

The Great Tide Pool

TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA

by local award-winning author, Brad Herzog

CITY OF HOMES

August 1, 2026



Pacific Grove goes by many monikers: Butterfly Town, USA... the Sanctuary by the Sea... America's Last Hometown. But for a while, in the 1920s and 1930s, local brochures touted PG as the "City of Homes." One of the most oft-repeated superlatives is the fact that there are some 1,300 historic properties located throughout less than three square miles in PG – more than any other city of its size on the West Coast. In other words, along with the jaw-dropping rocky coastline and the dunes and the tidepools and beaches and sentinel lighthouse, PG offers architectural magic.



A decade ago, three writers (Rebecca Riddell, Neil Flattery Carlson, and Margot Tegtmeier) and photographer Craig Riddell created a book celebrating that magic. *Pacific Grove: Architecture and Anecdotes* offers not only a journey through the various architectural periods in Pacific Grove (from tent cabins to Victorians to "kit-house" bungalows)... and not only a brief examination of some of PG's most iconic landmarks (from Chautauqua Hall to Holman's Department Store to Asilomar Conference Grounds)... but also a reminder: There are countless stories within the walls of every home – tales both structural and personal.

My journey through 84 pages of beautiful photographs and intriguing text taught me a lot:



I learned new architectural terms – fish scale shingles, three-pointed gables, barge boards, corbelled chimneys, witch's cap roofs.

I learned that you don't always see the most eye-opening aspects of these homes from the street. For instance, the Benjamin Langford House, an Italianate Style Victorian on Central Avenue, features a winding balustrade in the entrance hall leading to the second floor. Trimmer Hill, a Queen Anne mansion on 6th Street (and the only private residence in PG on the National Register of Historic Places) has elephant hide wainscoting in the dining room. And the James C. Brown House on Lobos Avenue once had – this is true – an open-air toilet at the top of the stairs.

The Great
Tidepool



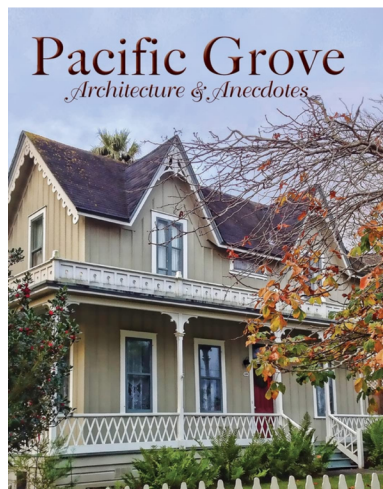


I learned that some historic PG homes were modeled after edifices elsewhere. The Carpenter Gothic James J. Stevinson House on Pacific Avenue, for instance, was a smaller replica of his family home in... Stevinson, California. And the Captain's Castle on 7th Street? Its inspiration comes from 5,000 miles away. One of PG's most recognizable residences was constructed by a college professor and composer named Everett Pomeroy, who modeled the four-bedroom home after his family's ancestral 15th-century castle in Devon, England - including a square corner tower overlooking Monterey Bay, battlements, strained-glass windows, gables, even gargoyles.



And I learned that just about every historic edifice can offer a solid piece of trivia. Consider:

- The Aliotti's Victorian Corner Restaurant along Lighthouse Avenue was once a trading post, selling everything from sea shells to barbed wire.
- The D.T. Welch House, also on Lighthouse Avenue, later housed the offices of Digital Research, where Pagrovia Gary Kildall became a pioneering computer icon by creating the software precursor to Microsoft.
- The first owner of the William Adam House on Central Avenue was a Scottish-born painter whose work is included in the Smithsonian Institution's collection.
- The William Lacy House on Ocean View Boulevard was originally called Ivy Terrace Hall and is now the Green Gables Inn. But Lacy himself? He never actually lived there.
- The Elihu Beard House on 19th Street, built as a summer home in 1880, has been owned and maintained by five generations of the Beard family.



There's a trite saying: A house is made of bricks and beams, but a home is made of hopes and dreams. But perhaps it's the combination that most inspires - both the building and the narrative within its walls. And Pacific Grove is brimming with such tall (well, two-story) tales. So the next time you stroll past PG's historic homes, remember the anecdotes that accompany the architecture.