row on Broadway which is greatly enhanced by the tree-lined street. This house was built by Nicholas Garben and his father-in-law, Claus Frederick Siebe. It was owned by the Garben family until 1973. Reportedly, many of the cottages on this block and in the vicinity were originally built as company-town housing on Cement Hill. The buildings were moved when the cement factory closed.

19 748 BROADWAY, Ca. 1880, OLD POST OFFICE. The old post office was originally located on the ground of the present courthouse. It is

now empty and in need of some care. The shoe box shaped building has a false front detailed with a bracketed cornice and a paneled frieze. Below that is the shed roof of a full porch which may be an addition. The sawn porch brackets are original, the basket-weave railing is an alteration. The window trim includes bracketed lintels and incised panels.



20 UNION AVENUE AND TEXAS STREET, 1931, SOLANO COUNTY FREE LIBRARY AND COUNTY BUILDING. This Spanish Colonial Revival style building completes the impressive



intersection where the Courthouse and the Hall of Justice are located. The L-shaped building was designed by

W.E. Coffman. It has red tile gable-roofed wings, and a shed-roofed porch leads to the former Fairfield-Suisun library entry at the junction of the wings. Ornamentation includes tile work, pierce grills and a plaster relief surrounding the building entrance. A dignified statue of Chief Solano, by sculptor William Gordon Huff, was added in 1934. It graces a carefully landscaped site which includes a lawn, flower gardens, shrubs, eucalyptus and evergreen trees.

21 UNION AVENUE AT TEXAS STREET, Ca. 1925, SOLANO COUNTY HALL OF JUSTICE. A Neo-Classical Revival building that was built on the Armijo High School campus. The symmetrical composition has a central columned portico and slightly projecting end pavilions. Details include a rusticated base and a projecting cornice which has dentils and brackets over the entrance. A 1970 remodeling has added a sprayed concrete finish, anodized aluminum windows and screens, and a modern south wing. The palms of Union Street are the building's best landscaping features.

