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## **Monrovia Unified School District Together at Last**

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When Monrovia schools were first started, they were governed by a board of trustees (board of education, or school board) and a superintendent. But when the high school was organized, a change had to be made.

Young people from Duarte and Arcadia were coming to Monrovia's high school. So a high school district was formed. People from Monrovia, Arcadia, and Duarte served on the high school's board of education. Now there was an elementary school district and a high school district. One superintendent worked with both districts.

Finally, Arcadia and Duarte students left Monrovia's high school when their own high schools were built. In 1960, the two Monrovia school districts became unified, or joined together.

Monrovia had seven elementary schools, one junior high, and one high school. Like many other towns, most of Monrovia's black children went to one elementary school, Huntington School. Many school leaders thought that this should be changed. After much planning and talking, the school board decided to desegregate its school system in 1970. Huntington School and Santa Fe School would no longer be elementary schools. Their children were sent to the other five elementary schools. Santa Fe and Clifton were reorganized and became middle schools with sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Huntington School was changed to Canyon High School.

Today, the five members of the board of education are elected by the citizens living in the school district. Each member works for four years and then must be reelected if he wishes to continue to serve. The board decides on the policies for the schools. The board also hires the superintendent and all employees. It is the job of the superintendent to carry out the policies of the board and supervise the schools.

School board meetings are held twice each month. People are invited to come to the meetings and hear what the board is planning for Monrovia's schools.



*W. N. Monroe house  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

# UNIT VI

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## Reminders of the Past

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Children sometimes call an old house a “haunted house.” It has creaky floors and squeaky doors. The windows are broken. Bats fly around in it. No one lives there to take care of the house. It is ugly and dangerous.

Monrovia has many old houses, but they are not “haunted houses.” People live in them and take care of them. The old houses are beautiful. They remind us of the people who came here to start the town.

This unit will tell you about some of these special houses. You may want to see them for yourself.

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## Heritage Homes

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William Monroe and his friends attracted many people to the new town. Some of them built large houses in Monrovia. A few of these big houses, along with many smaller ones, have survived to the present day. Some of the old houses have been moved to other locations. Others have been remodeled and do not look as they once did. A few of the old houses have been restored. They are as attractive today as they once were. These houses are scattered throughout the city. They stand as silent reminders of a past generation.

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### William N. Monroe House

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William Monroe's house, "The Oaks," was built by William Monroe in 1885. It was built entirely of redwood and had fireplaces in five of the eleven rooms. The ceilings were twelve feet high. The house was surrounded by attractive gardens and orchards. The gardens were planted with many rare trees and shrubs. There was a big lawn under the oak trees and a fountain and pool in front of the house. This Victorian style house was the showplace of Monrovia.

The house and land have had many owners. Most of the land surrounding the house has been sold. The house is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



*W. N. Monroe house – 1980  
250 North Primrose Avenue  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

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## Edward F. Spence House

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Edward Spence's mansion, "Silver Hill," was built in 1887. It was one of the most impressive houses in the whole valley. The house was two and one-half stories high, with one cupola and wide porches. There were tennis and croquet courts and a stable with several riding horses. After Mr. Spence's death, the estate at 339 East Prospect Avenue was sold. In 1920, it was torn down and a new house was built in its place.



Spence house  
(Los Angeles County Library collection)

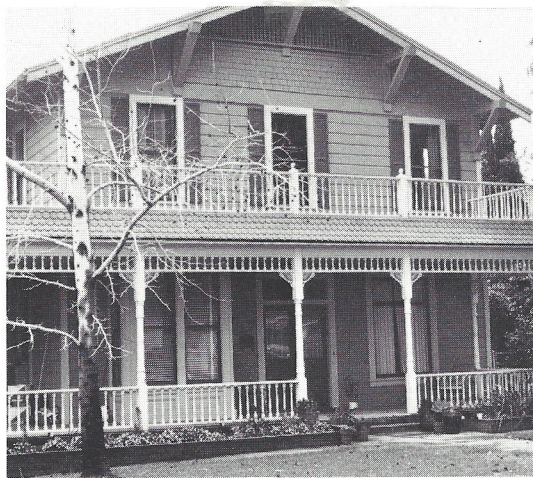
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## Felix M. Monroe House

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*F. M. Monroe house – 1895  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*



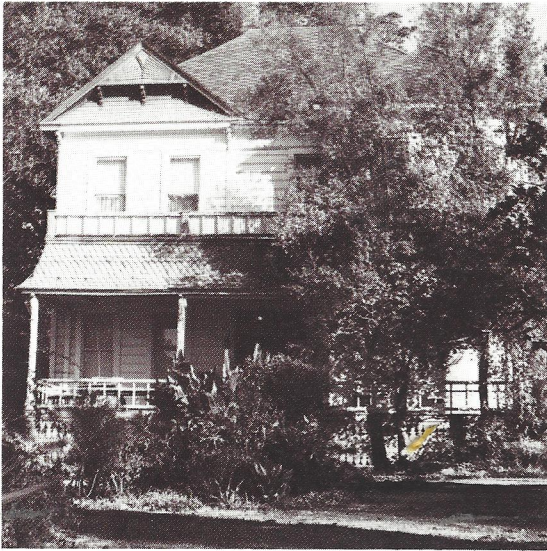
*F. M. Monroe house – 1986  
257 North Magnolia Avenue  
(Photograph by Richard Izbicki)*

William Monroe had two brothers who followed him to California. One brother, Felix Monroe, was a rancher and owned a livery stable. He was also active in Monrovia's city government. He and his brother, Campbell O. Monroe, helped develop the city's water supply. For eighteen years, Felix Monroe was the city's street superintendent. His job was to improve Monrovia's curbs, streets, and sidewalks. About 1911, he left this job and became the sewer inspector for the city. This job paid him more money.

Felix M. Monroe built his home at 257 North Magnolia Avenue. When it was first built, it looked exactly like the house at 167 North Myrtle Avenue. The house on North Myrtle was the home of Leonidas Barnes, Monrovia's first merchant. Now these houses do not look at all as they once did.



*Barnes house – 1986  
167 North Myrtle Avenue  
(Photograph by Richard Izbicki)*



*C. O. Monroe cottage  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*



*C. O. Monroe cottage – 1986  
225 Monroe Place  
(Photograph by Richard Izbicki)*

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## **Campbell O. Monroe House**

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This cottage was built for William Monroe in 1884. It was his temporary home until his larger house, "The Oaks," was completed. It then became the home for William Monroe's brother, Campbell O. Monroe, and his family. They added a second story to the cottage. It looks about the same today as it did when it was built.

Campbell Monroe was active in Monrovia's city government. He was the mayor and a member of the board of trustees for several years.

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## William A. Pile House

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General William A. Pile built this house. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War and earned the rank of general.

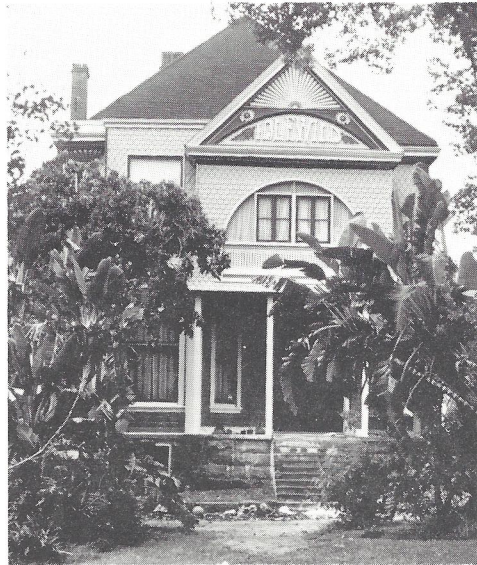
His Victorian mansion, "Idlewild," was built in 1887. He spent \$12,000 to build the two story house. Mrs. Pile planted a beautiful garden of rare flowers and shrubs around the house.

General Pile was elected one of the first trustees of Monrovia. He served as mayor for one year. He died after living in his elegant home for only two years.

In 1980, the inside of the house was restored by a television production company. It was used in the filming of a television movie, "East of Eden," a novel by John Steinbeck. The outside of the house has been restored by the owners of the house. They used historical records to find out what the house looked like one hundred years ago.



*Pile house  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*



*Pile house – 1986  
255 North Mayflower Avenue  
(Photograph by Richard Izbicki)*

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## Jerome I. Case House

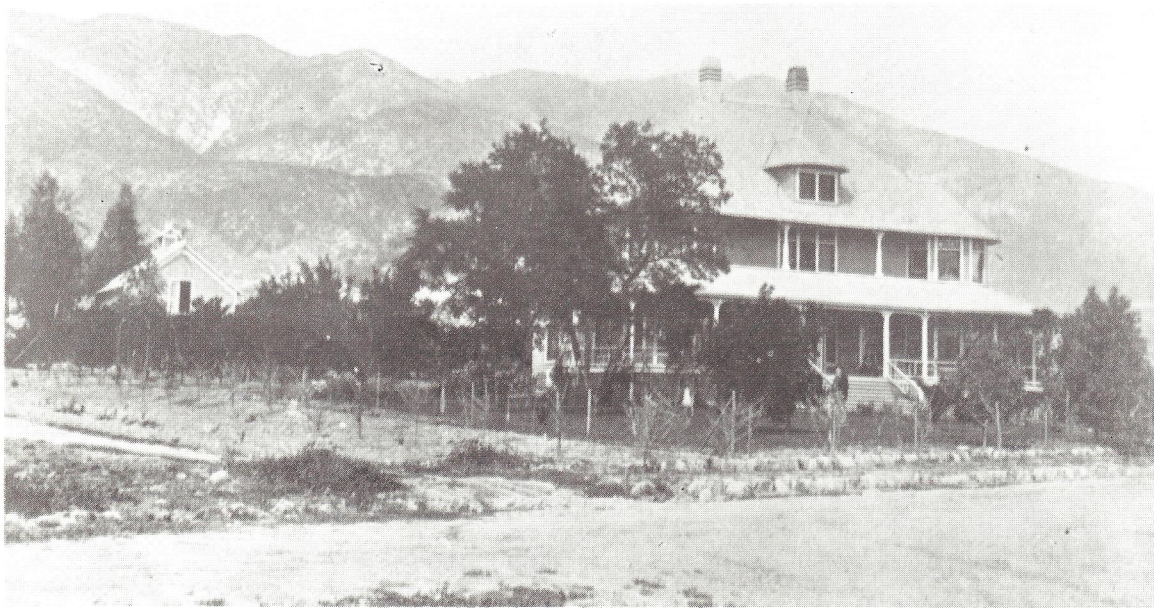
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In early 1887, two brothers from the Studebaker family came to visit friends in Monrovia. Their family became famous as makers of wagons and gasoline-powered cars.

The brothers liked Monrovia. They decided to buy land and build winter homes in this new town. The winters in California were mild and warm, not cold and snowy as they were in Indiana.

John Studebaker bought fifty-eight acres north of Banana Avenue from Charles Mueller. Some of the land he sold to his friend Jerome I. Case. Both men's homes were finished in the fall of 1887. Mr. Case's house was on the northeast corner of Mayflower and Banana Avenues. Mr. Studebaker's house was on the northwest corner of Banana and J.I.C. Avenues. They lived next door to each other, and their houses looked exactly the same.

John Studebaker and his family lived in his house for several years, and then it was sold. In 1940, it was torn down. Mr. Case's beautiful house still stands in its original place at the corner of Mayflower Avenue and Hillcrest Boulevard. Many people have lived in the Case house and have kept it repaired and attractive. It is a fine example of Victorian architecture.



*Case house  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*

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## George H. Anderson House

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John C. Anderson, a carpenter from Ohio, built the Mills Hotel. After the hotel was completed, he built a home for his family. It was a small Victorian cottage on Lime Avenue.

John Anderson served on the Monrovia Board of Trustees and helped the new town grow. After he died, his son George lived in the cottage until 1974. Since George Anderson had no family of his own, he left his house to the Security Pacific National Bank, where he had worked for many years. The bank did not need a house. Should it be sold or given away?

The historical committee in town wanted to own the house and use it as a museum. They wanted to restore it and decorate it the way it looked when John Anderson lived in it. The bank thought that was a fine idea and gave the Anderson house to the historical committee in 1975.

The house is now maintained by the Monrovia Historical Society. If you go there, you will see how it looked when Monrovia was just beginning.



*Anderson house  
215 East Lime Avenue  
(Monrovia Historical Society collection)*