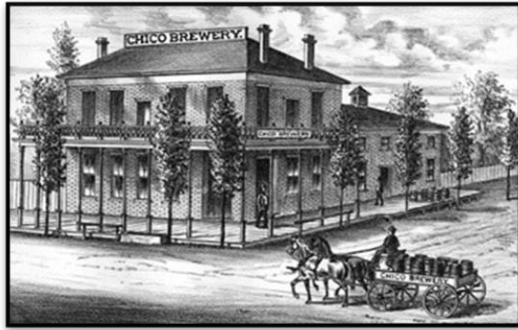


# *The Brewer & The Blacksmith*

*The Tale of Two Immigrants and How They  
Shaped Half of a Block in Chico's History*

*Charles  
Croissant's  
Chico  
Brewery  
c.1874*



*Andy  
Anderson's  
Blacksmith  
Shop c.1905*

*Charles Ray Wilson*

A Publication from  
*Sons In Retirement*  
*Bidwell Branch 110*  
*Chico, California 2024*

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# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

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# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Acknowledgements

In writing and compiling the information for this book, every attempt has been made to document its sources and accurately report the facts. Any errors that might have been made are unintentional. The exhibits used, which are a testament to the invaluable contributions of many, came from multiple sources, and I apologize if it appears I did not give proper credit to others who contributed.

I want to thank all the individuals for their collective contributions, and specifically the following individuals:

- Barbara Alger for generously providing her assistance in editing and proofing.
- Ryan Browar Archives Specialist, CSU -Special Collections.
- Anna Maria Kawecka, Archivist, Records Analyst, Butte County Archives Division.
- Dave Richer owner of Earthen Iron for granting me access to his shop located in the historic Anderson's Blacksmith Shop.

## Dedication

I dedicate this book to my wife Tina, for giving me the time to pursue my desire to learn more about Chico's history.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## About the Author

Charles Ray Wilson, born in 1943 in Salem, Oregon, has always been deeply fascinated by his family history. His interest in genealogy has led him and his wife, Tina, on numerous national and international adventures. He has published his father's and grandfather's biographies and, most recently, his third book, *Wire Down—A Memoir: Life in the Forties on the World's Largest Hop Ranch in the Hop Capital of the World*.

Ray, now retired, is far from idle. He resides in Chico, CA, where he is an active member of Sons in Retirement organization and pursues his passion for researching Chico's History.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## SIR Publication Information

SONS IN RETIREMENT (SIR) is a social organization for men. The organization is designed to be a luncheon club composed of men no longer involved in full-time occupations. The purpose of SIR is to promote the wellbeing of men through association of other men interested in increasing their quality of life through developing new friendships, through activities with physical and mental social involvement.

SIR branches sponsor a variety of activities, and the Chico Branch 110 has an active “Chico History Activity” which involves exploring topics related to Chico’s historic buildings, institutions, businesses and people. Besides enjoying monthly meetings with discussions of topics of interest and some more formal presentations, some members are involved in pursuing original research on topics of historic interest in Chico.

These research projects are driven by an individual’s curiosity and often result in a significant amount of information which seems worthy of sharing. Besides the desire to share the information, there is often a strong desire/goal of the preservation of this historical information for other interested people. These desires often lead to consideration of publishing the results of the research. Various options are available but the idea of having a publication crediting the SIR organization with the origin of the efforts leading to publications seemed attractive.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Preface

This is the story of two young men who migrated to America seeking adventure and fortune. The story begins with a German named Charles P. Croissant (1835-1919) who came to Butte County with nothing but a dream. He was able to build a brewery on a half block of land he purchased from John Bidwell in an area of Chico known as The Junction.

The story follows the chronological changes in ownership and should not be construed as an accurate chain of title. The story follows the numerous changes and uses to existing buildings and notes the addition of new improvements added between 1874 until 1929 when a blacksmith from Denmark named Andy Anderson (1886-1961) purchased it. After 95 years, the Anderson Estate still owns the property.

The Chico Brewery Building and Andy Anderson's Blacksmith Shop are a timeless legacy and testament to these remarkable men. They are not just buildings but living pieces of history that connect us to the town's past. Both men demonstrated an indomitable spirit and established themselves as Chico's leading businessmen.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The story of Charles Croissant and Andy Anderson is as accurate and authentic as can be. Every effort has been made to thoroughly document all events. Where there was a lack of documented hard evidence, the author relied on his good judgment and sound reasoning to draw logical conclusions. These incidents are acknowledged using phrases like "It is logical to conclude" or "It is logical to believe." You can trust in the authenticity of this historical account.



# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Introduction:

### The Founder of the Chico Brewery

Charles Phillip Croissant, the founder of the Chico Brewery, was born in Alsace-Lorraine, Germany, a small town near the border of France, on October 18, 1835. His father, Johann Martin Croissant, who was of French ancestry, died when Charles was only twenty-one months old.

Charles was born just five years after the start of the mass immigration to the United States and Canada, and six years before the start of the migration along the Oregon Trail (1841-1869). He was twelve when the California Gold Rush started (1848-1855), which most likely sparked Charles' desire to head out west.

At age fifteen, Charles bid farewell to his mother and siblings and embarked on a voyage to America to seek his fortune in the gold fields of California. With bravery and determination, he began his journey into a whole new world.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Onward West to the Gold Fields

He had only briefly been on the East Coast when he packed up his belongings and set out for Butte, California, which became Butte County after statehood. It was seventeen years before the U.S. Transcontinental Railroad was opened in 1869, so his journey most likely involved traveling part of the way by stagecoach, horseback, or possibly on a wagon train.

The trip would take several weeks if not months. A horse can only travel about 25 to 30 miles a day depending on the terrain, the age, and the condition of the horse, among other factors. A stagecoach would be faster since there were frequent changes of horses.

Embarking on a journey of over 4,000 miles from Germany in 1852, he was driven by a fervent desire to find gold. His path led him to Ophir City, which is what Oroville was called before statehood. This was a time of great adventure and uncertainty as he bravely navigated the uncharted territories of the Gold Rush era.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Change of Plans and a Trip Back East

It seemed most apparent that Charles came out West to seek his fortune in gold, but when he got here, for some unknown reason, he turned around and went back to the East Coast for a brief time before returning to Butte County in 1855, where he stayed for the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup>

We can only speculate why Charles returned to the East; perhaps he had met a girl when he first came to America and came back for her, but now she was gone, leaving behind a mystery that still intrigues us.

## Charles Returns to Butte, California

When he arrived back in Oroville, his first objective was to find work to help supplement his income while hoping to strike it rich in the gold fields. History has yet to show us what kind of work Charles found, a gap in the historical record that leaves us eager for more information. But given the number of saloons in the area, it is possible he worked as a bartender. He could also have worked as a farmer, since we know he did some farming later in life.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Establishes a Partnership

If it were his original plan to get rich searching for gold, he would have wasted no time. He had only been in Oroville two years when he partnered with three other men to placer mine for gold. His partners were William Schneider, L. M. O'Farrell and L.E. Day.<sup>2</sup> They filed a claim on an eighty-four-acre placer mine called the Union Gravel Mine.

Of his three partners, Charles hit it off best with Mr. Schneider. He was just four years older than Charles and had also migrated to America from Germany a couple of years before Charles. Mr. Schneider and Charles had a lot in common: both were German, migrated to America early, and were entrepreneurially minded.

The only evidence suggesting they succeeded in finding gold is that William and Charles later became partners in two saloons and other properties. It was a partnership that changed Charles' life significantly.

The number of business partnerships that ended unfavorably was widely reported yet they were not discouraged. They apparently felt comfortable knowing they had similar interests and ambitions. Their goal was to own more than one saloon and to start brewing their beer.

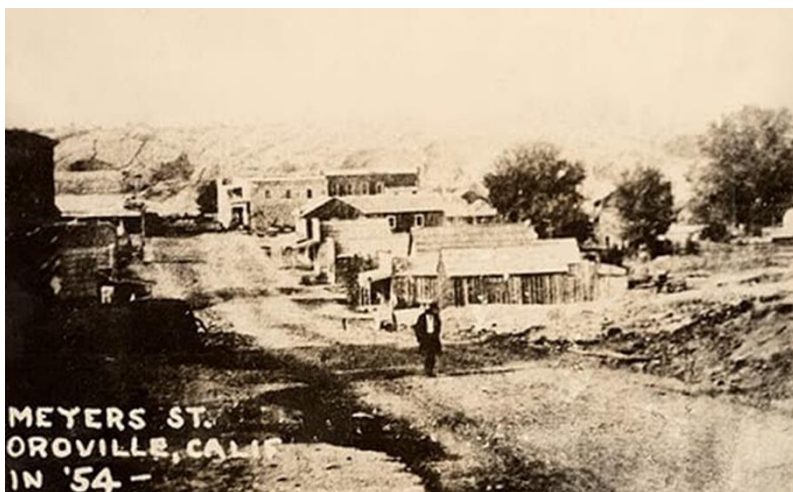
## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

William was already well established, and he owned the Bank Exchange Saloon when, in 1865, he purchased the City Brewery on Myers Steet, despite its storied history.

### City Brewery History

The story of the City Brewery is typical of the saloon business environment at the time. Investors had built a new brewery building and probably overextended themselves. J. A. Schiller's advertisement in the Oroville Daily Butte Record on August 11, 1857, boasts of having finished one of the most complete breweries in the State.

However, in the following months, several notices of default and declaration of a sole trader, as well as notices of not being responsible for the debt of the saloon, were filed.



Source: Calisphere Images Oroville, CA. A photo of Meyers Street 1854, three years before the City Brewery was built.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

On February 2, 1858, David Maier published, "Notice is given that he will not be responsible for any debts contracted by Wm. Geer of the firm Maier & Geer, owners of the City Brewery." A few days later, William Geer posted that he had sold his interest to Conrad Tempel.

In September 1858, Conrad Tempel advertised that he now owned the City Brewery and was prepared to manufacture Lager Beer.<sup>3</sup>

The ownership of the saloons changed so often that it was a job just keeping track of who the current owners were.



**LAGER BEER!**

**Conrad Tempel's  
CITY BREWERY!**

 WE ARE NOW PREPARED TO manufacture Lager Beer of a superior article, the materials used being conducive to health and of invigorating quality.— Hotel keepers and Saloons will be furnished at all times. Call and see us, and try our beverage.

**G. TEMPEL**

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The following notice to the editor of the Daily Butte Record regarding a notice of the sale of the City Brewery, read in part, “We are satisfied that you (meaning the paper) have been misled by misrepresentation of the facts by our enemies for the purpose of injuring our credit and business.” It went on to say that they still owned the saloon. The Daily Butte Record played a crucial role in documenting these ownership changes.

The history of the City Brewery was typical of many saloons at the time. When William purchased the Brewery in 1865, it is unknown whether it was having financial difficulties. The newspaper article suggests that William Schneider saw an opportunity to create value by remodeling the saloon. The newspaper reported that “Mr. Schneider was thoroughly repairing the same and has commenced to erect a large and spacious saloon, or cellar, which will make ‘comfortable quarters’ in the summertime.”<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after, a strategic partnership was announced between William and Charles, who became partners in both the City Brewery and the Bank Exchange Saloon. They saw the potential to offer high-quality beer at a competitive price and were brewing and selling beer in the City Brewery within a month. Based on their advertisements, it seems Charles was focused on brewing the beer and managing the Bank Exchange, while William concentrated on other aspects of the business. As their relationship continued to

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

develop, they became fifty-fifty partners in other properties they purchased.

Advertisements told the readers that they sold lager beer for wholesale and retail, and “All orders *that are left at the Bank Exchange Saloon on Montgomery Street or City Brewery on Myers Street will be promptly attended to.*”<sup>5</sup>

Charles knew the saloon business was challenging and risky. However, it came with high rewards, and he must have felt comfortable partnering with William due to shared interests and backgrounds. Regardless of whatever concerns he may have had, he moved forward with youthful confidence.

Although there were many saloons in Oroville at the time, most appeared to be doing well, and Charles undoubtedly felt confident that he and William would be successful.

### Finding a Niche in the Market

Now that Charles was in the saloon business, thanks to the success of his mining efforts and his partnership with William, he became aware that most saloons advertised as a brewery when they only imported their beer; they did not manufacture it themselves



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Setting themselves apart from the norm, the Oroville Brewery, owned by A. Berg & Co., did not operate a saloon. Instead, they focused on efficient service, promising prompt and free delivery. Their 1857 advertisement boasted, "*They spared neither time nor expense for the production of an article which may compete with anything of its kind in California.*"<sup>6</sup>

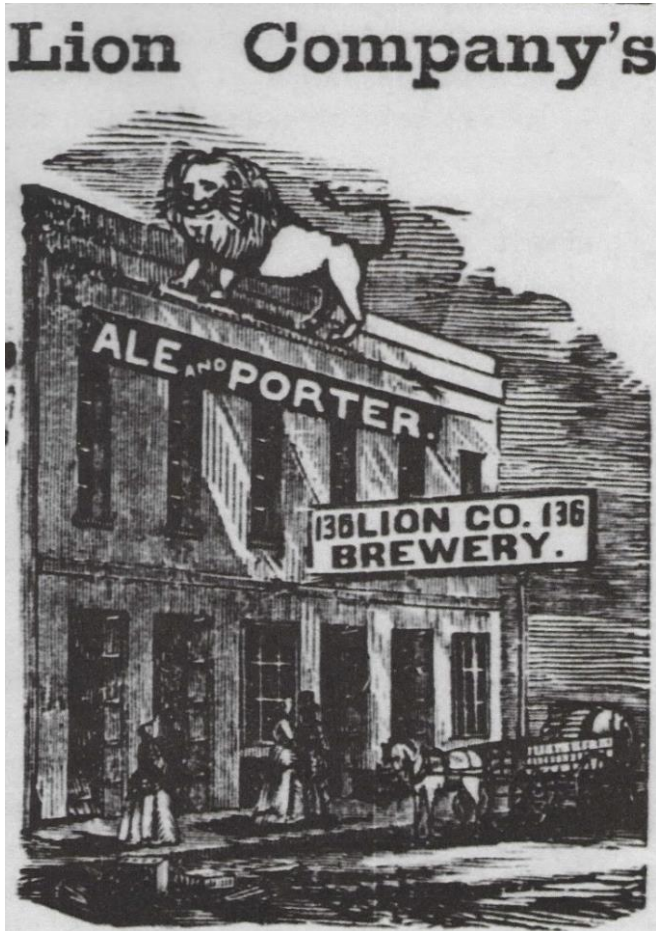


Over time, Charles discovered that the market was dominated by low quality beer and that the high-quality beer was being imported from San Francisco, particularly from the Lion Company Brewery, a major player. His most formidable competition was the M. M. Wyer Company, the exclusive agent for Lion Company's premium ale.

In May 1857, a reporter for the Weekly Butte Record named several saloons and breweries, specifically naming H. B. Hunt & Co., which sold both wholesale and retail wine

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

and liquor, and were agents for the Lion Co.'s celebrated Cream Ale from the Empire Brewery in San Francisco.



Amidst this bustling scene, the Ham Light's Billiard Saloon located in the U.S. Building soon emerged as a formidable competitor. Boasting four magnificent slate bed

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

pool tables, this establishment was not to be underestimated. As noted previously, it was common for saloons, even those with their own breweries, to import beer from the renowned Empire Brewery in San Francisco. A fact that would have surely piqued Charles' interest.

**Lager Beer!**  
**BETTER THAN EVER!**  
**T**HE PROPRIETORS OF THE CITY BREWERY call herewith the attention of the hotel and barkeepers of this town and vicinity to the fact that they have made arrangements to give perfect satisfaction to all consumers of the above beverage, and at such prices as will suit the present hard times.  
Give them a call and judge for yourselves.  
WM. GEER & CO.  
City Brewery, Oroville.  
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### Litigation and Market Demand

Charles may have had some concerns about being successful in the saloon and brewery business, given the number of partnerships posting "Notices of Dissolution" of partnerships which appeared in the papers regularly. If so, those concerns were mitigated if he read the article in the May 2, 1957, Weekly Butte Record or the article posted in the Weekly Butte Record in January 1867

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

"A Berg & Co., the enterprising proprietors of the Oroville Brewery above the mill, keep their establishment constantly in operation. At no time since they commenced business have they been able to supply the demand for excellent lager beer."

A reporter for the Weekly Butte Record in January 1867 noted that the proposed construction of a new building in Oroville was compared to "*a nuisance of a building resembling the Oroville Brewery in its construction, i.e., half granite, half brick and topped off with shakes.*" The reporter noted that despite the criticism of their building construction, the Brewery's success was unwavering.

**PREMIUM ALE!**  
In 10, 16, and 32 gallon Packages.  
**AGENCY AND STOREHOUSE,**  
Montgomery street, OROVILLE, and D street, oppo-  
site the Theatre, MARYSVILLE.  
**M. M. WYER, Sole Agent.**

Parties purchasing the above Ale will be particular in observing the brand on each barrel, for none is genuine except stamped with the "LION," and lettered 36 Pine street, San Francisco, as there is an Ale in this market which may be passed off for the Lion Company's Ale.

Wholesale dealers are respectfully invited to call on the Agent and satisfy themselves, as he has instructions from the Company to act in the most liberal way with all his customers.

N. B.—This Ale is only to be had at the above Agency, in Marysville and Oroville. All other is a counterfeit.

(fy20) M. M. W.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Charles – A Model Citizen

If Charles had a plan for his life, it could not have played out any better. He had been in America for less than ten years, had come to Butte County seeking gold, found an investment partner, and now owned a 50% interest in the Bank Exchange Saloon and the City Brewery in Oroville.

## Civic Duties and Responsibilities

Charles came to America just before the start of the Civil War (1861-1865) and coming from Germany at a time that country was having problems, he had a strong feeling about what it meant to be an American, so on August 20,



# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

1860, he received his Naturalization Certificate of Citizenship in Butte County, California.<sup>7</sup>

11, 7 10  
July 7, 1864

United States of America,  
State of }  
County of } ss.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> day of July 1864, personally appeared  
before me

*Charles Croissant*

to me known to be a Citizen of the United States, and deposed that he wanted to apply for an United States Passport, whereupon I took the personal description, as follows:

Age, 29 Years,	Mouth, common
Stature, 5 Feet, 10 Inches,	Build, square
Breath, high	Hair, light brown
Eyes, dark gray	Complexion, healthy
Nose, arched	Face, square

In witness whereof, I have signed my name and caused my notarial seal of office to be affixed hereto,

Signature of the Applicant: }  
*Charles Croissant*

*Leopold Hamburger*  
Notary Public

Four years later, on July 6, 1864, just before the end of the Civil War, he took the Oath of Allegiance, swearing to defend the United States.<sup>8</sup> His physical description indicated he was twenty-nine years old, stood 5' 10" and had dark eyes, and light brown hair.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The death of Prince: The town thought so highly of Charles that when his dog Prince died, it made headlines on page one of the Chico Weekly Enterprise: *The Death of Prince - The vital spark of "Prince," Charlie Croissant's Scotch terrier quit his mortal frame about 9 AM this morning.* Charles had gotten the dog as a puppy while living in Oroville. The dog was nineteen years old.

### Charles Gets Married and Starts Family

Charles was thirty years old and had already accomplished major business objectives when he set his sights on getting married and starting a family. He met and married Bertha Ehrhardt from Yuba County in September 1865, just five months after President Lincoln was assassinated. Their marriage lasted 54 years until he died in 1919.

Charles and Bertha had been married for twelve months when they started their family. As was customary back then, they had a large family of two boys and three girls. They were Charles G., who was known as Charles Jr. and Otto H. They had three girls, Lillie, Anna and Bertha.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## A New Opportunity

### Holmes & Mitchell Open Brewery in Chico

William had just purchased the City Brewery in Oroville and formed a partnership with Charles when, on April 22, 1865, Mr. E.W. Mitchell and Mr. Holmes announced that they had "...erected a large and splendid brewery establishment and are now extensively engaged in the manufacture of Ale, Porter, and Beer" in Chico, California.<sup>9</sup>

**CHICO BREWERY!**  
**HOLMES & MITCHELL,**  
PROPRIETORS.

---

**W**OULD RESPECTFULLY INFORM THE public that they have just erected a large and splendid Brewery Establishment, and are now extensively engaged in the manufacture of

**ALE,**  
**PORTER,**  
**AND BEER!**

And are now ready to fill all orders with the greatest dispatch. A liberal share of patronage is solicited.  
Chico, April 22, 1865. n25-4f



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Croissant and Schneider Dissolve Partnership

On November 8, 1865, Charles Croissant sold all his assets to William Schneider for \$2,200. His assets included his 50% interest in the Bank Exchange Saloon, 50% in the City Brewery, and 50% in three horses, three wagons, and a homesite.<sup>10</sup>

Then ten days later, on November 18, 1865, it was announced in the Weekly Butte Record that he and William were dissolving their partnership "with mutual consent," a decision that was made amicably and with both parties' agreement.

**Notice.**

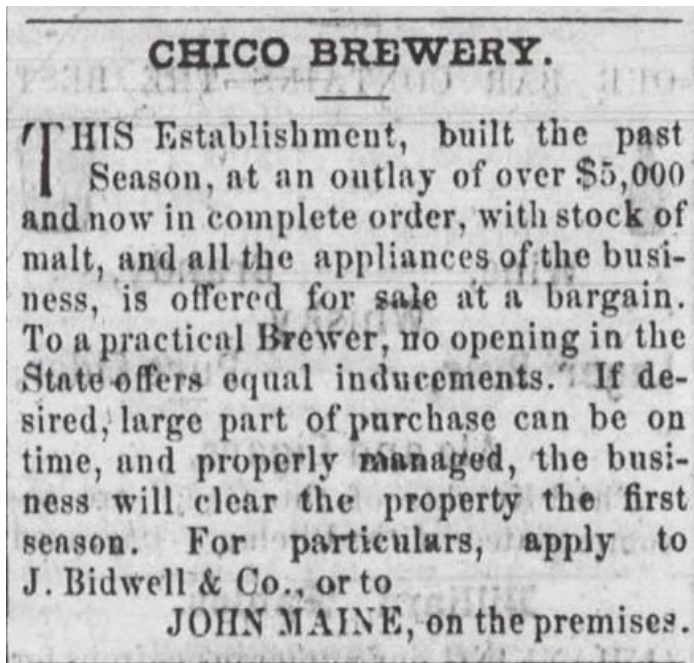
**D**ISSOLUTION OF CO-PARTNERSHIP—The copartnership heretofore existing between the undersigned, under the style and firm of Schneider & Croissant, in Oroville, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due the late firm may be paid to Wm. Schneider, who is alone authorized to receive any money due said firm. All debts due by the said firm to be paid by Wm. Schneider.

CHARLES CROISSANT,  
WM. SCHNEIDER.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Bidwell Offers Chico Brewery For Sale

Mitchell and Holmes success at brewing beer, however, was short-lived. Eight months after they opened their Brewery, J. Bidwell & Co. ran an advertisement on December 30, 1865, offering to sell the Brewery. Mr. John Bidwell built the building, complete with stock of malt and all the business appliances. The ad stated that "The brewery had been built the past season for an outlay of over \$5,000." Notably, generous terms were offered. It was announced a few months later that Mr. Mitchell was "Insolvent."



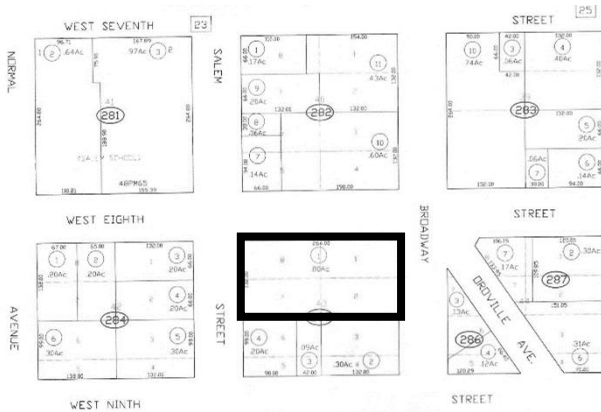
**CHICO BREWERY.**

**T**HIS Establishment, built the past Season, at an outlay of over \$5,000 and now in complete order, with stock of malt, and all the appliances of the business, is offered for sale at a bargain. To a practical Brewer, no opening in the State offers equal inducements. If desired, large part of purchase can be on time, and properly managed, the business will clear the property the first season. For particulars, apply to J. Bidwell & Co., or to  
**JOHN MAINE, on the premises.**

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Croissant's Golden Opportunity

Learning that Holmes and Mitchell failed to run their Brewery in Chico was good news to Charles. He could not pass up this opportunity. A new brewery in the Chico area known as “The Junction” was precisely the location he wanted. He could not have asked for more. The Junction gained significance in 1864 when John Bidwell and his partners constructed the Humboldt Wagon Road Company stage line to Ruby City, Idaho.



It was a strategic location for a saloon and brewery because those about to make the 16-day journey to Idaho started where Humboldt Avenue (now Oroville Avenue) intersected with Main Street, Broadway, and West Eighth Street. The Chico Brewery was in the middle of all the action, located on the corner of Broadway and West Eighth Streets. The area was developing quickly with hotels, blacksmith shops, stores, and everything the travelers needed.<sup>11</sup>

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Croissant Opens Chico Brewery - 1866

#### Bidwell Sells Property to Croissant

As the ad suggested, Bidwell was open to reasonable offers, and seeing that Charles had \$2,800 cash in hand, Mr. Bidwell accepted his offer. The deal, which included a stock of malt and all the appliances necessary to start brewing beer, closed on February 8, 1866.<sup>12</sup> Charles was now in business brewing beer in Chico, even though it was in the building where Homes & Mitchell's business had failed.

Not only did Charles now own his brewery, but the deal included over three-quarters of an acre of surrounding land, specifically, lots 1, 2, 7, and 8 of Block 43 of the City of Chico, State of California. The site had 264 feet of frontage on the southerly side of West Eighth Street, 132 feet on the westerly side of Broadway, and 132 feet on the easterly side of Salem Street. In the 158 years since the original transfer, the property has never been further subdivided, even though it has changed ownership several times.

On April 7, 1866, just four months after Holmes and Mitchell closed their doors, The Chico Weekly Courant announced that Charles had opened his new brewery in the same building.

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**OPENING.**—Chas. Croissant, the new Brewer (and by the way a *practical* Brewer, who knows how to make good Lager) invites everybody down to the Chico Brewery this afternoon to take “zwei glass lager, and fight mit Sigel.” In other words, he will give a free entertainment at the Brewery this afternoon to which everybody are invited. Chico hereafter is to be furnished with home-made lager that can't be beat.

He immediately begins advertising the “Chico Brewery.” Buildings in Chico had not yet been assigned a street-numbered address. However, people understood that the Chico Brewery was the building originally built for Mr. Mitchell in The Junction. The ad asks for the patronage of Chico and vicinity residences.

Eight years after Charles originally purchased the property from Bidwell, on February 6, 1874, another deed was recorded on February 8, 1866, again transferring the same four parcels from Bidwell to Croissant. The total consideration was \$1.00, but there was no explanation for the second recording. Mr. may have held the title to the land

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

as collateral for a loan he might have made to Charles so that he could tear down the brewery and build a new brewery to his specifications.

The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Croissant Opens New Brewery - 1874

**CHICO BREWERY**  
—AND—  
**SALOON,**  
AT THE JUNCTION.  
**CHAS. CROISSANT, Prop.**

THE best of Lager Beer manufactured  
and sold at Wholesale and Retail.  
All orders left at the Brewery will be  
promptly attended to.

**SALOON.**

In am now occupying my new building  
and have everything fitted up in the  
best of style, where I keep the best of

**LIQUORS,**  
Foreign and Domestic  
**WINES,**  
And the best brands of  
**CIGARS.**

Call and see me,  
myself, CHAS. CROISSANT.

In an advertisement on June 26, 1874, Charles proudly announced, "I am now occupying my new building and have everything fitted up in the last of style. Here, I offer the highest quality of Liquors, wines, and cigars, a testament to my commitment to excellence."

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

In his book, the History of Butte County, California, Harry L. Wells, published in 1882, states, “The Chico Brewery was built in 1866 by a man named Mitchell. That building was torn down and rebuilt in 1872 by C. Croissant.”<sup>13</sup> Debra Moon, in her book Chico Life and Times of a City of Fortune, also noted that Croissant tore down a building built in 1866 by Mr. Mitchel.<sup>14</sup>



Source: CSU Chico Digital Collections ID: sc7744

The architectural style of the Chico Brewery building has been described as a two-story 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial brick structure. A low-hipped metal roof tops its rectangular shape. Originally, it was encircled on two sides by a veranda with a wood guardrail.



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

A later addition to the rear of the building includes arched windows on the second floor. Many side windows have been bricked up in the original structure; the street-level facade has been remodeled into two early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century storefronts with plate glass windows and double entry doors. Glass bricks in the sidewalk along West Eighth Street light the basement, a testament to its historical significance



Source: 2023 Photo – Ray Wilson

At the time of its construction, it was one of the finest brick commercial structures in Chico, and it remained the only brewery in the area for many years, a fact that underscores its historical importance.<sup>15</sup>

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The photograph, taken in the fall of 2023, shows the building as it exists today. The green and gold sign advertising The Junction still hangs on the corner of the building. All but one of the apartments on the second floor are vacant.

### A Community Leader

Not long after Charles opened the Chico Brewery, a reporter for the Weekly Butte Record wrote that, *"It was a place where you could have a hearty schooner of beer with the good-hearted proprietor."*

Charles was well-liked and he played a significant role in Chico's early development and was one of the city's most prominent citizens. In February 1882, he was elected Town Trustee and was reelected several times thereafter.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## The Risk and Challenges to Success

### Happening in the Junction

By 1877, The Junction was an essential stop for visitors to the town. They found it fully equipped to take care of all their needs. The area had many blacksmith shops, wagon-making shops, corrals and stables, paint shops, harness shops, saloons, barber shops, and restaurants. The Junction was the business center itself, which prompted Charles to one day open a feed mill.<sup>16</sup>

On January 11, 1878, a reporter for the Chico Weekly Enterprise wrote,

*“We visited the Chico Brewery to see the improvements being made. Mr. Croissant is putting up a frame at the rear of the brick building to be used as the Brewery. The introduction of steam power will run the feed mill and pump. The brick where the brewery bottles are now will be converted into a stockroom, while the saloon will remain as it is now.”*

*“With this change, Charles contemplates manufacturing a better-quality beer all through the summer months, as the frame will allow the beer to cool much smoother than it formally did in the brick. Mr. Croissant, little by little, has enlarged his premises, and until now, he has about the finest Brewery in the northern portion of the state.”<sup>17</sup>*

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Businesses Doing Well in The Junction - 1881

In the winter of 1881, a reporter for the Weekly Butte Record visited the Junction and Chapmantown to see what he called "*The Businesses and Beauty of that Part of Our City.*"

*"The Chapmantown neighborhood is being built up quickly and presents a pleasant and clean appearance. Most dwellings are two stories and are surrounded by large and well-kept grounds. This is now one of the desirable parts of town for a residence."*

At the Junction, the reporter found everything in good shape, and the stores, meat markets, and hotels here are all doing a thriving trade. The Junction is the manufacturing part of the town. He noted that Rusby & Mery's "Chico Iron Works" was the principle establishment in the area. They were doing a lot of work making mills and mining machinery, farming implements, and everything manufactured in a first-class foundry. He also noted that A. B. Allen was building at the Junction, the county's largest blacksmith shop and carriage factory.

The Chico Brewery, under the ownership of Charles Croissant, was making a name for itself with its superior-quality beer. The reporter's account hinted at the Brewery's

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

growing reputation and the rewards reaped by its owner, Charles Croissant, for his dedication and hard work.<sup>18</sup>

### Croissant Adds Grain and Feed Mill - 1882

In an advertisement on December 15, 1882, Croissant announced that he had finished adding all the necessary machinery for crushing grain and feed. The same ad acknowledges that the recent alterations made to the Brewery enable him to offer better quality lager beer. He planned to make the reputation of the Chico Brewery second to none in the State.<sup>19</sup>

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### **GRAIN AND FEED MILL.**

**H**AVING put in my premises at the  
**CHICO BREWERY,!!!**

all the necessary machinery for crushing

### **GRAIN AND FEED,**

I respectfully ask the Farmers of this vicinity to call and give me a trial.

**T**HE subscriber would return thanks for the liberal patronage bestowed upon the

### **Chico Brewery**

Since it opened, and would respectfully ask a continuance of the same. The late alterations made enables him to offer a better quality of

### **Lager Beer**

Than has ever been offered in Chico, and no pains will be spared to make the reputation of the Chico Brewery second to none in the State..

The Saloon attached to the Brewery is supplied with the best liquors and cigars.

ad5tf

**CHAS. CROISSANT.**

Charles was a born entrepreneur who knew how to take a calculated risk. That is what he did when he became a partner with three men in search of gold. He beat the odds and accumulated enough wealth to invest in the saloon business with one of his gold mining partners, William Schneider. Together, they invested in two breweries, and again, they beat the odds by becoming successful in an incredibly competitive market.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

His most significant risk came when he sold everything he owned to William and moved to Chico to start his own saloon and brewery business. He not only survived starting his own brewery in Chico, but his brewery business was exceeding his wildest dreams. He ventured into other sources of revenue, like adding a grain and feed mill. Now that he could start to feel comfortable, he was facing a new challenge from the Temperance Movement.

### The Temperance Movement

A significant challenge to his future success started in 1881 with a crusade against saloon owners for keeping their places of business open on Sundays. It was referred to as “Sunday Salooning.” The Justice Courts issued sixteen complaints to saloon owners, which included the Chico Brewery. After one defense was found guilty, the remaining fifteen came together and employed legal counsel.<sup>20</sup>

Two years later, the Temperance Movement brought to the attention of the Board of Supervisors that Chico had twice the number of saloons as Oroville, and they pressured the Board of Supervisors to impose a tax of \$50 per month on each saloon. They argued that the new tax would reduce the number of saloons to ten from thirty-two, which they felt would be enough to supply the demands of the city.<sup>21</sup>

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The new liquor tax was passed in October 1883, and by January 1884, twenty-eight saloon owners in the County had not paid the new “Liquor License” of \$50 a month, and the County threatened to file suits. Charles Croissant of Chico and William Schneider of Oroville were both named.<sup>22</sup>

In April 1891, a committee of citizens presented a petition signed mainly by prominent citizens asking for the suppression of all houses of ill-fame within the corporate limits of the town. General Bidwell was present and made some very forcible arguments on behalf of the petitioners. His championing of their cause led to some very pointed remarks both from those of the petitioners present and individual members of the Board.<sup>23</sup>

From all accounts, the Brewery was doing brisk business. Nonetheless, Charles was feeling the pressure, so he sold the Brewery in February of the following year.

### A Shift in the Economic Base

If the risk from the Temperance Movement was not enough to worry about, Charles had to have been concerned about the County's economic base, which was shifting from mining to timber. The good news was that in 1884, Chico's was the largest town in the County.



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

If Croissant had concerns over the decreased mining activity the area once enjoyed, the timber industry looked to become the source of his future business. The Chico Enterprise felt that “The prospects of the town are very flattering.”<sup>24</sup>

### The Risk of Fire

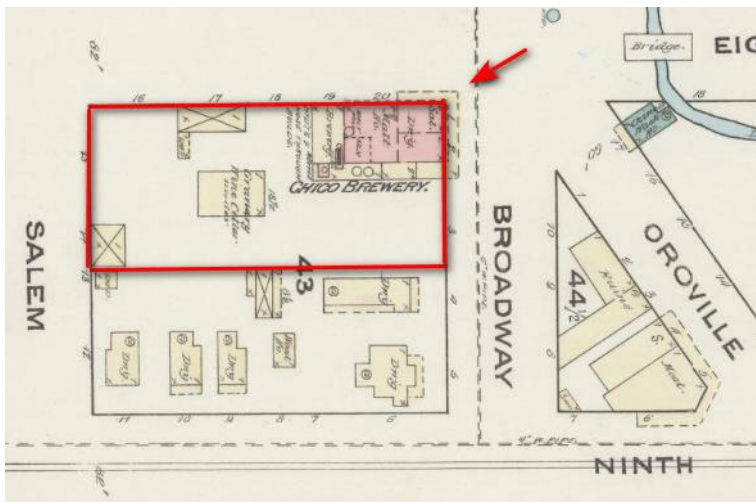
The primary concern of the City Fathers, and no doubt Charles, was fire protection, a crucial aspect of urban development, especially in the city's early days.

In 1890, according to Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Limited, the city water works had two stations consisting of a series of tanks with a capacity of 60,000 gallons that were elevated fifty-five feet above street level. They were filled by a Steam Pump of 100,000-gallon capacity at Station No. 2 which was on Croissant's property. The water came from wells of ample supply.”

The Volunteer Fire Department consisted of two hundred men, one 3rd Class LaFrance Steamer drawn by horses, five independent hose carts, and one hook-and-ladder truck drawn by hand. Telegraph offices were located at the waterworks, railroad depot, hotels, and several business houses.”

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Mr. Croissant was one of the organizers of Engine Company No. 2, Chico Volunteer Fire Department. Acting in his capacity as a City Trustee, Mr. Croissant was responsible for the selection of a new fire engine. On April 27, 1883, he reported to the City Council that he had read the report on the Silsby Fire Engine, which had been tested and was not satisfactory in his judgment. Charles found it “entirely too slow” to get a sufficient quality of steam in as short a time as other steamers could. Additionally, he felt the boiler was not as durable as other engines.<sup>25</sup>



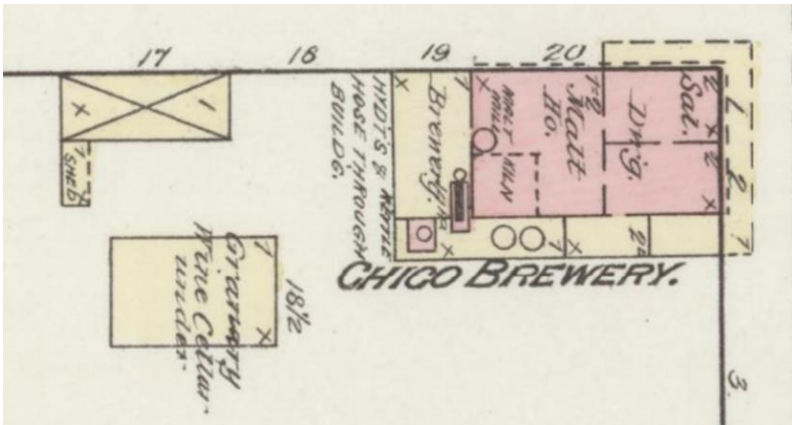
Sanborn Map 1884

In 1884, the Chico Brewery building housed the Brewery and Saloon on the ground floor and, and boarding rooms on the second floor. At other times, the second floor was reportedly used as a brothel.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The enlarged view below shows a wood-frame building with an attached shed facing West Eighth Street that was used as a woodshed in 1884.

The grain and feed mill Charles recently built is shown in the middle of the property and identified as a granary. It had a wine cellar in the basement.



Sanborn Map 1884 - Enlarged View

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Croissant Sells Brewery to Popp - 1892

The headlines read, "Chas Croissant Has Sold Out His Brewery and Saloon at the Junction." The Chico Brewery is one of the oldest institutions in Chico. Charles had been running his Saloon and Brewery in Chico for twenty-five years, and the past seventeen years were in his new building when he sold it to Micheal Popp on February 8, 1892.<sup>26</sup>

**CHICO BREWERY.**  
Chico,  
**MICHAEL POPP, Proprieto**

---

**H**AVING recently purchased the above named Brewery, I beg leave to inform the public that only **FIRST-CLASS BEER** will be manufactured.

---

**CRUSHED BARLEY**  
FOR SALE.

Country Orders solicited

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

A reporter stated, "Mr. Croissant says e is Anxious to Get Out of the Liquor Business and Sold At Sacrifice, Only Getting \$12,000 for the Fine Property With Brick Building and Everything Complete as it Stands." The article goes on to say that he was recently elected a Town Trustee for three years and will devote his time to town affairs.<sup>27</sup>

Charles' focus was not only being redirected to the affairs of the town, but his wife Bertha was suffering from a long-term illness and had become feeble, and he needed to care for her. Less concern may have been about the direction in which the economy was headed. As he had feared a few years earlier, mining interests in the foothills and mountains, which had been the major force in the economy, were giving way to other pursuits. As a result, Chico's population declined by 12.3% between 1880 and 1890, according to Wikipedia. It continued to decline another 9% over the next decade.

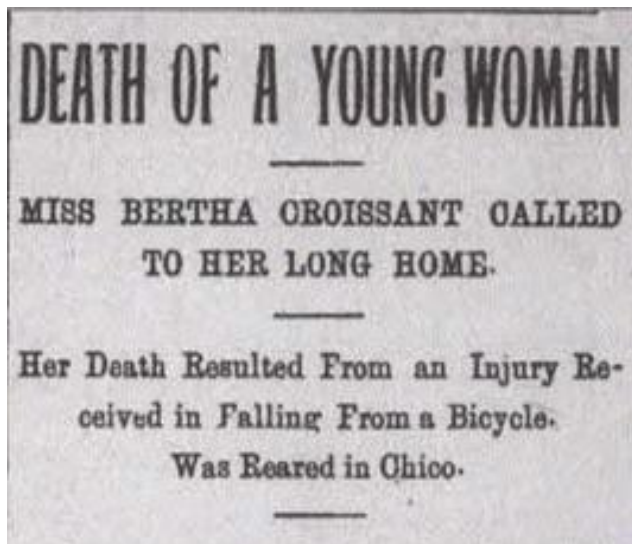
After Charles sold the Brewery, besides attending to the town's affairs, he and his son, Charles Jr. directed their efforts towards Charles' orchard on Oroville Road. A few years earlier, Mr. Croissant had acquired farmland south of town and planted prune trees in his orchard in the late 1880s. The prune trees drew particular attention just a year before he died, because several of these trees, which had been producing prunes for over 30 years, will produce a third

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

more prunes than the French prune trees in the same orchard. Unfortunately, no record of their variety was kept.<sup>28</sup>

### Death of a Young Woman – 1898

In 1898, Charles Croissant received the sad news that his daughter, Bertha, had passed away at the family home in Oakland. She had been recovering from injuries sustained in a fall from a bicycle two years earlier and had gone to Oakland to be with her mother, who was also ill and being cared for by their other daughter, Lillie. Unfortunately, Charles had been quite ill himself and was too weak to make the trip to attend his daughter's funeral.<sup>29</sup>



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Popp Sells Brewery to Scholl - 1899

Michael Popp had owned the Brewery for seven and a half years when he sold it on August 24, 1899, to Mr. John D. Scholl for \$4,737 in gold coins. Mr. Scholl was from Tacoma, Washington, and was said to have extensive experience in the brewery business. Mr. Scholl was the executor and Trustee of the estate of Karoline Scholl.

Apparently, the property had fallen into a state of disrepair. According to newspaper reports, the Brewery and as well as the milling part of the property will undergo a thorough overhauling from top to bottom. However, things went differently than Mr. Scholl had planned. A newspaper article in December 1899 stated that many local businessmen questioned the risk Mr. Scholl had taken by putting so much money into the Brewery.<sup>30</sup>

### Financial Troubles for Scholl

Scholl had only owned the Brewery for a short time when a rumor circulated that it had been sold to a Sacramento Brewery. Mr. Scholl said it was entirely unfounded. A newspaper article in December 1899 discussed how well his brewery business was doing. It noted his beer was being sold in several saloons in town. Unfortunately for Mr. Scholl his tenure was marked by a swift descent into financial difficulties.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Less than a year after his purchase, Mr. H. D. Pherson filed a lawsuit on May 26, 1900, to foreclose on the Chico Brewery for failure to pay a certain \$5,000 promissory note.<sup>31</sup> In a desperate attempt to raise cash, Mr. Scholl advertised quoting new prices for beer, barley crushing, and ice.<sup>32</sup> The situation reached a tipping point on September 21, 1900, when Sheriff Wilson placed the stock of liquor and the fixtures in the Saloon at the Brewery under attachment.<sup>33</sup>

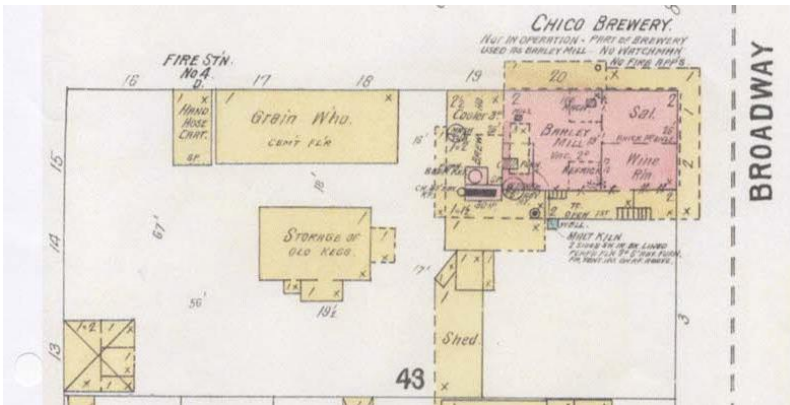


# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Pherson Acquires Brewery Business - 1901

On January 17, 1901 it was announced that Mr. Horace Pherson filed to foreclose on the chattel mortgage on the brewery equipment he had given John D. Scholl.<sup>34</sup>

When Sanborn Map Co. did their inspection in September 1902, the Brewery was still not in operation, after having the Sheriff attached all the equipment and closed the doors a year earlier. The shop on the corner of the building was closed, as was the adjacent wine room that faced Broadway.



Sanborn Map 1902

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The second floor was vacant, and it is noted that the second-floor balcony, which wrapped around the building, had not yet been removed. The Grain and Feed Mill building that Charles Croissant had built in 1884 was now being used for the storage of old beer kegs.

The Brewery had been closed for over five months when it was announced in March 1901 that Mr. Pherson had leased the brewery building to H. C. Bader and Wm. Fitch of Cherokee, California. This new duo brought a wealth of experience in brewing beer and running a saloon. Mr. Bader was the proprietor of a brewery in Cherokee, and Mr. Fitch ran the saloon.<sup>35</sup>

Although Mr. Scholl no longer had control over the brewery business, he or perhaps it was his estate still owned the remainder of the property and over the next eighteen years several changes and additions were made to the property. A few of the most noticeable changes follow.

### Enterprise Soda Works

In March 1907, E. W. Miller, the proprietor of Enterprise Soda Works, which had been located at 800 Broadway, announced he had completed plans to triple his plant's capacity and he was moving into the 3,500 square

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

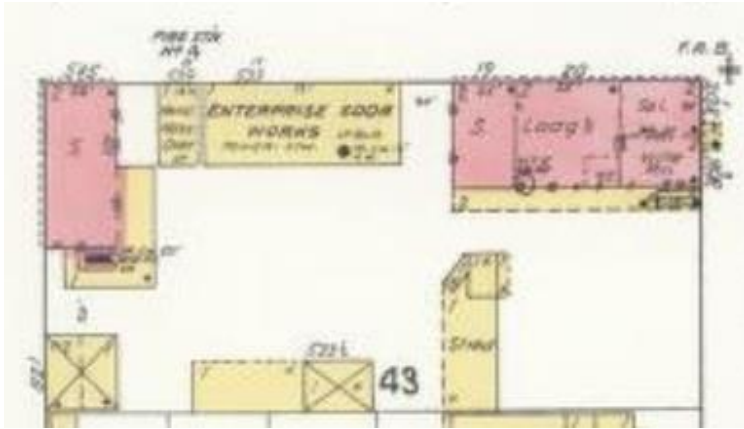
foot single story wood frame structure that fronted West Eighth Street. Enterprise Soda Works manufactured all kinds of carbonated drinks, syrups and extracts. The location where Enterprise Soda Works once stood, today provides access to the parking lot between the Brewery building and the Blacksmith shop.

Five years later, on Saturday July 6, 1912, it was reported that Mr. Dunn and Mr. Taber, the new owners of Enterprise Soda Works, had spent two thousand dollars on new equipment, which included a new ice machine, filler machine and a large beer room. It was noted that Dunn and Taber were agents for Rainier beer.

### New Two-Story Brick Building

A significant improvement to the property was the addition of a two-story brick structure that was constructed on the southeast corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets. The Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory estimates that the building was built in 1905, which brackets Sanborn Map's noted improvements made to the property between 1902 and 1909. Unfortunately, records are not available to tell us who built the building.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith



Sanborn Map 1909

The building, now known as Andy Anderson's Blacksmith Shop, that stands on the southeasterly corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets is described by the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory, holds a significant place in Chico's history.

*“A two-story rectangular brick structure with a low hip metal roof and a plain wood frieze at the eaves was constructed on the southwesterly corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets. Its distinguishing features are the window openings with radiating brick, relieving arches, and slightly projecting brick lugsails. An arched ground floor door opens onto Salem Street, and a similar door originally opened onto a veranda on the West Eighth Street façade. Two large sliding metal doors are centered on the front. A*

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

*false-front metal building shares the east wall. It had a fifty-foot chimney, and an attached single-story framed structure wrapped around the southerly and easterly sides of the brick building.*"<sup>36</sup>



Source: Photo by Ray Wilson 2024

### White Star Laundry – First Tenant in Building.

On November 23, 1907, White Star Laundry announced that it was opening for business in the building on the corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets, making it the most likely the first tenant. In newspaper reports, the building was sometimes referred to as the White Star Building.

Less than a year after its grand opening, the White Star Laundry faced a financial setback. On August 1, 1908, the laundry was closing down for an indefinite period,

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

leaving its thirty-five employees in uncertainty. However, the story didn't end there. Despite the notice of bankruptcy published on August 10, 1910, it was announced two weeks later that the laundry was reopening under the new management of The Club Renovation.



Operational problems were not the only challenge the laundry faced. Newspaper reports revealed that the absence of a spark screen on the building's fifty-foot chimney had led to at least six minor fires in nearby buildings, including the Enterprise Soda Works building.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Death of Chico's Prominent Citizen

For many years, Charles Croissant was one of Chico's most prominent citizens. He died on June 15, 1919, at the home of his son, Otto H. Croissant, in Chapmantown.

Charles had become despondent because of ill health, feebleness, and believing he had outlived his time. He suffered the loss of his eldest son, Charles Croissant Jr. when, in 1901, he died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-five. Charles also suffered the death of his daughter Bertha when she died in 1898 at the age of twenty-one.

He missed the companionship of his wife of 53 years because she was also in ill health and disabled; that, in 1896, she had gone to live with their daughter in Oakland. She was so ill and feeble that she was unable to attend his funeral. Charles was eighty-three years old and had lived without his wife for the past twenty-three years.<sup>37</sup>

Charles was one of the first to develop in an area known as The Junction. Fortunately he lived long enough to see it transform into a vibrant commercial and industrial neighborhood. Charles left an indelible mark on Chico's history, and now his brewery is assuming a new role as one of the city's cherished historic landmarks, a testament to his entrepreneurial spirit and vision.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Charles' life was intertwined with several significant historical events, each carrying its own weight of historical context. He was twenty-five years old when the Civil War started, a pivotal moment in American history. He was twenty-nine when the U.S. Transcontinental Railroad was completed. He witnessed the assassination of two U.S. Presidents, Abraham Lincoln and William McKinley, events that shook the nation. He was 67 years old when the Wright Brothers made their first flight, a milestone in human history, and three years after that, he read about the first Model T rolling off the assembly line, marking the beginning of a new era. Just two years before his passing, he saw the United States enter WWI, a global conflict that would change the course of history. All these events bear testament to his resilience and adaptability.

### A Testament to the Family Name - 1901

It was often said that Charles Croissant's words are as good as his bond. That character trait ran in the family and was evident when his son was arrested for selling liquor to minors. The March 1901 article in the Chico Enterprise read, "Charles Croissant Jr., who has been for many years a resident of Chico and vicinity, and whose character has been above reproach was today arrested on charges of selling liquor to minors."



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Mr. Croissant Jr. was approached by two 16-year-old boys who told him their parents had sent them to buy some wine for their parents. When their parents learned they were given the wine, they filed charges, and Charles Croissant Jr. was arrested.

He was arraigned before Judge Collins and attested to the fact that he did sell the liquor to the boys, having believed their story that it was for their folks. "No one acquainted with Mr. Croissant's son would entertain a belief that he would have sold liquor to the boys if he had the slightest doubt that the youngsters had not told him the truth." When the parents of the boys learned the truth, they dropped all charges.<sup>38</sup>

Four months later, on July 5, 1901, Charles Croissant Jr. was visiting friends in Prattville for health reasons when he suddenly fell ill and died before the family could reach him. He was thirty-five at the time of his death. He had been working with his father in their orchard. Charles Sr. was sixty-five and at a point in his life when he was thinking about retirement and turning the orchard business over to his son.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Dassel's Acquires Property - 1919

On May 8, 1919, it was announced that Mrs. Katherine H. Dassel had filed a "Suit to Quiet Title against John D. Scholl as executor and trustee to gain title to the entire property."<sup>39</sup> A quiet title action was necessary to establish who owns the property and whether or not there were multiple parties claiming ownership of it or a portion of it.

The Dassel's were wealthy ranchers in Lassen County, who saw the property as an investment. It was noted that considerable improvements were made to the property between 1901 and 1919 and at the time the Dassel's acquired the property, they were producing revenue of \$230.00 per month. Tenants on the property included:

- Polar Ice Company (Corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets)
- White Furniture Store (The Junction)
- Hall Street Metal Works (804 Broadway)
- a shoe shop
- a paint shop
- a lodging House

Their story with Chico was just beginning, as four months later, on September 12, 1919, the headlines read, "Lassen Rancher to Spend Winters in Chico Home."

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Mrs. Dassel's affection for Chico was evident as she purchased Tom Morgan's home in Chico, where they planned to spend their winters, a testament to their love for the city. For the next nineteen years, the Dassel's and their son, Frank J. Dassel, left their mark on Chico's business history by developing and managing the various businesses on that half-a-block Charles Croissant first purchased from John Bidwell.

The Dassel family's most notable contribution is the 'Dassel Auto Park Hotel,' a venture they developed and managed. This establishment, catering to travelers passing through Chico by automobile, proved to be a significant boon for local merchants. Its success was further underscored by the endorsement it received from the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Chico.

The following summarizes in chronological order some of the property's business uses during the years Dassel owned it.

In March 1920, it was announced that F. J. Dassel had ventured into the automobile repair business with Mr. Peterson. They opened an auto repair shop which they call, Ever-Rite Motor Repairing in their building at the corner of West Eighth and Salem Street which they had been trying to rent.<sup>40</sup> Six months later, on September 26, 1920, Dassel's advertised that the Ever-Rite Motor Repair Shop business was for sale.<sup>41</sup>

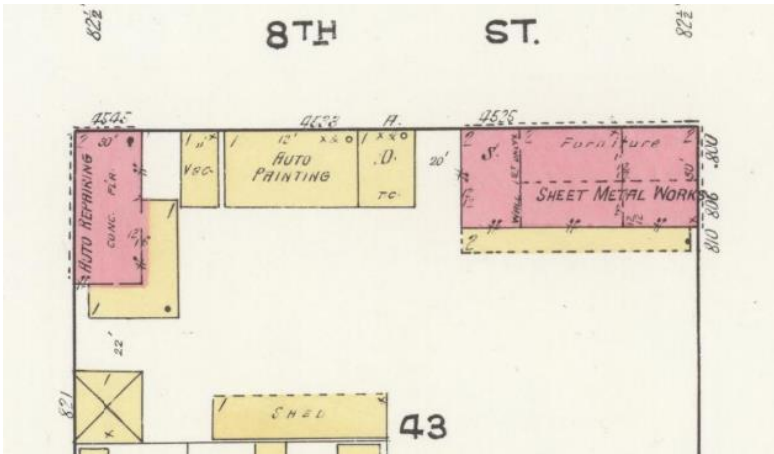
## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

The Dassel "Auto Camp" on West Eighth Street opened for the season on June 21, 1921. Mrs. Dassel said that people from all over California and other states that have stayed are overcome by Chico's charm and many have decided to make this their home.<sup>42</sup>

The advertisement says that it had access to West Eighth Street, which extended clearly across the block from Broadway to Salem Street. The fee of \$0.50 per night included light, water, and gas stoves. Local merchants were encouraged to put up signs advertising their businesses free of charge.<sup>43</sup> The following year, a record number of 1,900 cars spent the night at the auto camp, and the season was deemed the best ever.<sup>44</sup>

According to Sanborn Maps, in 1921, the ground floor of the Brewery building was used as a furniture store, and the building at the corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets was still used as an auto repair shop. The wood frame building facing West Eighth Street in the middle of the block was used as an auto paint shop.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith



Sanborn Map 1921

On October 1, 1921, the Dassel's opened a men's rooming house at 810 Broadway Street on the second floor above a furniture store on the corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets. The advertisement stressed it provided all outside room access for men.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith



In July 1922, the Dassel's leased the corner store at Eighth and Broadway Streets to John Quistini and Nat Bertagna for a three-year term as a general merchandise store.<sup>45</sup> They advertised having a full line of "Imported and Domestic Groceries, Hardware and Household Goods."

It is interesting to note that the Dassel's also owned the building on the corner of Ninth and Salem Streets. In July 1922, they rented that building to C. A. Pendelton for use as

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

a garage and repair shop. Pendelton will represent the Reed Tire Company. This was the same building that Andy Anderson rented for his blacksmith shop in March 1934.

In August 1924, Mr. Frank J. Dassel advertised his, "In Town Auto Camp and Auto Park Hotel" for an overnight rate of \$0.50 with the convenience of a grocery store on the corner of the property. Frank's mother, Mrs. Katherine H. Dassel, ran the park. Frank and his wife, Lorine, were living at 14th and Chestnut Streets.<sup>46</sup>

In March 1928, George Wong, the proprietor of the Palace Café at 804 Broadway, ran this advertisement in the Chico Enterprise.



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

On October 27, 1928, the Enterprise Record reported that Mr. Ben Tibbett planned to open a poultry store in the building at the corner of West Eighth Street and Broadway Streets. However, his plans were put on hold when he was robbed of \$50 and a watch from his clothing in the middle of the night while he slept in the Dassel's Rooming House at the same address.

Mrs. K. Dassel was given credit for being the first to provide living accommodations for workers who were thrown out of lodgings at the Union Hotel and Hallam House due to fires. She announced that she had opened a new 18-room lodging house on the second floor of Andy Andeson's brick building at West Eighth and Salem Streets.<sup>47</sup>

On June 11, 1929, Frank S. Dassel died at his son's home at Fourteenth and Chestnut Streets. Two weeks later, his wife, Mrs. Katherine H. Dassel, who was only 63 years old, also died at her son's home. Their son Frank J Dassel managed the family's businesses for many years after that.



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Andy Anderson Acquires Property - 1929



Andy Anderson Applying His Trade.

Source: Private Collection of Dave Richer, Richer's  
Earthen Iron.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Andy Anderson's Biography

Andy Anderson was born in Denmark on October 21, 1886 and migrated to America in 1905. He first lived in Iowa where he stayed for two years before moving to Chico in 1907.

Finding employment was not difficult for Andy because he had served his apprenticeship in Denmark, beginning as a young man working under the watchful supervision of skilled mechanics. He was taught the science as well as the practice of iron working and in the end, he was accorded his credentials as a master workman, a journeyman craftsman.<sup>48</sup>

Andy had been living in Chico three years when he met Georgia Rose Smith. She was born in Chico in 1890, and they were married in Redding on May 9, 1910. He was twenty-three and she was twenty years old. They started their family right away and had two sons, Nels L. Anderson, and Leslie Francis Anderson and a daughter, Dorothy C. Anderson. Like Charles Croissant, Andy suffered the loss of a son Leslie Francis who was only twenty years old.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Employment History

His first job when he arrived in Chico was working for Diamond Match Co. He had only worked there for a brief time before taking employment in 1908 with George Jeffery in his blacksmith shop in the Junction.

An announcement in the March 1934 Chico Enterprise read, "Andy Anderson, for 12 years employed as a blacksmith and welder here, has rented the old Leininger shop at Ninth and Broadway and is installing modern equipment for all types of mechanical repairs."<sup>49</sup>

## Anderson Purchases Dassel's Property

In April 1929, Andy Anderson purchased the Dassel property, the same half a block that Charles Croissant had originally purchased from John Bidwell in 1866.

The transfer from Mr. and Mrs. Frank S. Dassel closed on April 5, 1929, for a sum of \$10.00 as noted on the deed.<sup>50</sup> However, the Enterprise Record reported the price was \$20,000.<sup>51</sup>

His timing couldn't have been worse, as six months later the Stock Market crashed, and the economy suffered for the next several years.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

**RECORDED**  
**INDEXED**  
**23**  
**OFFICIAL**  
**RECORDS**

This Indenture, made this 5th day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty nine. Between FRANK J. DASSEL and LORNA DASSEL, his wife, the parties of the first part, and ANDY ANDERSON, the party of the second part, WITNESSETH, that the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of 250 Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to them in hand paid by the said party of second part, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do by these presents, grant, bargain, sell, convey and confirm unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns, forever, all that certain lot, piece, or parcel, of land situate, lying and being in the County of Butte, State of California, and bounded and particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Lots 1, 2, 7 and 8, Block 43 of the City of Chico, as the same are laid down, numbered and designated on the map thereof, filed as of record in the office of the Recorder of the County of Butte, State of California.

Subject to taxes for the fiscal year 1939-40.

Subject also to all assessments and liens for street improvements to become due hereafter.

TOGETHER with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereto belonging, or in anywise appertaining, and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and singular the said premises, together with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties of the first part, have hereunto set their hands and seal, the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of FRANK J. DASSEL (Seal)  
LORNA DASSEL (Seal)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA }  
County of Butte } ss.

On this 5th day of April in the year one thousand nine hundred and thirty nine, before me, LOU BEND, a Notary Public in and for said County, residing therein, duly commissioned and sworn, personally appeared FRANK J. DASSEL and LORNA DASSEL, his wife, known to me to be the person whose names are subscribed to the within instrument and they acknowledged to me that they executed the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal, at my office in the County of Butte, the day and year in this certificate first above written.

(Seal) LOU BEND  
Notary Public in and for said County of Butte, State of California.

Recorded at the request of THE BUREAU OF RECORDS AND COPIES, a body corporate, on APR 5 1939 at 10 min. past 10 o'clock A.M. in Volume 22 of Official Records, page 60. Records of the County of Butte.

W. H. Anderson  
County Recorder.

No. 10872 Compared { Book 101 By W. H. Anderson Deputy Recorder.  
{ Doc. 5072 }

## Deed Transferring Title to Andy Anderson

Andy did own the Dassel property for eight years when he made his first significant improvement. He announced in March 1937 that he was building a new building on Broadway Street between West Eighth and Ninth Streets (now known as 820 Broadway). The structure

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

measured 60' x 80', and it had reinforced concrete walls and a composition roof.<sup>52</sup> Two months later, Parker Hardware Company was rewarded with the contract to supply the paint for Andy Anderson's new building.<sup>53</sup>

Andy negotiated with North Valley Tractor to move its operations into his new building on Broadway Street and, at the same time, announced that a new large repair shop measuring 30' x 65' is being erected behind the new building to accommodate all types of repair work.<sup>54</sup>

Everything seemed to be going in the right direction for Andy, when on April 10, 1938, he was injured in an automobile accident north of Corning. He underwent an operation on his left kneecap which was broken in half. The surgery was performed by Dr. N.T. Enloe at the Enloe Hospital in Chico where he spent two weeks in recovery.<sup>55</sup>

After Andy acquired the half block from the Dassel Family, in 1929, he continued working at his old location until 1942, when he moved his business to his own building at the corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets.

# The Brewer and the Blacksmith

## Land Use Changes – 1929 to Present

The following is a recap of changes and additions to the property while Andy continued his blacksmith business at the corner of West Ninth and Broadway Streets.

### The Bank Club

The Chico Brewery Building had previously served as a vegetable market, grocery store, and soda fountain, among other uses, but after the repeal of prohibition in 1933, Andy Anderson decided to establish a bar in the building once again.

The premises may have been put to other uses for a while, but in September 1942, Ralph R. Rice sold his liquor license to J. Henry Boggs, who then took over the management of the bar business. A gentleman named Frank Rich named it the “Bank Club.”

The business and liquor license were later bought and sold several times. Around 1940, Mr. Lloyd Mulkey purchased the license, transferred it to another location, and removed everything from the premises except the Bank Club sign.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith



Photo of Bank Club Sign

Source: Ray Wilson

This photo of the original Bank Club sign is now stored on the second floor of the two-story brick building at West Eighth and Salem Streets.

Gilbert “Gil” Venos was a veteran Chico mixologist who took over the business on January 10, 1946, and ran the Bank Club for twenty-eight years until he retired in 1974. He was one of the few active bartenders who still carried on the old custom of wearing a white bartender’s apron while serving patrons.<sup>56</sup>

Andy Anderson had continued operating in the blacksmith shop on the corner of West Ninth and Broadway

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Streets until it was announced on January 1, 1942, that after twenty-two years in business in that location, Andy Anderson, popular blacksmith and horseshoer, was moving into the two-story brick building he owned at the corner of West Eighth and Salem Streets.<sup>57</sup>

It was reported that his new blacksmith shop will connect to a new metal building on the east side of the brick building. It was to be used as a truck and body shop. Connected to this building is a large warehouse, which will be used for storage. Anderson's blacksmith shop was first used by the White Star Laundry Company and later by the old Polar Ice Company building.<sup>58</sup>



Photo Polar Ice Building c.1912

Source: Private Collection of Dave Richer - Earthen Iron

This photo of the Polar Ice Company is believed to have been taken shortly after the Polar Ice Company



## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

announced on June 22, 1912, it was about ready to move into their new headquarters at West Eighth and Salem Streets.

Men had been working installing the condensing machinery and water pipes and that the machinery had been started two days earlier.<sup>59</sup> Seven years later, on March 1, 1919, the Polar Ice Company announced it was discontinuing all deliveries but would continue to manufacture wholesale and retail at the plant.

In November 1919, the building that once housed the Polar Ice Company. was offered for rent. The advertisement noted that the building had a 300-foot well, which made it suitable for a car-washing station.<sup>60</sup>



Anderson's Blacksmith Shop - Source: Ray Wilson 2024

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith



Source: John Nopel Photograph Collection ID: sc50298

The current photo is of Andy Anderson's Blacksmith and Welding Shop, which he built in 1942 adjacent to the original two-story brick building built in 1905. A mural of Andy practicing his trade is shown on the side of the building.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith



Current Interior View Anderson's Blacksmith Shop

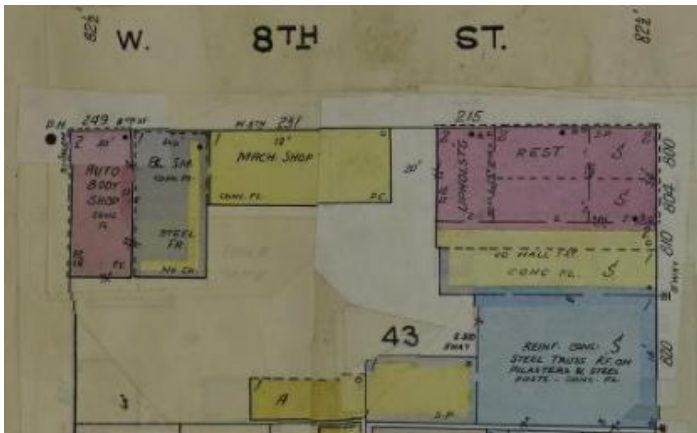
Source: Ray Wilson 2024

The current photo of the interior shows that very little has changed over the past eighty years.

The 1949 Sanborn Map tells us that the wood frame building in the middle of the block facing West Eighth Street was being used as a machine shop. The Andy Blacksmith Shop adjoining the two-story brick building in 1949, was being used as an auto body shop.

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

Two retail stores occupied the ground floor of the brewery building, one on the corner and the other facing Broadway Street. Behind the stores, and facing West Eighth Street, was a restaurant, and next to the restaurant was an upholstery shop.



Sanborn Map 1949

The ground floor of the original brewery building has housed numerous retail businesses in the past, including an antique and craft shop, and a deli. The second floor has served as a boarding house and a brothel but now has apartments for rent.<sup>61</sup>

J. V. Pullins started his cycle shop business in 1919 when he purchased L. A. Houk business that was located at 835 Main Street. He operated at that location for 33 years until he moved to 804 Broadway Street in 1952. In 1953, he sold his business to his son-in-law.<sup>62</sup>

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

### Death of Another Prominent Citizen

Andy Anderson was born in Denmark on October 21, 1886, and died in Chico on December 5, 1961, at the age of seventy-five. Andy came to America in 1905 and arrived in Chico in 1907. Andy had served his apprenticeship in Denmark where he learned the science as well as the practice of iron working. With this knowledge combined with honesty and hard work, he built a business known throughout the Sacramento Valley.<sup>63</sup>

In 1932, long before he chose to retire, the Chico Enterprise wrote a tribute to Andy, which reads,

“At the corner of Ninth and Broadway, Chico is a place of business, the door of which appears the sign, Andy Anderson, General Blacksmithing and Horseshoeing. That sign has been there for 25 years, a quarter of a century. During all those years, the bell-like music of hammer and steel has resonated, and Andy Anderson has been the director of the anvil chorus.”

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The most recent and current use of the improvements to the site are as follows:

- 800 Broadway Street. In 2007, Bustolini's Delicatessen occupied retail space on the ground floor. The corner retail space was occupied by the Winchester Goose, a bar, but is now vacant.
- 804 Broadway Street is occupied by Studio One, a ballroom dance studio.
- 810 Broadway Street is occupied by Dimensions Salon, a beauty salon, and Epperson Brothers martial arts school.
- 820 Broadway Street is currently occupied by Melton Design Studio and Epic Engineers.
- 830 Broadway Street is occupied by LO Design Studio, an interior designer.

The retail spaces facing West Eighth Street are currently occupied by:

- 213 West Eighth Street is currently occupied by Glass Designs studio.
- 231 West Eighth Street is occupied by Richer's Earthen Iron. The second floor, which was an 18-room boarding house, is now vacant.

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## Conclusion

In “The Junction,” the heart of Chico, California, two men left an indelible mark on the city’s history through their dedication and craftsmanship.

Charles Croissant, an untrained yet passionate immigrant from Germany, purchased a half a block from John Bidwell in 1866 and opened the Chico Brewery on the corner of West Eighth and Broadway Streets in 1866. Over the next 53 years, he perfected the art of brewing, creating a legacy of quality that outshone all others.

Charles faced numerous challenges throughout his career. As an immigrant with no formal training, he had to learn the intricacies of brewing through trial and error. He also had to compete with other local saloons and breweries, all of which failed to match his quality. Numerous competitors and Prohibition posed significant threats to his business, but Charles’s resilience and commitment to excellence helped him navigate these obstacles. Despite these challenges, and family tragedies, he remained a generous and community-oriented individual. The Chico Brewery became a gathering place where stories were shared, and friendships were forged, reflecting his commitment to his community.

Andy Anderson, unlike Charles Croissant, was a highly skilled blacksmith trained in Denmark, started building his reputation as a skilled craftsman in the Junction in 1907. Andy also faced his share of challenges. The competition from other blacksmiths were fierce. The Great Depression brought economic hardships, and the advent of

## The Brewer and the Blacksmith

industrialization and mass production threatened the viability of small, family-run shops like his. Despite these difficulties, Andy's meticulous craftsmanship and willingness to help his neighbors kept his business afloat. The Anderson Family still owns the half a block Charles Croissant purchased from Mr. Bidwell in 1866.

Through the lives of Charles Croissant and Andy Anderson, we see the embodiment of dedication, resilience, and community spirit. Their contributions to Chico's development were not just in the physical structures they built but in the lasting impact they had on the people around them.

The Chico Brewery and Anderson Blacksmith Shop stand as testaments to their hard work and commitment. Their stories remind us that true legacy is built not just through success, but through the positive influence we have on our communities.



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## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Obituary, Chico Record Newspaper, Number 143, June 17, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Mining Claims, (Butte County Recorder's Office) Book A, Page 191.

<sup>3</sup> Weekly Butte Record Volume 5, Number 45, September 18, 1858.

<sup>4</sup> Weekly Butte Record, Volume 12, March 18, 1865.

<sup>5</sup> The Weekly Butte Record Volume 12, Number 30, May 27, 1865.

<sup>6</sup> Weekly Butte Record, Number 25, April 18, 1857.

<sup>7</sup> Certificate of Citizenship, August 20, 1860.

<sup>8</sup> Oath of Allegiance, July 6, 1864.

<sup>9</sup> The Weekly Butte Record, Volume 12, Number 30, May 27, 1865.

<sup>10</sup> Butte County Record's Office, 1865, Book of Deeds H, Page 694.

<sup>11</sup> Mages of America Chico, Copyright © 2005 by Edward Booth, John Nope, Keith Johnson and Darcy Davis. Published by Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina.

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<sup>12</sup> Butte County Record's Office, Book of Deeds H, Page 788.

<sup>13</sup> History of Butte County, California by Harry L. Wells, Volume I, Pg. 228.

<sup>14</sup> Chico Life and Times of a City of Fortune, by Debra Moon, Published by Arcadia Publishing, Copyright © 2003, Pg. 53.

<sup>15</sup> The State of California – The Resources Agency department of Park and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory, Ser. No. 04-5926-6-42.

<sup>16</sup> Chico Record, Sunday, March 28, 1937.

<sup>17</sup> Chico Weekly Enterprise, Volume IX, Number 33, January 11, 1878.

<sup>18</sup> Weekly Butte Record, Volume 29, Number 8, November 12 1881.

<sup>19</sup> Chico Weekly Enterprise, Volume XIV, Number 30, December 15, 1882.

<sup>20</sup> Weekly Butte Record, Volume 28, Number 44, July 23, 1881.

<sup>21</sup> Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA) Friday, March 23, 1883.

<sup>22</sup> Weekly Butte Record, Volume 31, Number 14, January 5. 1884.

<sup>23</sup> Chico Weekly Chronicle-Record, Saturday, April 25, 1891.

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<sup>24</sup> Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA) Friday, November 14, 1884, Page 1.

<sup>25</sup> Chico Weekly Enterprise, Friday, April 27, 1883, Page 3.

<sup>26</sup> Butte County Hall of Records, Deed, Book N, Page 188-189.

<sup>27</sup> Chico Weekly Enterprise, Volume XXIII, Number 40, February 12, 1892.

<sup>28</sup> Chico Record, Number 172, July 21, 1918.

<sup>29</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLIV, Number 24, August 29, 1898.

<sup>30</sup> Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA) Friday, August 11, 1899.

<sup>31</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLVII, Number 17, May 26, 1900.

<sup>32</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLVII Number 56, July 13, 1900.

<sup>33</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLVII Number 117, September 21, 1900.

<sup>34</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLVII, Number 39, January 17, 1901.

<sup>35</sup> Chico Record, Volume XLVII, Number 77, March 1, 1901.

<sup>36</sup> Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory, Ser. No. 04-5926-6-64.

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- <sup>37</sup> Chico Record, Number 143. June 17, 1919.
- <sup>38</sup> Chico Weekly Enterprise, Volume XXXIII  
Number 11, March 22, 1901.
- <sup>39</sup> The Chico Enterprise, Thurs., May 8, 1919, Pg 7.
- <sup>40</sup> Chico Record, Number 75, March 28, 1920.
- <sup>41</sup> Chico Record, Number 230 September 26, 1920.
- <sup>42</sup> Chico Record, Number 285, December 14, 1921.
- <sup>43</sup> The Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA) Tuesday, June  
21, 1921.
- <sup>44</sup> Chico Record, Number 148, October 21, 1922.
- <sup>45</sup> The Chico Enterprise, Sat. July 1, 1922.
- <sup>46</sup> The Chico Enterprise, Tue, August 19, 1924, Pg.  
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- <sup>47</sup> The Chico Enterprise, Friday, October 2, 1931.
- <sup>48</sup> The Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA.) Saturday,  
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- <sup>49</sup> The Chico Enterprise, Monday, March 26, 1934,  
Page 10.
- <sup>50</sup> Butte County Recorder's Office, Book of Deeds  
No. 22, Page 49.
- <sup>51</sup> Enterprise-Record (Chico, CA.) Sunday, April 7,  
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- <sup>52</sup> Chico Record (Chico, CA) Friday, March 12,  
1937, Page 2.
- <sup>53</sup> Chico Record, Sunday, May 30, 1937, Page 3.

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- <sup>54</sup> Enterprise Record, (Chico, CA) December 30, 1939.
- <sup>55</sup> Chico Record Saturday, April 16, 1938, Page 2.
- <sup>56</sup> Enterprise-Record Saturday. February 16, 1974, Page 4.
- <sup>57</sup> The Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA) Wednesday, December 31, 1941.
- <sup>58</sup> Enterprise-Record (Chico, CA.) Thursday, January 1, 1942, Page 3.
- <sup>59</sup> The Chico Enterprise (Chico, CA.) Saturday, June 22, 1912.
- <sup>60</sup> Chico Record, Number 267, November 23, 1919.
- <sup>61</sup> Chico Life and Times of a City of Fortune, Copyright © 2003 by Debra Moon, ISBN 978-0-7385-2446-7, Page 53.
- <sup>62</sup> Enterprise-Record (Chico, CA.), Saturday, February 3, 1973, Page 4.
- <sup>63</sup> Enterprise-Record, (Chico, CA.), Wednesday, December 6, 1961, Page 2.