



BIDWELL MANSION ASSOCIATION

CHICO, CALIFORNIA

To the Honorable Judge Caraway,

On behalf of the Bidwell Mansion Association, a community organization dedicated to preserving the legacy of General John and Annie Bidwell and the historic home that bore their name, we wish to convey the profound and irreparable impact that the December 11, 2024, arson attack has had on our organization, community, history, and shared identity.

The Bidwell Mansion was more than just bricks and plaster—it stood as a testament to how far our community and region have come. It served as a living monument to the perseverance, innovation, and civic spirit that built Chico and shaped California's early history. Its loss is not merely physical; it is an assault on the cultural, educational, and emotional fabric that binds our community together.

For generations, Bidwell Mansion has stood as a bridge between the past and the present, welcoming thousands of schoolchildren, families, scholars, and visitors who have walked its halls to learn about the Bidwells' contributions to agriculture, education, social reform, and natives' rights. The Mansion played a pivotal role in the development of Chico Normal School, later becoming California State University, Chico, reinforcing its legacy as a cornerstone for education. It was also a cherished gathering place, hosting weddings, cultural celebrations, agricultural festivals, and community events that deepened local connections and traditions. This was a place where residents and guests forged lifelong memories. Now, these moments feel more poignant as they can never be recreated.

The fire that consumed the Mansion stripped us of far more than the loss of a historic building—it tore away an essential part of who we are. In a single night, decades of preservation work, priceless artifacts, and generations of memories were reduced to ash. Every piece told a story that can never be retold: John's map table, where he meticulously planned Chico's agricultural development and helped shape early California politics; the taxidermy case, a valuable historical and scientific record of the region's native wildlife; Annie's piano—a cherished wedding gift whose melodies once reverberated through the halls, as well as her wedding portrait showing her with hope for the future; and the beloved, life-sized portrait of John that welcomed countless visitors with a silent but dignified presence. There were rare, out-of-print books—including those by Susan B. Anthony—that provided insight into the social reforms championed by the Bidwells. There were numerous cultural artifacts, such as the priceless embroidered tapestry gifted by Chico's Chinese community to the Bidwells, symbolizing their enduring respect and gratitude. Indigenous artifacts documenting the Mechoopda people's connection to this land further anchored the Mansion's significance as a bridge to diverse histories.

These irreplaceable links to the past have been stolen from us, leaving only memories in their place. These and everything else lost were not mere relics but tangible reminders of where we

came from and who we are as a community. The fire obliterated an essential and inimitable archive of our collective heritage. This loss is permanent, affecting not only our community but also the broader historical record of California and the nation.

This devastating act of arson was more than just the destruction of a priceless piece of our past—it was an assault on our community, our values, and the lessons we pass down through generations. If politically motivated, it was an act of terrorism against our community and a deliberate attempt to erase the past rather than engage in meaningful dialogue. The Bidwell Mansion stood as a testament to history, representing different things to different people—some good, some painful—but it was a place where stories could be told, lessons could be learned, and conversations could be had. Destroying a historic site to silence its narrative is not just an assault on a building; it is an attack on education, preservation, and the very foundation of our society.

History should never be rewritten through violence. It should be studied, understood, and preserved, allowing future generations to learn from it. If this crime was driven by political extremism, it deserves the utmost gravity in this Court's deliberation. Failing to deliver justice would deepen our communal loss and embolden those who would dismantle, silence, and erase rather than enlighten.

The citizens of Chico are grieving but also determined. The loss of the Bidwell Mansion has ignited a collective outpouring of support demanding justice. Many want the Mansion rebuilt, further reaffirming the resilience of our community and our refusal to let its history and culture be erased. While rebuilding at this time is unclear, we can call for justice to be served.

Judge Caraway, we ask as you deliberate on the appropriate sentence that you consider not just the physical structure and the priceless and irreplaceable artifacts that were lost, but the generational impact on educational enrichment, cultural identity, and local heritage. We implore the Court to impose the maximum sentence allowable under the law, sending a resounding message that acts of targeted destruction will not be tolerated. To do otherwise would diminish the severity of this crime, dishonor our community's pain, forsake all the Bidwells gave so that our city could prosper, and risk suggesting such acts can be committed without significant consequences.

While this loss has deeply saddened and shaken us, it has also stirred our resolve to protect our shared heritage and honor the sacrifices and legacy of the Bidwells.

Thank you for your time, service, and careful deliberation of this crime's gravity.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors of the Bidwell Mansion Association

Adrienne Glatz, President

MaryRose Lovgren, Vice President

Nancy Leek, Secretary

Steve Schoonover, Treasurer

Nick Anderson

Kathy Lanpheir

Aislie McEnteggart

Sandra McLean

To: The Honorable Carie Caraway
Superior Court of Butte County, California

Re: People vs. Kevin Carlson

Victim Impact Statement for Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park arson

Dear Judge Caraway,

My name is Raeann Bossarte. I am one, of what I suspect are many people, who loved Bidwell Mansion and feel victimized by Kevin Carlson's arson of our town's beloved landmark. I have a special bond with Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park as I was the lead California State Park Interpreter 1 at Bidwell Mansion SHP from 2013-2020, when I retired. I managed guide staff, special events and community outreach, coordinated school and summer programs and lead Mansion tours. I was also the Collection Manager for most of that time and was responsible for the oversight and management of the entire artifact collection related to the Bidwells and the mansion history (thousands of objects).

What was lost due to the arson fire of the Bidwell Mansion on December 11, 2024 was not just the beautiful, historic building but also the one-of-a-kind original Bidwell artifacts that served as a visual tie to the history of John and Annie Bidwell, Chico, California and our nation in the 1800's.

There will never be another original map desk belonging to John Bidwell where he drew maps of the properties and ranchos he surveyed in Northern California and the map laying out the new town of Chico.

During my employment at Bidwell Mansion, two thousand school children toured the mansion each school year. The highlight of every tour was the chance for a child to play Annie's Grand Piano, a gift from John that was bought in Washington, D.C. and shipped to Chico. No child will ever have the joy to experience that special opportunity again.

Eighty percent of the approximately eight hundred books in the library were owned by John and Annie Bidwell. The three built-in bookcases that exhibited the books were original to the mansion. Books about the Temperance movement and women's right to vote included Annie's signed books from Susan B. Anthony. Annie was fluent in the French language and had a collection of 100 volumes of French natural history books (*Histoire Naturelle*) published in the late 1700's - early 1800's. Several of these were signed by her father as gifts to her. School children and adults could look at the titles of the books in the library to get a sense of the values and interests of John and Annie that shaped their lives and our community.

The names of the Maidu women, who created the Native American baskets in the bookcases, were identified by tags hand-written by Annie. These artifacts served as a segue to talk about the other peoples and cultures that were integral to the history of California and Rancho Chico and the Bidwells' relationships to these people.

In the main entry hall was a portrait of John Bidwell commissioned by Annie after his death in 1900. It was a near life-sized painting and was painted in a special perspective technique that made it seem like John Bidwell's body turned when viewed from different angles. Visitors loved it and were impressed with this innovative way of painting. In the painting, John has his hand on a chair. That chair belonged to the then famous orator Daniel Webster, and sat in the hallway next to the portrait.

I could go on for hours about this history and the artifacts that represented it. And I did with children, adults, Chico residents, and national and international visitors.

What Kevin Carlson took from the people of Chico and the state of California was an iconic building and the Bidwell artifacts – the portraits, books, furniture, baskets, vases, and much more. These were the symbols of the cultural history of Chico, California, and the United States in its formative years.

Like many Chico residents, I grieve for what this arsonist took from our community. I may be a little different from others in that my time being at the mansion made it feel like my second home; I had an intimate relationship to the mansion building and the artifacts it held. The memory of all the objects that were destroyed, and the stories they elicited and were shared with so many, is heartbreaking. I am also left with the question of why Kevin Carlson did this senseless act. What fed into this act that was, and may be still be, dangerous on several levels of public safety and security?

I ask that you consider the loss to our community, state, and national history beyond any loss in a dollar amount. I ask that you incorporate the incalculable historical loss into your sentencing for this arsonist.

Thank you for your consideration of this statement.

With Respect,

Raeann Bossarte

From: Patricia Whitworth Daniels

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 11:55 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement from Community Member

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Judge Caraway

The following is my impact statement. I've been a part of the Chico community since 1985. Chico is a jewel at the top of the Sacramento Valley and that jewel was accented by the Bidwell Mansion. The mansion has provided a living history of our North State for well over half a century... a valuable opportunity for everyone from children's school field trips to out-of-town visitors to hear, see, and touch California's past—to walk through a living history lesson.

I work near where the burnt shell of the once grand mansion sits. I make an effort to not drive or walk by the remains because the loss hurts and sickens me to my core. It has changed my trust and shaken my ability to believe we are safe here in our community. Something very special was taken from me and the community that day and harm was done. No bodies may have been pulled from the burning building but every person in our town is suffering. Our current community mourns its loss, and all future generations will never know what was stolen from them. One person premeditatedly and heinously sought to destroy history and launched an attack on our community. The center of our community is now a burnt scar.

Kevin Carlson's decision to destroy the mansion was not his to make. He may not have agreed with parts of Chico's history, but it was not his right to try to erase it. What if we tried to erase Ellis Island or Monticello by burning them down? History is complicated but burning it down is not the answer. This was not a victimless crime. There were hundreds of thousands of victims- past, present and future.

Please inflict the maximum sentence because arson is an intentional action designed to create fear and devastation without concern for possible injury to others – This is a form of terrorism and should be punished. It's not a way to start a conversation or express a belief. It was a crime against all of California.

Respectfully,

Patricia Whitworth Daniels

From: Shirley Kendall

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 12:50 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Bidwell Mansion Victim Impact Statement

I am Shirley Kendall, and I worked at Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park for 22 years as the Curator for California State Parks. My career in State Parks was very important to me and I did not think of it as a job. I enjoyed my time there and felt like I made an impact on my time with my 32 years caring for the historic artifact that were under my care. Bidwell Mansion was very important to me and felt it was more of a second home. On December 11, 2024, I felt like part of my world fell apart. I was deviated while I watched to news and saw that it was on FIRE. The destruction was horrible and I feel like it will never be the same. It is still very painful and has caused me to go have an A Fib episode. leading to a hospital stay to have my heart return to normal rhythm. I will have to have an ablation done in the next month to prevent me from having a stroke. Although some may say that I would have had that happen anyway and that is possible but I feel that it was from the stress of loosing a big part of my life in one evening, I said it was like a second home and although I had worked is other historic sites Bidwell Mansion was very special to me. I will try to explain a little in the following part of this letter.

During my tenure I was fortunate enough to meet with donor that had original artifact the belonging to the Bidwell's. It was very special for me to accept the items as it was an important part of the home. The Donors made these donations to Bidwell Mansion as they felt secure that they would be preserved for generations to follow to learn more about the history of the

Bidwell's while they lived in the home for 50 years. One specific item I received that was given by a Bidwell family member was a dress that belonged to Annie Bidwell and was on display for many years and gave the public an idea of how small she was (4."8" tall") it was an honor to accept this dress and

many other items that belonged to the Bidwell's as well as many period item from the victorian era. It gave to public a chance to learn more about the time the Bidwell's lived in the home.

Before the Visitors Center was built the staff had offices in the Servants Quarters. The Ranger and Guide had the office you can see from the back stairs and my office in the back was shared with our additional staff. I had my interview for the position, in the Library and made that room very special to me. I constructed all the curtains in the home by using historic photographs of the home and did the research to find lace fabric that was similar to what was in the historic home. We took two weeks after Thanksgiving to decorate the home as the Bidwell's did each year for the Christmas, for visitors to come and enjoy the home. We would have Living History Programs during the holidays, I was lucky to be in one of the group that came and sang in the mansion each year at Christmas, and this another wonderful memory of my life.

Thank you me the opportunity to allow me to make this public statement on how important the Bidwell Mansion is to me and why it has such an impact on my life. It will be an important impact on visitors as well, as all they have is a Visitors Center to try to portray to home that was built in 1865-1968 by John Bidwell. My life will never be the same as this was a second home to me and of all the other parks that I worked in this is the one that was most important. We used to say as we left the Mansion. "Goodnight, John and Annie, enjoy your home tonight"

That is all gone now!!!

Shirley J. Kendall

Sent from Gmail Mobile

From: Ed Wrona

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 1:35 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Letter re: Impact of loss of Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Good afternoon.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my feelings to help deal with this loss of the Bidwell Mansion.

My family drove through Chico in the 60s while on vacation, but I really didn't appreciate the beauty of this town until we moved here 47 years ago. Bidwell Mansion was one of the sites that was special. I knew of its importance to the City of Chico, but until I had the first opportunity to visit and tour the Mansion, I didn't realize just what a treasure it was. Bidwell

Mansion was a history lesson for all who had the opportunity to visit and explore. It gave insight into how things were in the 19th century in the local area but also provided a historical perspective of what was happening in California and the rest of the US at that time. Many classes of children – elementary through high school – learned so much in this one location.

I am a member of the Bidwell Mansion Association and, as such, have had the opportunity to not only invite others to special events held at the Mansion, but also to help with many of those events. It was exciting to see the Mansion all decked out and to see the appreciation of it in people's faces. But now so much is lost. While we have pictures of the Mansion – both inside and out – to help "relive" that era, we can no longer "feel" the history. That was such an important part of the Mansion – to actually see and touch (sometimes) the things that were part of a working home in the late 1800's. Even rebuilding would never bring back that "feel".

One person decided we no longer needed the Mansion. One person took it upon himself to remove our history. One person took away that one special thing that made Chico unique. Yes, we have the University here, but when people come to visit, they want to see what made this town so special – Bidwell Mansion – and now they can't.

I ask the Honorable Judge Caraway to consider the maximum sentence to this one person who has admitted his guilt by pleading no contest. He deserves nothing less. It will not bring back the Mansion, but it will keep him from doing harm to anything else.

Respectfully,

Edward Wrona

"Democracy is never a final achievement. It is a call to an untiring effort." John F. Kennedy

-----Original Message-----

From: Amy Wadlow

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:38 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Missing the mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Having grown up in Chico, Bidwell mansion is part of my story. I walked there for field trips from Citrus Elementary, I took pictures on the porch before dances at Chico High, I sat on the lawn there and studied and had conversations with friends while at Chico State. It's been a landmark for me, and not just geographically.

My son is in third grade and I remember clearly the morning we found out the mansion had been destroyed. His teacher was distraught and the students profoundly disappointed. Throughout this year they've been studying Butte Co. history and historical landmarks and were so excited for the climax of it all, their field trip to the mansion.

This is one more devastating loss for our area and I trust that as you evaluate sentencing, you'll be filled with wisdom and act accordingly.

Thank you for serving our community, blessings to you as you continue to do so.

Amy Wadlow

Chico resident for the past 48 years

Sent from my iPhone

From: Natalie Brookshire

Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 5:26 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Mansion Impact Statement - Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway,

My name is Friday Viola Brookshire, and I am 8 years old. I live close to the Bidwell Mansion and passed it every day on the way to school. I loved looking at it and am so sad that is gone.

I have gone there with my grandma. We got to see all the old stuff that the Bidwell Mansion had in it and I am sad that it burned.

I am sad that the teddy bear and the dolls are gone. I liked it there.

Sincerely,

Friday Brookshire

Age 8

-----Original Message-----

From: Erin

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:20 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim impact statement

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

The Bidwell Mansion was an important part of Butte County history as well as an important part of the city of Chico. My family has direct lineage to the Bidwell family so losing the mansion has been a great loss. I pray the mansion is rebuilt so future generations will enjoy its history. I also pray the perpetrator responsible for this crime is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Annette Heinemeyer

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 2:39 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Victim impact statement regarding Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park

I am a homeowner in the neighborhood adjacent to the Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park. My family and I, as well as the entire community of Chico, suffered and continue to suffer a loss due to the deliberate and carefully planned actions of an arsonist who burned the Bidwell Mansion.

My family and I appreciated the Bidwell Mansion for many reasons. The Bidwell Mansion held great historic and current value to us as:

- **A reminder that a determined person facing many disadvantages can turn things around and deliberately create a welcoming, healthy, vibrant community.**
 - Despite adversity (in many forms) in his early adulthood and throughout his life, John Bidwell made the best of whatever presented itself. His calm, thoughtful planning and persistence when his plans failed and failed again remain an inspiration and a reminder that great things happen through small, conscious choices.

- John and Annie's investment of time, talent, energy, ingenuity, and money in Chico set a model for civic leadership that continues to make me proud to be part of this community.
- John and Annie's determination to treat people fairly and decently remains a core cultural value reflected in Chico today; Chico is a kind, grounded, and hospitable city in part due to the patterns they set in place.
- John's generosity in donating land for the Chico State Normal School and Annie's in donating the Children's Playground and Bidwell Park to Chico helped cement the idea that it is people giving back to the community that create our shared identity and values.
- **A symbol of refuge and hope**
 - Though not a perfect example of someone who respected and treated all people equally, John Bidwell was very progressive for his time.
 - He shielded both East Asian and Indigenous people from vigilante attacks, over and over again, despite many who ridiculed him for harboring violent and dangerous elements.
 - John and Annie Bidwell successfully fought to integrate Chico's schools and (despite regrettable efforts to assimilate indigenous cultures) made a concerted effort to help Chicanos recognize the humanity and worth of her indigenous citizens.
 - Although Annie gets a bad rap for pushing her (religious, suffrage, and prohibition-related) ideas onto people (not just the indigenous) who didn't much appreciate them, she (like John) understood that coercion did not produce good results; she and John succeeded by attracting people who wanted what she had to offer in the way of skills and education.
- **A testament to John's vision of a modern city, leading the world in agricultural production**
 - John Bidwell understood that Northern California agriculture had much to offer the world.
 - He did his best to understand and leverage what Chico had to offer, adapting to conditions as he found them.
- **An accessible and delightful, warm and inviting public space:**
 - Chico High School, CSU Chico college students, and community members often hung out on the porches, reading and talking.
 - Every spring and fall, Bidwell Mansion was the site of prom and wedding pictures.
 - As a community member, these sights and sounds brought joy to me and to my family during our daily walks.
 - Sondra Murphy's tours of Bidwell Mansion were fascinating. I looked forward to taking visitors on these tours to learn about the Bidwells and the history of Chico.
- **A repository of irreplaceable historical artifacts**
 - Although John and Annie's journals were digitized, seeing the environment in which they were produced gave the experience of reading them a depth and warmth that will never again be possible for future readers
 - The basketry that burned with the mansion, in some cases gifted by the sovereign domestic nations whose members produced them, were amazing. Their loss to future generations, is profound.

- **A model of innovation in architecture for its time.**
 - John was fearless in adopting the latest technologies.
- **A place of inspiring beauty and timeless, balanced proportions**
 - Yes, Bidwell Mansion was a mansion but not an especially ostentatious one. Its proportions, like those of most of the buildings on the Chico State Campus, are not built on some monumental scale. The building was impressive for its elegance and balance, but also because it felt built to human proportions. It was approachable--humble and honest--even though it aspired to greatness. I loved that about the Bidwell Mansion.

Burning the Bidwell Mansion served no good purpose, and put many people at risk. My yard and roof, like those of my neighbors, was littered with embers from the fire. We are lucky no additional losses were incurred.

The man who set our history (and a cherished symbol of hope, civic purpose, and all that is good and right) ablaze is clearly very ill. I have no idea what can be done to help him, or what can possibly restore to our communities what we have now lost. I hope Kevin Alexander Carlson finds peace with himself and finds a way to give back to this community some measure of what he has taken from it.

Sincerely,

Annette Heinemeyer

From: Joel & Carrol Quivey [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:36 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion fire impact

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Over the years, my family and I toured Bidwell Mansion many times. Our family has an interest in the past, and has reenacted several periods of American history, traveling to many historic sites, buildings, and houses in the United States.

Unlike the eastern part of our country, California is younger, and has fewer opportunities to visit historic homes and buildings. The Bidwell Mansion was one such site important not only to Chico and the area, but also to the rest of the state because of Mr. Bidwell's involvement in local and national politics.

Not only were many irreplaceable historical artifacts lost in the fire, the loss of the building itself has been heartbreaking.

It is important for us to be able to see, and experience (even momentarily), how those before us lived their daily lives....whether rich or poor. The mansion was a place to learn about people of global influence, as well as the people that lived off the land, and the people that lived here even earlier. It was an opportunity for everyone to catch a glimpse of life in the past. One hopes it will be rebuilt.

Thank you,
Carrol Quivey
Chico

From: Linda Watkins-Bennett
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 10:07 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Arson Fire Trauma

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Honorable Judge,

I deliver a lot of bad news in my job as a television news journalist, but the news of our beloved, historic Bidwell Mansion burning was a shock that shook me to my core. I cried when I awoke to the news that morning. I cried when I shared what happened with my mother. And cried again on the air that day reporting the details. The only other time I have cried on air during my 40 year news career was during the Camp Fire.

It was hard to believe that our majestic crown jewel, home to Chico's founders, was gone. A cherished part of our history, my history. Nothing left but a burned out shell of a building. A total loss.

After 156 years, gone. And the hurt grew worse when I learned the loss of our mansion was not an accident, but rather an intentional, senseless act of hatred.

I loved the mansion. Born and raised in Chico, as a young girl I toured it regularly on school field trips. and with youth groups. It brought history alive for me, and gave me an appreciation of what life was like back when the Bidwells lived there. A sense of pride at what they had accomplished when times were much harder, in laying the groundwork for our city's future.

I loved sharing the mansion's history with my own son, nephews and nieces. And a tour of the mansion topped my list of recommendations for visitors.

I still haven't been able to bring myself to stop by since the fire happened, it still hurts my heart too much.

Even if a replica is rebuilt it will never be the same. The treasures inside are lost forever. And while no amount of jail time or money can make up for what's been done, I believe the man who set fire to the mansion should serve the maximum time in prison called for by law.

Thank you,

Linda Watkins-Bennett

From: Laura Urseny

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:50 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Butte County District Attorney's office,

I moved to Chico in 1977 after graduating from college. I was struck by Bidwell Mansion, because it was so accessible and so much history right at my fingertips. I love knowing about a place, the people, the actions, what came before right now.

The first time I was in Bidwell Mansion, I felt a connection to the times that Annie and John lived in. To have walked those same floors, bumped into the doorways, and peered out the windows , that gave me eyes on a different time.

I was living in history in a way that couldn't be replicated. That has been stolen from me, the community, our children and grandchildren and beyond.

What right did this person have to destroy history, something precious within our grasp? While it can be rebuilt — who knows if it will — it can never be replaced.

Kevin Carlson assaulted me without even touching me.

Laura Urseny

Chico, California

From: Jim in Chico

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:34 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion arson

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The arson fire of the Bidwell Mansion was a major crime against not only the people of Chico, but against California history.

This selfish act will not only steal the mansion from me, it has also taken it away from current future generations.

I urge the court to impose the most strict sentence against the perpetrator of this crime.

Galvin Matthews
Chico

From: Elizabeth Quivey

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:37 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to express a few thoughts on the Bidwell Mansion arson.

I have lived in Chico since I was a child in the late 1980s. Growing up, the Bidwell Mansion was always a place where we would visit with grandparents or friends from out of town. As an adult and having learned more about history, I valued the Mansion as one of relatively (compared to the eastern United States) few original remaining mid-1800s historic structures on the rural west coast. Aside from its direct connection to Chico's history, the Mansion was a handsome structure on its own, and also a valuable example of unique building techniques. It featured modern indoor plumbing, which was rare for its time, and the building's ventilation and air flow was specifically designed for Chico's hot valley climate.

I served on the board of directors of the Bidwell Mansion Association for six years, and continue to volunteer as a member. As a board member, I was on committees for many events at the Mansion, including Annie's Tea Party, and a Valentine Dinner. Both those events were a wonderful opportunity for community members to experience a slice of life in the Mansion first hand. They were magical experiences for everyone attending.

I acknowledge that the relationship between the Bidwells and the local indigenous people was often complicated - especially as seen through our modern lens. We have learned much over the passage of time, and certainly have much more to learn. That being said, I do not believe that willful destruction of property is the answer to the discussion of colonialism - particularly arson in a community that has been traumatized by wildfire multiple times in recent years. I am saddened by the destruction of the Mansion and the heavy loss that is felt by generations of community members, volunteers, docents, and CA State Parks staff. Our national, state, and local parks staff dedicate their work to the preservation of historic and natural sites like the Bidwell Mansion, which we so often take for granted.

Like many Chico residents, I am hopeful that the Bidwell Mansion can be rebuilt so that future generations can enjoy not only its architectural significance, but its educational, tangible link to Chico's history. In the meantime, I am hopeful that the Mansion arsonist will receive a fair consequence representative of the damage done to Chico's

history and the decades of hard work and valuable resources committed to the Mansion's preservation by State Parks staff and volunteers.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Quivey

-----Original Message-----

From: William Peterson

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:44 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

I graduated from Chico 34 years ago and returned 6 years ago to make beautiful Chico my home.

The Bidwell Mansion was not just a building, but a testament to Chico's remarkable history.

Every time I drive by the charred remains my heart sinks.

There are no words that can adequately express the hurt.

William Peterson

From: Nancy Overton

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 12:15 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement by Nancy E Overton

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

February 27, 2025

Butte County District Attorney Office

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

It was a huge personal brutal blow to be awoken by the news of the burning of the beautiful historic Bidwell Mansion early December 11, 2024.

In 1969, my first time in the Bidwell Mansion was on a field trip with my fifth grade teacher Miss Prudence Elliott from Orland's Fairview Elementary School. She had lived in the mansion while studying at Chico State and told us stories about what it was like to live in the mansion. It was the beginning of thousands of school children who would attend a Bidwell Mansion program from all neighboring counties in Northern California.

In 2011, keeping Bidwell Mansion open to the public became my life's mission when Governor Jerry Brown decided to close over 60 State Parks historic museums and centers. The Bidwell Mansion Community Project was formed which I eventually ended up chairing, and was responsible for raising over \$100,000 in 90 days from January 1 – March 31, 2012. Aside from encouraging scores of others via nonprofits and school groups to raise money for the Mansion, I also chaired the Project's only fundraiser "Run to Bidwell Mansion" on March 31, 2012 where hundreds walked or ran from Bidwell Park to the Bidwell Mansion.

Enough funds were raised together with thousands of people and groups to stop the State Park from closing Bidwell Mansion's doors on May 1, 2012.

By the summer of 2012, The Bidwell Mansion Community Project was incorporated and as its president, I signed on the mansion's front lawn with fellow board members at my side, a three year cooperating agreement to send \$25,000 every quarter to State Parks for the benefit of keeping Bidwell Mansion's doors open to the public.

The Bidwell Mansion Community Project, before its incorporation, had received an inheritance and had accumulated over \$150,000.00. Only two quarterly checks for \$25,000 each, were sent to State Parks on July 1 and October 1 in 2012 before it was discovered that State Parks had a \$54 million hidden fund. Another gift had also been made for keeping school field trips going. Then State Parks matched all funds in good faith that were given during the time when the park closures were pending. No further donations from The Project were made during the remaining three years of the agreement. The Project remained a watchdog of the State Park's internal culture and was dissolved in 2017 and \$100,000 of the remaining funds were assigned to the Bidwell Mansion Association per The Project's By-Laws.

In May 2012, I also became a board member and Newsletter Editor of the Bidwell Mansion Association, the cooperating partner of Bidwell Mansion State Park and remained on the board until January 2021. My most memorable assignment was to chair the Bicentennial of John Bidwell's Birthday Committee to celebrate his life and the different ways he impacted the City of Chico, the State of California and the United States of America. Most of the 12 public events were held in the Mansion or on the Mansion grounds for the benefit of the community of Chico and Northern California.

Thousands of hours of my personal devotion and those of my fellow board and community members to keeping this beautiful centerpiece of history, culture and legacy for the community of Chico and Northern California went up in smoke with Kevin Carlson's senseless premeditated heinous crime on December 11, 2024. He should be sentenced to the maximum time allowed by law and to as many hours of community service deemed reasonable enough to help him understand that our historical buildings and museums and the memories of the lives of those who helped shape our history are to be preserved for future generations.

Sincerely,

Nancy E Overton

From: Alyssa Manes

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 2:05 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Hello,

My name is Alyssa Manes and I am a Chico resident. I enjoy learning about history and nature and love visits to the library. Around 2013, I came across a John Bidwell book in the juvenile section of Chico's library and read it out loud to my then 3-year-old son. John Bidwell lived California history - coming when this was still Mexican territory, overland as part of a wagon train, traveling to missions, seeing native inhabitants (both animal and human), hunting for gold and farming the rich land, connecting people and traveling places. I have re-read the book several times since then, and we have even met the local author, Nancy Leek. We have been to Bidwell birthday celebrations at the mansion, my children and I have attended the yearly Bidwell Mansion Association's meetings where we have heard discussions about many topics, including women's suffrage and Indian affairs. Bidwell the man has been the gateway to history for us, and Bidwell Mansion (and its adjacent visitor's center) have been the meeting place for us to gather with other history lovers and re-enactors, learning things we didn't know that we didn't know about the history of our area. The burning of the mansion was a very sad day, because this lovely heirloom of the city - and especially, because its irreplaceable contents - have been destroyed. We read about John Bidwell's travel to California and how he had to leave behind most heavy things in the Nevada desert - but part of the mansion's collection included some books that he carried with him all the way to California. There were baskets made by native peoples gifted to Annie. Books, clothing, gifts - representative of the Bidwell's tastes and also of their connections to others from different places (like the East Coast, where Annie was from), cultures (Chinese, who John Bidwell received death threats for working with), and interests. This, I believe, was the real legacy of the Bidwells - connecting people and places. Bidwell Park is such a treasure in our city, and it is so sad that so much of it burned as well in the Park Fire in 2024. The mansion fire and Park Fire both represent how quickly the actions of one careless (or intentionally reckless) person can affect the lives of so many others. My daughter and I had been looking forward to a visit to Bidwell Mansion after its scheduled external renovation. She and I had just re-read Nancy Leek's book, taken notes, and written an essay about John Bidwell. It saddens us that the Mansion has burned, and especially that all the treasures of history inside were damaged or lost.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Manes

From: Camera Man

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:23 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Statement From Cameraman Investigations

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Judge Caraway,
In the matter of People V Carlson 25CF00018

I ask that you impose the maximum sentence as permitted by law, the public must know our historic in Butte County are not forgotten and deter those who plan to harm them. This was an intentional act and to dissuade future acts the sentence should be at least the middle term, if it can happen to the Bidwell Mansion I fear what could someone do to the Lott Home or Chinese Temple?

I was not able to experience Bidwell Mansion as many residents of the county have, going past it many times I thought to myself I've got to go in there someday, but you don't realize what you've got till it's gone hopefully they won't pave it into a parking lot. Now the Bidwell Mansion will join my list of things I will not ever be able to experience, the other two being to fly on a Concorde and to eat atop the Windows on the World restaurant.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,
Yours truly,
Mr. Albanese
TheCameraman of Cameraman Investigations

From: Meegan Jessee [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 7:27 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To whom it may concern,

The loss of the Bidwell Mansion is a tragedy for our community and one that feels very personal to me and my family. My mom was born and raised in Chico and took me to visit the Mansion on a number of occasions in my childhood – sharing stories of when she, as a teenager, got to dress in Victorian clothing for a photo shot at the Mansion organized by Ted Meriam as part of an Oser's advertising campaign. My husband's family roots go back even further— his three- and two-times great grandfathers worked in John Bidwell's orchard which stretched from the Bidwell Mansion to Lindo Channel.

My husband and I choose to live and raise our family here in Chico and where lucky enough to buy and revive an older home near the Mansion, in the "Mansion Park" neighborhood, so dubbed because the neighborhood was developed on the Mansion's immediate "park" land. The Mansion was a regular destination for family walks and bike rides. My kids honed their bike riding skills doing countless laps in the Mansion's circle drive, under the big Magnolia. We picnicked on the lawn, took pictures in the

garden and on the porch, and once they got old enough, we toured the Mansion and talked about the Bidwells and the complicated legacy they left.

On our last visit to Mansion, my mom, daughters and I attended a Tea Party in the Mansion – a fundraiser for the affiliated community organization I believe. My daughters, at the time, were both in elementary school and this was their first “Tea” and one I hope they won’t forget since never again will they be able to visit the Mansion. Until now, the Bidwell Mansion has been a cornerstone of their community, family, neighborhood and lives. I can only hope they are old enough to hold on to some of these memories so that someday they can share them with kids or grandkids of their own.

Sincerely,

Meegan Jessee

From: Kathy LeDuc

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:35 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Generations feeling the loss of Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I will attach this below, but also put it here if that makes it easier to submit to the District Attorney's Office.

It is difficult to express the loss of Bidwell Mansion in words. The morning I heard that it burned, I experienced a very deep grief and wept as the death of something I **treasured** was suddenly gone. That hurt has lessened over the months, but the pain of the loss will remain.

Our family moved to Chico almost 50 years ago. I knew it was a special place when the community wrote poems expressing their love and grief over the loss of a tree: the famous Hooker Oak. How infinitely more important is the Mansion! For years we took a tour with every visitor who came to see our new hometown. We later became friends with the Park Ranger, Steve Feazel, who gave us a very special treat taking us up into the tower.

Almost every year we attended the special events: Christmas with the Bidwell's, Christmas with choirs singing inside, and once a very special dinner in the parlor. I enjoyed the grounds outside too: sitting on the green, walks during my lunch break from Chico State, a agriculture/farm event with our grandchildren, and summer with Shubert's ice cream. Celebrating the Centennial in 2005 was especially meaningful. A friend officiated on the front steps and many we knew attended to honor our founders for their vision and gifts to Chico.

In 1998, I worked with local historians, John Nopel and Mike Hamilton, to create an audio tour of Chico and the Humboldt Wagon Road. (This was the final project for my Master's Degree.) The tour begins at the Mansion, recounting how John Bidwell came overland to Chico and had this lovely mansion built for his Annie. Nopel and Hamilton's depth of understanding and great love

for the history of Chico's founders and community was passed on to me through that experience.

Now our children are grown, and our 9-year-old grandson was ready to visit with his class. That day his teacher was devastated by what happened. December 11 is a day marked with such pain and there is NO way to understand how a person could purposely obliterate something so special to this city and community. It was our White House, our Notre Dame. How is it possible to rebuild or replace something so incredibly meaningful to so many?

Kathy LeDuc

From: Ray and Teresa Hansen

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 7:13 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Teresa Wood-Hansen Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

February 28, 2025

When I saw on the news the Bidwell Mansion was burning down my heart dropped! How could someone destroy this beautiful historic building, the iconic symbol for Chico, California?

I myself am a descendent of the Hupp family, a pioneer family here in Butte County from the 1850's. I cherish local history and the demise of this spectacular building is devastating to me.

My mother Mary Lee Wood always told us stories how she and her girlfriend in the 1940's would scale up the Bidwell Mansion outer levels peeking in the windows at night. Fortunately they were never caught or got injured!

As I raised my two sons here in Chico, we would make attending the Bidwell Mansion Christmas open house every year a priority event. They both have fond memories of the wonderful music and yummy cookies and apple cider. We would then tour the mansion. Watching General Bidwell's eyes follow you from the grand painting in the main hall was always a highlight. When I called to tell them of the burning of Bidwell Mansion they were horrified as well.

I have enjoyed taking out of town friends on Bidwell Mansion tours. What pride I had in this very special historic building, the pride of Chico. General Bidwell founded our city of Chico and to burn down his home is just plain cruel.

I was born and raised in Chico and am now 70 years old. To have enjoyed the Bidwell Mansion for so many years has been a gift. I am so traumatized by this destructive burning of the Bidwell Mansion that I still am unable to drive by it to view the horrifying shell of a building.

Bidwell Mansion was an iconic building for our city. I miss it so much! How an individual could take this away from us is simply deplorable. I greatly hope it can be rebuilt so future generations can take in it's glory and learn about Chico's history.

That's my story and I am sticking to it, as my Mother would say

Regards,

Teresa Wood-Hansen

From: Alicia Glatz [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 8:44 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I am struggling to put into words how the destruction of the Bidwell mansion affects me. Disbelief. Shock. Anger. Sadness. Loss. When I first heard that the mansion had burnt down via text message from a friend, I couldn't believe it. Who would do such a thing?! Why?! Then I saw the first pictures online and it was like a punch in my gut. It was like hearing the news that a loved one had been killed in a senseless, tragic crime. Then the tears came.

As I stood watching the smoldering ruins later that morning, I thought about how much the mansion is the heart and soul of our town. I thought about how I would never again be able to play Annie's piano (itself, a beautiful, irreplaceable historic square grand piano) at the Annual Christmas With The Bidwells and fill the mansion with Christmas song and listen to the people join in to sing carols. Never again would I tickle the ivories and fill the home with Victorian era music at Annie's Tea in the spring time. I thought about all the kids and visitors to our town who will never be able to take the tour and learn about our Chico pioneers and the history of our town and state. The Bidwell mansion is like a living time capsule in which to experience an era in history.

The arsonist didn't just burn down a building, he burnt down history. He stole our joy and our future memories of this beautiful historic home. These things are irreplaceable. It saddens me to think an individual felt the need for this senseless destruction. I wonder if he really understands the magnitude of his crime, for which he should be punished. Our town lost a piece of its soul.

Alicia Glatz

From: David and Dianne Wilkinson

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 9:10 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Victim Impact Statement

Dear Butte County District Attorney Michael Ramsey,

As a young museum professional in Fresno in the 1970s, I became aware of the existence of a legendary historic mansion in Chico, CA, named "Bidwell Mansion." It was regarded all over the state of California as one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of historic buildings in California. It was not until the early 1980s that I was able to visit Chico and to visit the famous Bidwell Mansion. It was obvious to me as to why it was so revered across the state as a premier landmark. That includes not only the magnificent structure itself, but the incredible history of the builder of the mansion, John Bidwell, and his contribution to local, state, and national history.

Bidwell Mansion, shockingly destroyed by a vicious act of arson, must be rebuilt, as close to originally constructed as possible. If it was possible to rebuild the entire historic center of a city destroyed during WWII, namely Dresden, which I have seen and can attest to, then it is possible to rebuild Bidwell Mansion. The arsonist should be part of work crew, doing the most manual of labor, carrying cured adobe bricks to the work site and placing them to reconstruct Chico's, and California's, revered landmark.

Thank you,

Dianne S. Wilkinson

- Former Executive Director, Chico Museum
- Former President, Chico Heritage Association
- Former Board member, Stansbury House, Chico
- Former Board member, Californians for Preservation Action
- Former Executive Director, Arts Council of Glenn County
- Former Executive Director, Fresno City and County Historical Society, which operates the historic Kearney Mansion Museum and Fort Miller Blockhouse
- Founder and Director, MuseTech
- Graduate, Seminar for Historic Administrators, Williamsburg, VA

From: Bob LeDuc

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 9:23 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Personal loss

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

How do I express the feelings of loss that this classless act of destruction does to me, our city, citizens, and state?

This home, built by one of the founders of our state, was a memorial to a pioneer, statesman, developer, warrior, and mediator between cultures. He was the glue to the foundation of Chico. Its history speaks of permanence and care. It was the center of our city.

Bidwell's home was well built, modern in its time, beautifully designed, and a place dignitaries visited to get a glimpse of how bountiful and productive our land is.

What a shame to see our valued home wantonly destroyed! It hurts deeply every time I think of it or drive by the charred remains.

Sincerely, Bob LeDuc

From: Kacee Hamre

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 9:56 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Both my daughter and I loved going to the mansion and taking pictures or taking out of town guests to the mansion and showing them the history of town, and now that is no longer an option because of this arsonist and his selfish desires. My Girl Scout Troop also enjoyed a visit to the mansion and even though they are all in high school now we were considering another visit shortly before the devastation of the fire.

I have taken people from Africa by the mansion when they were visiting our office for business (sadly it was on closed days so they couldn't tour indoors), I have taken people from numerous states there, field trips with my daughter's school, even when I was in school and my Girl Scout troop. We love the mansion and the history behind it (even if there are some who don't appreciate the history). It was always a highlight to see when we drove downtown, not it is a heartache. I feel that the arson punishment isn't strict enough because someone who burns down buildings for fun isn't losing the history, memories, life's work, possessions, and more, but I feel that this criminal deserves the full and maximum punishment as we lost many valuable irreplaceable items the day he burned our town history down. I hope that we can rebuild, even though it will not be the exact same, just like the covered bridge. I am happy to have the bridge back, but it isn't the same.

Thank You!

Kacee Hamre

-----Original Message-----

From: Philip Hughes

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:22 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

To whom it may concern,

The arson fire at Bidwell Mansion affected my family and the communities in Butte county by destroying history and one of the only icons in Butte county. It brought tourism and money into our Chico businesses as one of the stops and attractions to see in town. This was a hate crime against the Bidwell family and our State Park system. The fire was deliberate and meant to send a statement to the city of Chico and the county. We can never get back what was lost from the fire.

Thank you for your time,

Phil

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Ward

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:33 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: The mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Hi. I wanted to write about Bidwell mansion fire.

This place was an icon for many of us!!!

I was brought to tears about our loss. I was so thrilled to be able step into the place of the Bidwells. (although they were a somewhat an iffy group of hate against other cultures.)

Even though, it's all part of our history. I'm shaken of the horrible damage this man created , in burning down the place. Please send him to jail, maybe send others to not send places on 🔥

I'm from Paradise, and then Phoenix Oregon. Two devastating fires. I'm always on alert. Living with ptsd.

Please convict this guy.

Melissa Ward

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Florian

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:36 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Loss of Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Your Honor,

My name is Susan Florian. I've resided in and around the Chico area since I was 19 Years old. I've raised my family here.

My family and I have been very fortunate to have visited the Mansion on many occasions over the years.

Visiting the Mansion has had a huge impact on my life. Aside from the breathtaking beauty and historical value it has represented in Chico, it also gave me a love of taxidermy. Not trophy kills, but of nature. There were displays of the taxidermy work in the Mansion that I was always in awe of and led me to do some displays of my own.

It also gave me insight into the personal lives of the Bidwells. I have a book that I treasure detailing their love story and their lives together.

While on a visit to the Mansion, a dear friend of my family was invited during a tour to play a little something for everyone. He played Hall of the Mountain King. A memory I will forever cherish.

Chico has lost a true gem, one that many of us held dear. The perpetrator not only gutted a building, he gutted a gift, a piece of history that can never be replaced.

Thank you for your time.

Susan Florian

Sent from my iPhone

From: Melissa Hansen

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:37 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The Bidwell Mansion fire is such a huge loss to the community of Chico. Bidwell Mansion was the face of Chico and I am devastated that its been destroyed. I cried the morning of Dec 11th, when I looked at the news first thing that morning.

As a 4th generation Chicoan and from a farming family, I have to admit, I took the mansion for granted. My great grandfather sold grain to John Bidwell and my mother had a college class on the 2nd floor, to the right at the top of staricase. As a junior high student at Notre Dame, our class would look forward to riding our bikes from 4th & Hazel Streets to Bidwell Mansion to play soccer on the old soccer field to the north of Bidwell Mansion, where Gateway Science Museum now resides. In 1986 my high school senior pictures were taken on the beautiful grounds of the mansion and in 2022 my wedding announcement photos were taken out front. A wonderful cousin, who just passed away last week, was married in the gazebo out front in May 2018. I am so grateful to our Annie K Bidwell Parlor# 168, of Native Daughters of Golden West, for putting together a tour a year and a half ago, That was the first time I had been on 3 rd floor (it wasn't open on my childhood tours) , that tour was when my Mom showed us her former college classroom on 2nd floor. To say I will miss Bidwell Mansion, is an understatement.

Kevin Carlson needs to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Incarcerate him for years!
Thank you for your time.

From: Julie Threet

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:02 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: BIDWELL FIRE VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To DA Ramsey et al,

This is my personal impact statement I would like submitted to the judge for purposes of sentencing of the arsonist responsible for this tragedy.

First, I am a member of the Bidwell Mansion Association and felt a profound loss waking up to news of the fire. We are a group of dedicated community members who cared for this historical monument and legacy to Chico. It is unbelievable still that we will never have another Christmas event. I had two new grandbabies last year and have lost the ability to enjoy this part of Chico history with them.

Second, I am a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Chico Chapter. We had been working on a special project with the Association to honor Annie Bidwell next year as THE MOST FAMOUS local Daughter of the American Revolution member. Most in the community have to clue Annie had a patriot who fought for our independence. The national organization had challenged local chapters to honor a famous DAR member with a bronze marker (see link below). This is part of the

America250 Celebration - a host of activities being planned to celebrate America's independence in 1776.

Being on the west coast, finding a famous DAR member is more challenging - we were all so thrilled and very excited when our President found Ms. Annie Bidwell to be an actual card-carrying member! We formed a small Committee and started an EXHAUSTING process of applying to both our national organization, coordinating with other northern California DAR Chapters to combine funding, secure an appropriate boulder to hold the marker, work with the Association and of course the State Parks division.

Our Chapter was right in the midst of working out the details of where to place the boulder on the grounds and how to celebrate the placement.

Needless to say, while we are resilient and will continue with plans to celebrate Annie Bidwell our most famous member, the interference in this project that has cost our chapter time and money, and the emotional turmoil on our members dedicated to this project, Annie Bidwell and this Country, is immeasurable.

PLEASE CONSIDER THE IMPACT ON OUR MEMBERS WHEN MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT.

Julie Threet

From: Leslie Phillips

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:05 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Fri 2/28/2025 10:44 AM

I moved to the Chico area in 1990 from Southern California. It wasn't long before I realized how important the Bidwell Mansion was to Chico. When my mother came to visit from Southern California, I took her to the mansion. She was very intrigued by it and its history. Year after year when she came to visit at Thanksgiving time, she would volunteer at the mansion to help decorate for the holidays. She enjoyed that so much and really came to love the mansion and getting it ready for the holidays and its visitors. The mansion became important to her and my family.

As my mom aged, she was not able to make the trip and visit the mansion. Whenever I would drive by or go to the mansion I would think of my mom and the joy it had given her. My mom passed away last year at the age of 95. I am grateful that I never had to tell her the mansion had been set on fire by an arsonist, that would have broken her heart.

That is what I feel has been stolen from everyone that loved the mansion, memories, history and opportunities. I hope justice can be done in the sentencing of Kevin Alexander Carlson to give some peace to the community. We all miss the Bidwell Mansion, there needs to be severe consequences.

Sincerely,

Leslie Phillips

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Fiscus

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:14 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Personal Impact of Bidwell Mansion destruction by the Arsonist

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

The arson destruction of the Bidwell Mansion was a tragedy. Chico is my hometown and I enjoyed seeing and sharing the preserved history of this area. So many family memories, photos, wedding memories, history and treasures have been lost because of this person Kevin A. Carlson. We as a community have lost this wonderful historic home as the result of this person's actions. Showing the little ones how people lived, watching their little faces alive with wonder and questions, was something to truly enjoy. I do not have the right words to express my feelings, just a tragic loss. I hope you can find a sentence for this person that will help him to understand what terrible grief and sadness he has created for so many people.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Michele Lehane [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:27 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Hello Mr. Ramsey,

I am the Regent of Chico Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. On Saturday, February 15, 2025, members of District I of the California State Society, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), dedicated an America250! Patriot Marker to honor Revolutionary War Patriots and those of Annie Kennedy Bidwell (DAR Member #1329). Annie Kennedy Bidwell's two great-grandfathers, Andrew Ellicott (DAR Ancestor #A037386) and Samuel Kennedy (DAR Ancestor A#064784). District I

includes Chico Chapter, Major Pierson B. Reading Chapter (Redding) and Siskiyou Chapter (Yreka). Annie Bidwell became a member of the DAR in 1892. The beautiful bronze marker will be placed on a boulder donated by ProAggregate (Chico). Due to a tragic fire at Bidwell Mansion, the installation of the marker was postponed. Our hearts are broken. Members are devastated that our beautiful, historic mansion has been virtually destroyed. The boulder with the marker will still be installed later this year near the Visitors Center on the grounds of Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, but now our beautiful America250! Patriot Marker will no longer be seen by excited, interested visitors as they embark on touring the historic mansion. Sadly, no jail term, in my opinion, is long enough for this crime. This horrible person has torn a treasure from the arms of our City and deserves the maximum punishment. Honoring God, Home and Country,
Michele Lehane

From: Scott Cory [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:57 AM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The arson of the Bidwell Mansion has taken away the beautiful landmark building that I drive by at least twice every day on my way to work. Instead of happiness, my drive downtown and home is now filled with anger and sadness each time I pass the remnants of this horrific act. It also tarnishes the joy of all the special moment photographs my family has taken with the mansion and grounds as a backdrop. I am very upset that my grandchildren will not get to share the same exclusive to Chico experience our family has enjoyed for the past 60 years of my life.

~ Scott Cory

-----Original Message-----

From: Diane Farris
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 11:57 AM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Good day

It is my understanding today is the last day for statement regarding the fire that was started and damaged a good portion of Bidwell Mansion.

I attended Chico State in the early 80's...

It was a great experience ..and seeing the mansion almost daily was part of my routine. I ended up staying Summers between semesters...

The mansion was a great reminder of the history of Chico. ...And what the Bidwells added to the community .

It was great landmark

I met students that were raised there in Chico and were tour guides at the mansion.

(i did have a chance to go thru it several times.) My brother got married there on the front lawn of the mansion ...graduation day May of 1986.

Have also seen the repairs of the covered bridge.

History needs to be preserved

I have to say was very upset when I got the news of the Mansion being so badly damaged ... and when the pictures came across the internet, it was worse than I had imagined So it is my hope ...and plea that the maximum sentence will be handed down Diane Farris Former Chico resident Lover of history Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Michelle O'Hara

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 12:10 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject:

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

BIDWELL MANSION, I AM INTERESTED IN CALIFORNIA HISTORY AS I ALSO COME FROM A FAMILY IN SACRAMENTO THAT WERE FOUNDING FATHERS. MY SON IS A FIREMAN SO IT AFFECTED ME EVEN MORE. I HOPE HES SENTENCED FOR WHAT HE DID. THANKS YOU MR RAMSEY

From: Lori Dieter

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 1:25 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: History, Culture, Piece of the Heart

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To whom it may concern,

Near 60 years ago, I was born in Chico. I resided there for more than 55 years, and remain a resident of Butte County. Bidwell Mansion was among my early memories, as my mother took me and my sister around Chico to learn about our culture and the roots of our home town. Wonderful memories of her excellent parenting helped educate each one of us in a very special way. The Mansion was an amazing resource for a visual learner such as myself. The prominent Bidwells spent their adult lives for the benefit of Chico. Many points in Chico's heritage have now disappeared due to fire and other means, but under the care of the City of Chico and CA State Parks, the Mansion served as a marker in history so we would not forget or erase the foundation or importance of Chico in the early development of

California. The architecture and location served as a delight to the citizens such as me. The importance goes beyond community for me. It was an inspiration. When life's struggles would get me down, I would go to the mansion to remember the struggles of the past. This would help make me feel better. Now it's in ashes. That made me cry. When the Mansion was given to the city, and then to State Parks, it was in public trust. That is now broken. It's another example of how the bad influences in Chico have control. It's a reminder that currently the city takes advantage of its good citizens in the name of good will. It's heartbreaking to hear that enforcement did their job by catching the person who willfully destroyed a peace of our culture, yet the punishment is so lenient. It makes me sad to know I live in a time when destroyers, thieves, addicts and worse seem to be slapt on the wrist or less for their wrongdoings to others. The loss of the mansion will go down in history as a sad day, not only because of the loss but because of the harm it inflicts, as a burned out monument to societal failures. Don't let this happen! Make the punishment match this intentional crime against not just the building, but culture, the foundation of Chico and of early Northern California as a whole.

Sincerely,
Lori Dieter

From: Jeff Shaner
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 1:49 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Not to bothered

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I appreciate history more than the average person. I also know the History of the Native Americans and what John Bidwell and the likes of him did to them. Burning their villages, killing their game to starve them. Had Bidwell Mansion been a place that served both the history of the Native Americans and the english settlers I might be angry about it burning. I also know that they didn't have working fire alarms as they had cancelled their contract with the local fire alarm company. Had the local company still been monitoring the fire alarms, the heat sensors would have alerted the fire department an hour or more before they got called. The Mansion would still be here.

So it goes.
Jeff Shaner.
--

-----Original Message-----

From: Cliff Barley [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 3:12 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

My name is Clifford Barley. I was born December 14, 1950. Bidwell mention has been in my life since my beginning. It has been the centerpiece of Chico. Whenever new friends or out of town relatives came to Chico the first things on the tour would be General and Annie Bidwell's home and the beautiful park that's Annie donated to the city of Chico. The mansion and the Bidwells were part of our history lessons in school. It was a part of history, local state and national that we could see, touch and walk around in that was real and not just pictures in a history book. It needs to be rebuilt so my grandchildren can see, touch and understand our history. Chico is a unique town whose history needs to be preserved. It wasn't a perfect history, but having the Mansion as a background can help us learn of our past. All of our past including the horrible parts. I think rebuilding the mansion can help start an ongoing discussion of our history.
Sent from my iPhone

From: Thewordisluv

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 3:28 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom it May Concern,

I first moved to Chico in 1997 and was introduced to Bidwell Mansion then. I knew it was treasure then and always held it as such. For the past 28 years I have never lived more than 1.2 miles from the Mansion. The Mansion was part of my life in that I saw it on a regular, sometimes daily, basis depending on my commute. Last year when my daughter was in 4th grade her class was not able to visit the Mansion. I promised her that I would take her as soon as the reconstruction was done this spring. I can never keep that promise because of what Kevin Carlson did, because of what he destroyed. He destroyed a treasure, an irreplaceable piece of history, he destroyed my promise to my daughter and he destroyed the chances for current and future generations to enjoy what was the blessing of Bidwell Mansion. I really hope he will serve more than 11 years for what he did and that the charges can include domestic terrorism for terrorizing our community.

Christina Lynn

From: Jillian

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:56 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I have lived in Chico since 2008. I have always heard about the Bidwell Mansion and that Chico was basically built around this Foundation by John Bidwell. I always said someday i want to take a tour in

there. And time flew by, my schedule never met up or i couldnt find anyone to go with me even though we would kind of make plans to see it some day. Well it went under renovation and i said to a friend, for sure after the renovation we have to go. Then the biggest heartbreak of this city fell upon us. The Bidwell Mansion was on fire. Hundreds of years of history wiped out in a matter of hours. Our fire department couldnt save it. All was gone. The city is devastated. We all knew what happened even before the investigation started that morning. A person started this fire. This city has been taken over by so many people that have no respect for this land, the history, the wildlife and the preservation of our historical buildings. The people of the streets get everything handed to them on a silver platter when they should be made to enter a program to get off of drugs or leave our city. I hear this man comes from an affluent family as well. So why did he set our beautiful mansion on fire? What purpose could this act have? 11 years isnt long enough for him. Maybe 150 yrs would be a start because thats how long this mansion survived until he took the joy out of our community. The people of Chico have pride in the city. We love our parks, our historical buildings, our events in the parks, in the downtown parks with Friday night music and skating rinks. I use to go downtown to shop but no more. Its scary. You cant bring children there. You cant enjoy anything anymore. The burning of the Bidwell Mansion was the last heartbreaking straw for me. Ill never get to see the mansion in its original state. Ill never be able to feel the past inside those walls once rebuilt. Ill never get to see such things like John Bidwells self portrait hanging on the wall as it is gone. Forever. This man intentionally burned down the heart of Chico for what? What could he of possibly gained from such a horrible act. He should pay the rest of his life for the death of the Bidwell Mansion. I hope the City of Chico figures out soon how to rid our streets with the destruction going on. Its time we take this city back. Unhoused need to accept shelter or start towards the city limits. Now they are in our parks again.

Please wake up and make it illegal to panhandle, and camp. Follow Lodi and Fremont and kick them to the curb.

From: Lisa Burns

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 4:03 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion to me

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The intentional burning of Bidwell Mansion was perhaps the lowest day that the city of Chico has ever had.

I grew up in Chico. This mansion was built by a man with a desire for a beautiful and productive city. We wouldn't have most of our local assets if it were not for the foresite and generosity of John and Annie Bidwell. A park, a college, a church, land donated.

The mansion is more than a historic home. It is who we are. It is a representative and reminder of our legacy. If you go inside, you are given important lessons of a time when lives were the same as ours, but also very different. You learn how Annie and John developed a relationship and working trust with the most of the local native Americans. You learn how they survived amid disease, criticism, the hurdles to traveling for necessity or to see loved ones. I could write on and on, but in the effort of being brief, I'll stop.

I hope that this crime will receive the fullest extent of punishment that the law will allow. This is a deliberate and premeditated act.

I also believe that the mansion needs to be rebuilt with a priority to accuracy. If it takes time, that is fine with me. It should be lovingly and respectfully rebuilt. It is who Chico is and was.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lisa Burns

From: Andrea Beaumont

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 5:26 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Statement of Impact: The Loss of Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Statement of Impact: The Loss of Bidwell Mansion

The loss of Bidwell Mansion in Chico, CA, is not just the disappearance of a historic landmark—it is the erasure of a vital piece of cultural and educational heritage. As someone who dedicated years of my life to this remarkable estate as a guide trainee, tour host, and summer camp leader, the mansion was more than just a building; it was a living, breathing testament to our past, shaping my identity and inspiring my future as an educator.

During my time at Bidwell Mansion, I had the privilege of leading hourly tours for groups of 20 to 30 people, welcoming visitors from all over the world. I was a Guide Trainee from about 1995-2002. It was a place where history came to life, from the intricate vanishing-point perspective of the grand hallway painting to the delicate and personal touch of the Victorian-era hair wreath—a playful nod to our "hairitage" that never failed to spark curiosity. I took part in decorating the mansion for Christmas, carefully hanging live pine garlands to evoke the spirit of the past, and engaging with children in summer camps, churning butter and making fresh ice cream just as pioneers once did. Each experience deepened my appreciation for history and strengthened my skills in education and storytelling.

In addition, I met fantastic lifelong friends such as Ellen Clark, Renee Fergusson, and Shelby Erickson. Shelby became my roommate and she remains my closest friend.

The impact of Bidwell Mansion on my personal and professional life is immeasurable. It shaped me as a woman, a lover of history, and ultimately, as a local educator. It provided me with a profound connection to the past, fostering a sense of stewardship for the stories and legacies that historic sites hold. I even had the unique honor of guiding my one-legged principal, Charlie Troughton, up to the widow's walk tower—a moment that underscored the accessibility and shared experiences this mansion facilitated for all who visited.

Beyond my personal journey, Bidwell Mansion stood as an iconic centerpiece of Chico, a source of civic pride and historical identity of course it is showcased on the police cruisers. Within its walls, stories of remarkable figures like Susan B. Anthony, President Rutherford B Hayes, Francis Willard, Governor Stanford, and John Muir unfolded, connecting our community to the larger fabric of American history. For generations, the mansion was an essential educational rite of passage—an experience that will now be lost to future children and families. The absence of these immersive, hands-on encounters with history is a devastating blow to the educational landscape of our city.

My connection to Bidwell Mansion began even before I arrived in Chico. While working on Catalina Island and searching for a place to earn my teaching credential, I knew I wanted to work at a museum or historic home. Having previously been a tour guide at the Meux Home Museum in Fresno, I recognized the profound impact that historic spaces have on shaping our understanding of the past. When I learned about Bidwell Mansion, it felt like fate—a place where I could continue to bridge education and history.

The mansion's cultural significance extended beyond guided tours. I was once featured in *Videomaker Magazine* with Bidwell Mansion as a backdrop, a testament to its visual and historical grandeur. I also had the honor of participating in fashion shows and living history performances, embodying Annie Bidwell's sister and bringing the past to life through storytelling and performance. These experiences not only enriched my life but also contributed to the preservation and appreciation of our shared history.

The loss of Bidwell Mansion and its irreplaceable artifacts (both Native American and Victorian) is not merely the loss of a building—it is the silencing of stories, the dimming of a city's pride, and the removal of an educational resource. Future generations will no longer have the chance to step inside its halls, to feel the weight of history beneath their feet, or to engage with the past in a way that textbooks simply cannot replicate. We must recognize the gravity of this loss and work to preserve the legacy of Bidwell Mansion in any way possible, ensuring that its stories and significance endure despite its absence.

Butte County has one of the highest Arson rates in the United States. People like Kevin Carlson need the maximum penalty and enhanced charges. Bidwell Mansion cannot be replaced. He robbed Chicoans and future visitors of experiencing one of the most impactful historic sites in Northern California this Italianate Villa will never again rise from the ashes. The eerie rubble looks like a war zone now.

Yours Truly,

Local Corning High Educator, Former Bidwell Mansion Guide Trainee, and Friend of Shawn Ramsey

Andrea Beaumont

From: Connie Apostolakos

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 5:35 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

My Victim Impact Statement

I am heartbroken at the loss of the Bidwell Mansion. This is a tragedy for everyone who calls Chico home, and those who want to learn about the history of our town. The mansion was a fabulous piece of Chico history, a testament to a successful man and his benevolent generosity to the City of Chico.

I moved to Chico with my family when I was 9 years old in 1964. Even though I was not born here, I consider Chico my hometown, and I am very grateful I was able to grow up in Chico. Chico was a wonderful place to grow up, and I have raised my own children here. Bidwell Mansion was one of the first places we visited as a family shortly after arriving in 1964. I was impressed with the architecture of Bidwell Mansion and how well it had been preserved to allow us to see how people lived back then. John Bidwell donated land to create the City of Chico, so I honor and respect him as the founder of my hometown. The Bidwells were visionaries and donated land to create Bidwell Park, which is a Chico treasure that people enjoy to this day. I grew up riding my horse in Bidwell Park as a teenager. My father was a psychology professor at Chico State, and his office at one time was directly behind Bidwell Mansion. Sometimes when I would visit my Dad's office I would park in the Bidwell Mansion parking lot and walk from there back to his office. I love my home town of Chico, I love Bidwell Park our town treasure, and I loved visiting Bidwell Mansion. When I have visitors come from out of town, I always took them to tour Bidwell Mansion to learn the history of our town and learn about the generosity of John and Annie Bidwell. I honor and respect John and Annie Bidwell and am grateful for all they did for our community. They were benevolent and generous to donate their land to create the City of Chico, they gave us a big lovely park, and they also gifted land to create Bidwell Presbyterian Church. John and Annie Bidwell did so much for our community. Their generosity lives on forever for those of us who live in Chico.

I just recently retired and was planning to volunteer at the Mansion during my retirement years. That opportunity has been unjustly taken from me by the arsonist. When my dear friends visited from Tacoma Washington last year, we set out to visit Bidwell Mansion. Sadly we were a week too late as the remodeling project had just started. Now I will never be able to tour them through the mansion and let them see the beautiful old house in person. The loss of Bidwell Mansion is the loss of our town jewel, and the loss of our town history. Such a great loss cannot really be made right, even if we rebuild the mansion. I am especially sad about the loss of the amazing picture of John Bidwell that was in the lobby. It was wonderful how his eyes and feet pointed at you no matter where you stood in the lobby. There is no amount of restitution and no jail sentence long enough that will make up for our great loss. The loss of Bidwell Mansion and everything in it is an epic tragedy.

The arsonist had no right to torch our Chico history and turn such a valuable historical home into ashes. Bidwell Mansion belonged to all of us who live in Chico, and the precious artifacts in there cannot be replaced.

I urge you to sentence the arsonist to the longest possible sentence allowed by law. His callous and selfish crime is a crime against everyone who lives here and calls Chico home. In 2023 the population of Chico was 101,301. So there are 101,301 victims to this arson; a tragic loss that was senseless and cruel. He took from us a valuable piece of history that can never be replaced.

Connie Apostolakos

From: daniel Goodson

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 7:53 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement from Goodson Family

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

“We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us,” Sir Winston Churchill, House of Lords, October 28, 1943, requesting the House of Commons (bombed out in May 1941) be rebuilt exactly as before.

Bidwell Mansion. Shaped myself and my family. Always where we took our visitors, followed immediately by Bidwell Park.

My Sons would laze on its porch after getting speech therapy at Chico State.

We would walk near it nearly every day, throwing our eyes with pride upon its facade.

Feel anchorless without it.

As these domestic terrorists raze our Bidwell Park and our Beloved Bidwell Mansion, our identity as a town is erased.

Soon Chico will be nothing special....

Please rebuild our most precious and important touchstone.

Allow us not to be shaped by terroristic arsonists, but exultant in rising from the ashes.

Thank you,

The Goodson Family

Daniel, Julie, Sawyer, Evan,

Sent from my iPhone

From: Mike Swann

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 7:54 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom It May Concern:

I've been a volunteer living history actor at the Bidwell Mansion for around 7 years, am a former BMA board member, and have been an area resident almost my whole life. It's difficult to articulate how much the burning of the Bidwell Mansion has affected me and the city at large, though for myself, I wept when I saw the footage. Having your town founder's home survive this long, in a nearly pristine state was a rare treasure this community had that few others do. The destruction of such an irreplaceable structure and the one-of-a-kind artifacts within it alone is a monumental tragedy, but with the loss of the living history and community events that it supported as well, the pain is compounded and will be ongoing. This is a crime against everyone, it is permanent, and cannot be undone. My life will never be the same, Chico itself will NEVER be the same! I ask the court to impose the maximum possible sentence in this case; as horrible as arson is already, this was no ordinary house that lies in ruins.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Michael Swann

From: Steffany Barret

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 9:13 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to explain what the Bidwell Mansion meant to me. It was a beacon of my home, it was a beautiful monument of a wonderful founder family of my hometown. It felt like a family estate that everyone in our community had a stake in. I grew up in Chico my entire life and I sat on the steps of the mansion as a child visitor, and as a teen, and finally as an adult I watched my children visit. My middle son even broke his arm there. My children love history and love the mansion... their hearts were broken to hear of this arson and it was difficult to explain to them why anyone would do such a senseless act. It is a shame that it has been stolen from my community, and it is a tragedy that we have lost the home of our Great Bidwells!

From Stefanie Barrett

[Yahoo Mail - Email Simplified](#)

From: Cyndi Pereira

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 9:19 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement from Cyndi Pereira

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Honorable Judge,

As a proud lifelong resident of Chico, I am writing to express the deep and personal loss I feel in the wake of the destruction of the Bidwell Mansion—a place that has been a cornerstone of our community's history and a cherished part of my own family's traditions for generations.

Growing up in Chico, visiting the Bidwell Mansion was something I looked forward to every year. It wasn't just a school field trip or a casual outing; it was a connection to the roots of our city, a chance to step back in time and understand the people who shaped this place we call home. When I became a parent, I made sure my children had the same experience, walking through those rooms, hearing the stories, and feeling a sense of pride in our town's heritage. I had every intention of continuing that tradition with my future grandchildren—passing down not just history, but a sense of belonging and appreciation for where we come from.

But now, that opportunity is gone. The fire didn't just destroy a building; it destroyed memories, traditions, and a tangible piece of Chico's identity. It robbed future generations of the chance to walk through those doors and see history come alive. Our community has lost an irreplaceable landmark, a place where schoolchildren learned, where families gathered, and where we all could feel connected to something bigger than ourselves.

The loss of the mansion is heartbreaking, and it was completely avoidable. The actions that led to this destruction have left an entire community grieving—not just for a building, but for what it represented. The damage cannot be undone, and the impact will be felt for years, even decades, to come. I ask that you take this into account when considering the consequences for the person responsible. **This was not just an act against a structure of wood and brick; it was an act against the heart of our community and our shared history.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Pereira

Lifelong Chico Resident, Parent, Local business owner and Community Member

From: MrRandalTea

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:01 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: From Randal Turley, A 14 Year Old Mourning The Loss Of Our Amazing Landmark

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom It May Concern,

I just wanted to share some thoughts on the Bidwell Mansion. If this is being shown in court during this arsonist's sentencing, it will be on my fifteenth birthday. On a "late start" Wednesday at the high school I attend, Pleasant Valley High School, my father notified me that the great monument I have looked up to and thought about for years was burned in a terrible fire. I remembered the school trips we took there, when my little brother broke his arm there, I remembered the painting that watches you, and all the times I sat on those steps as a child after playing in the park. I am largely into history and very patriotic for our great city of Chico, and have even made many different artworks featuring the Bidwell Mansion, such as a Chico specific money [attached]. I would love to see this great monument rebuilt someday, and see the spirit of Chico returned, and hope this man who took it away from us feels remorse for his terrible actions.

Sincerely, Randal Turley

From: Mary-Katherine Pereira

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:02 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Rebuild Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Thank you for providing this forum.

I hope to see Bidwell Mansion rebuilt, as it represents a bittersweet history for me. The architecture is both inspiring and historical. It is a work of art. My dad stayed there as a college student after the Second World War, my classmates sang there, and I played the piano there. My sister was a volunteer docent, and my fellow Chico High School graduates reunited there to share their collector cars. Throughout my childhood and young adulthood, the mansion served as an important anchor for me. However, the history of Bidwell Mansion is not without complexities. The Bidwells, like many people in the nineteenth century, were influenced by the prevailing ethos of manifest destiny. They built the mansion on Maidu Mechoopda land, a decision that significantly impacted the lives of the indigenous people. It is essential to recognize that our understanding and attitudes have evolved since that time, and more history has occurred there. If the mansion is rebuilt and preserved, it can stand as a testament to this evolution and help us interpret and understand our local history—a crucial aspect of California and United States history. John and Annie Bidwell were not perfect individuals; very few

historical figures are. I reflect on Thomas Jefferson, whose writings are foundational to U.S. democracy, yet he was an enslaver and fathered children with Sally Hemings. Would I want Monticello rebuilt if it were destroyed? Yes, because it encapsulates both noble and ignoble aspects of history. Bidwell Mansion does the same. An article published on February 9, 2025, in the British daily newspaper The Guardian highlights some of the history that Bidwell Mansion represents. The fire has illuminated both local and international history. One part of the headline reads, "Now a city reckons with its painful history" (Anguiano). Restoring Bidwell Mansion can teach us how to "reckon with painful history," because erasing it will not help us move forward.

Gratefully,
Mary-Katherine Nelson Pereira

Work Cited

Anguiano, Dani. "The landmark home of a California family was destroyed by fire. Now a city reckons with its painful history." 9 February 2025. Ed. Katharine Viner.
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Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria. 2025. Mechoopda Indian Tribe.
<<https://www.mechoopda-nsn.gov/>>.

Tyler, Ash. "Demystifying a legend Local historian rattles a skeleton in John Bidwell's closet—the Indian Treaty of 1851." *Chico News and Review* 27October 2011.
<<https://www.newsreview.com/chico/content/demystifying-a-legend/4257071/>>.

From: Christine Buckstead [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 10:13 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing to let you know how the arson and destruction of the Bidwell Mansion has affected me and the community. The mansion was the "crown jewel" of Chico. It was one of the oldest and most ornate buildings in the city. The architecture was beautiful to look at when driving down the Esplanade. I enjoyed the mystery of the servant's staircase and the bell system in the kitchen. Some of the artifacts are irreplaceable like the giant portrait and the old map. Tangible reminders of the past are important to keep history alive so that we may celebrate it,

acknowledge our human journey, and learn from our mistakes. The destruction of the mansion is a painful loss to the community.

Sincerely,

Christine Buckstead

BUTTE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 2195
OROVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95965-2195

February 27, 2025

To Butte County Superior Court

Re: Victim Impact Statement

From: Butte County Historical Society, Larry Mauch, President

The loss by fire of the Bidwell Mansion is a loss to all the citizens of Butte County.

The over 150-year-old building, now lost to arson, was one of the most, if not the most outstanding historic building in the county, and was a visual and impressive link to the historic narrative of many major themes in Butte County's history.

John Bidwell was one of a handful of pre-Gold Rush settlers in Butte County, and the most prominent of them. Annie Bidwell was a driving force in the life of the community and beyond. Bidwell's historic discovery of gold on the Feather River at what became Bidwell's Bar, was the foundation of Butte County's extensive Gold Rush history. The fortune that he acquired there enabled him to purchase Rancho Arroyo Chico, lay out the town of Chico and build the Mansion. His early contact with the Mechoopda Maidu people and his protection of them during the period of conflict between Settlers and Native Peoples was a notable chapter in the history of Butte County's Native Tribes.

Bidwell's role in the history of agriculture in the County, especially his experiments with hundreds of imported plant species, underlies Butte County's nationally significant Agricultural history. Additionally, Bidwell's development of the Humboldt Road brought a stream of commerce through Butte County from the Sacramento River to Susanville, Nevada and Idaho that was of benefit to all of Northern California.

The Butte County Historical Society, in our commitment to the preservation of Butte County History for the benefit of all the citizens of Butte County, urges the Court to take into consideration the fact that, unlike most arson fires, the burning of Bidwell Mansion is a loss not just to one family or even one city, but to every citizen of Butte County.

BCHS Board: Larry Mauch, Pres., Daniel Ballard, VP, Lucy Sperlin, Secretary. Janet Bertagna, Treasurer.

At-Large Members: Dale Wangberg, Nancy Brower, Marjorie Daley, Peggie Adamson, Kent Fowler

A Message of Strength and Forgiveness

Bidwell Mansion Arson Impact Statement

The recent arson of Bidwell Mansion is a profound loss to our community. This historic landmark has long served as a symbol of our shared history, resilience, and cultural heritage. The damage caused is not merely physical but deeply emotional for the residents of Chico and beyond.

While the destruction is painful, we must recognize that difficult times do not define us-our response to them does. This is an opportunity for unity, strength, and renewal.

To the Individual Responsible:

The actions taken have caused harm, distress, and a deep sense of loss. However, mistakes-even severe ones-do not define a person. Redemption is always possible. Taking responsibility and seeking to make amends can be the first step toward healing, both for yourself and the community.

We live in a world where judgment is swift, yet true strength lies in owning our actions and seeking a better path forward. There is still time to change course, to seek forgiveness, and to rebuild trust. Your past does not have to dictate your future.

To the Community:

Chico is built on a foundation of perseverance, history, and the ability to overcome adversity. The fire that damaged Bidwell Mansion cannot erase its legacy, nor can it diminish the values that define us as a community.

Let this be a time where we choose to come together, to support one another, and to reaffirm the importance of our shared history. Bidwell Mansion has stood the test of time, and with collective effort, it will rise again-stronger than before.

Moving Forward:

Healing comes not just from rebuilding structures but from restoring hope and trust. Let us respond not with anger, but with action. Let us choose strength, resilience, and the belief that even in loss, something greater can emerge.

Bidwell Mansion will be restored, and so too will the spirit of this community.

Addendum:

At the time of my statement, I used the word 'damaged,' but I understand that Bidwell Mansion was completely destroyed. My feelings of loss and hope for rebuilding remain the same.

Kevin Sorrels

Bidwell Mansion Victim Impact Statement

Tyler Ash

2-27-25

When I first came to Chico, I didn't know anything about John Bidwell. When I left Chico, I wanted to tell the world about him.

My name is Tyler Ash and I graduated from Chico State in 2012. I was born and raised in Northern California and had never been to Chico until 2008 when I came to visit the college campus to see if it might be a good fit for me. Needless to say, it was. There was something about the city itself I had never experienced. It was like a big, small town. Something inside me knew there was something in Chico for me. But there were many things.

I met my future wife and some of my best friends. I gained a bachelor's degree in journalism and hands-on agricultural experiences at the Agricultural Teaching and Research Center that enabled me to get to the career that I love and enjoy today. Chico was truly the first city I had ever lived in that felt like home. And it was all because a man named John Bidwell lost a horse and stumbled upon the land that later became Chico in 1843. He described it as a "revelation," it was luxuriant and fertile, with cold, clear water.

I remember walking past the Bidwell Mansion during my first days in Chico, not thinking much of it. "Huh, that's neat," I thought as I was probably more concerned with getting to class on time or if I could make any new friends in the dorms. I'm sure thousands of students and Chicoans probably think that same thought, not realizing that the man that lived there made countless contributions to the future of California and the United States at large.

I first learned about John Bidwell when I was interning at the Chico News & Review. I had done three semesters with the Chico State Orion and wanted to get an internship under my belt to boost the old resume. At the time in 2011, the mansion was facing closure due to State budget cuts. I was assigned the story, and it changed my life and my understanding of the history of the State of California.

You can read that story here.

<https://www.newsreview.com/chico/content/history-in-jeopardy/3812428/>

Basically, my task was to find out why the mansion should stay open to the public, and what I found out was that both the people of the Chico and California had no idea how amazing and important the story of John Bidwell was to American history. If you were to invent an imaginary character that was at just about every major historical event and place in California during the most of the 1800s, it would be John Bidwell.

He led the first overland wagon train to California when it was still a Mexican territory. He was a key part of the Bear Flag Revolt, which was the turning point in California history that eventually led it toward becoming the 31st United State. It was also where we got the prototype for the California State flag. He worked for John Sutter at Sutter's Fort where he was tasked with dismantling Fort Ross, the remnants of the Russian occupation in California. Then he was there when James Marshall found gold in the American River. In fact, John Bidwell was almost the first one to find it because he was looking for it at the same time. Bidwell was the one who took the gold to San Francisco to get it authenticated, which inevitably kickstarted the Gold Rush soon after. When California became the 31st state, John Bidwell was responsible for taking a block of gold-bearing quartz to Washington DC as California's contribution to the Washington Monument when it was being constructed. He then brought California's statehood papers back to California from DC. Bidwell served in California's first Senate and contributed to naming California's original counties. He was a member of the US House of Representatives in Washington DC after that. Bidwell was a Brigadier General in the Civil War. He ran for California governor four times and even ran for President.

If you enjoy California produce, you should thank John Bidwell because not only was he a pioneer during the Gold Rush, he was also a pioneer in agrarian research and ranching methods. Bidwell used his connections at the US Department of Agriculture to send him seeds, bulbs, cultivars, and varieties of all kinds of fruits, vegetables, and livestock, essentially turning Chico into an experimental farm. He was instrumental in bringing specialty crops like almonds, olives, melons, raisins, and many others to California and proving that they were practical and financially viable options for farmers.

He had a laundry list of accomplishments that would justify not only keeping his home-turned-state-park open, but also protected. This arson, this incredible loss of history for future generations is not only a travesty, it's an embarrassment. It's sad that a man who founded a city but was humble enough not to name it after himself, isn't even remembered for his accomplishments by the people that live in that very city. Many Chicoans probably have a very limited scope of those accomplishments and focus on the local aspects, not the far-reaching historical aspects. I won't even begin to talk about how California and US history has clearly forgotten him, because if they knew the real story behind the mansion like I had to discover for myself, this tragedy would have never happened.

This realization that the world needed to know about this man led me to begin the production of a documentary on his life that regrettably has been left unfinished. I had a team from CSU, Chico's Advanced Laboratory for Visual Anthropology (ALVA) program, and we interviewed a handful of Bidwell biographers and local historians on his life. We were nearly finished conducting interviews and gathering footage when both myself and the

members of my team all received job offers elsewhere. All three of us were post-graduates looking for work with a little bit of extra time on our hands, so we were filling it with making this documentary. But sadly, we had to abandon it to pursue our careers. About three years ago I donated all the footage of the interviews that I had saved to the Bidwell Mansion Association. So at least the footage is there if they ever wanted to utilize it.

You can see a teaser of that unfinished documentary here:

<https://tylerashresume.wordpress.com/2018/05/21/john-bidwell-the-life-legacy-of-a-california-pioneer/>

Years of my life have been devoted to learning about this man and his time in California. That is why when I found out about the Bidwell Mansion burning down late last year I was devastated. It hit me so hard it felt like a loved one had died. I no longer live in the area, but I mourned. I mourned the loss of a building that has been the focal point of one of my favorite cities for nearly 160 years. In fact, I'm still mourning it, that's why I have been putting off writing this until literally the day before it's due because I don't want to think about it anymore. I have been dreading doing it because it's upsetting to me. I'm upset that I won't ever be able to step foot in that Victorian time portal that was Bidwell Mansion. I'm upset that if I did ever have the time or opportunity again to pick up where I left off with my documentary, all of the artifacts of John Bidwell's life, all of the rooms and furnishings, everything I still needed footage of but never got, they're all gone now. They are unavailable and they will never be able to be replaced. I never embarked on the filmmaking journey to make money, which is why I was able to walk away from it. I was directing it because it needed to be done, and I didn't know anyone else who would or potentially could do it at the time. His story needs to get out to a larger audience, and I always intended on completing it one day. But if I was able to finish it, have it distributed and potentially even license it to a streaming service or broadcasting syndication company, who knows how much money I could have made from the documentary. But now without those artifacts and the striking visuals that the mansion itself would provide, I don't believe that would ever be possible anymore.

Bidwell too often gets depicted as a bad man who didn't care about the local native Americans, which I don't think could be further than the truth. Bidwell played the cards he was dealt better than all of the other white settlers of his time. I would even go as far as to say his treatment of the Mechoopda Maidu was altruistic and protective. In a dark part of California's history regarding its original inhabitants, while others viewed scalping, murdering, or worse, as acceptable options when encountering the California natives, John Bidwell was protecting them and employing them at the same wages as Caucasian workers, which was unheard of at the time. John Bidwell paid his workers the same wages, no matter what race they were. The mansion was actually nearly burnt down in his time by

the Chico Anti-Chinese League because Bidwell was paying Chinese workers the same wages as Caucasian workers. Does that sound like a bad man to you?

It's difficult to defend a dead man that you've never met before, so please allow me to quote someone who did know John Bidwell and could attest to his good character.

In November of 1972, Helen Gage was interviewed by John Sharpe of the Association for Northern California Records and Research for part of the CSU, Chico Oral History Program. You can find the transcriptions of her interview in the Meriam Library Special Collections and University Archives under the title "Northeastern California Project Recollections of Life in Early Chico and of General and Mrs. Bidwell."

Helen was an elderly woman at the time of the interview, but she was a child when John Bidwell was still alive. In her recollections she described John Bidwell's kindness. She starts by saying that she had an autograph album that she would collect signatures from her friends and family.

"I was peddling happily down the street on my bicycle, and I saw General Bidwell and a man get out of a big spring wagon in which he used to ride around the town. I thought, 'there's the General. My autograph album!' I dropped the bicycle and ran over to where he was standing. He was very tall and he wore those long Prince Albert coats. I tugged at his coat. He looked down at me and said, 'Why it's little Helen. What can I do for you, little Helen?' I said, 'General Bidwell, I've just had a birthday, and I got an autograph album. Will you please stay here while I go home and get it and then you write in it?' The man laughed but the General didn't. I didn't think it was funny. He looked at me with that grave quiet smile and said, 'yes, little Helen, you go home (He didn't say hurry) and you bring the autograph album, and I will be here waiting for you.' When I returned the man was gone, but there was my dear, kind General waiting for me in the sun. It was not long before his death, he was an old man. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a pencil with a purple point. He said, 'This pencil is the kind that is called indelible. I want my name in your autograph book to be indelible.' So, standing there in the sun, he wrote 'John Bidwell' in my autograph album."

She goes on to describe another interaction with John.

"One time Mother and I were riding with the General and Mrs. Bidwell up in the Park. People have said, 'Why are there so many Black Walnut trees all over Chico, and in the Park?' The General had a great regard for the black walnut. This one day when we were riding along, every once in a while he would say to the coachman, 'Stop.' He would stop at a place where there didn't seem to be very many trees. He would carefully climb down out of the tall wagon, reach in his pocket, take out a black walnut and a little knife. He would make a hole, put in the walnut and press it down and get back into the wagon. Seeing a puzzled look that

I was giving him, he said, 'You are probably wondering why I am doing this. Those are black walnuts. When they grow up they make beautiful trees which give shade, they give nuts for people and little animals in the wood. When they are old, they are still made into beautiful furniture. I am an old man. I will not live to see these walnuts grow to trees. But I hope that you and your children, and grandchildren will frolic in their shade.'"

I am deeply saddened that future generations don't have the opportunity to learn about the history of the area and the State of California by literally walking through Bidwell Mansion. This is such an unfathomable loss that I've been in borderline denial that it is really gone. To put it into perspective, this is Chico's Notre Dame.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask the court to consider the impact this crime has had on my life, as well as the lives of countless others in Chico, throughout California and elsewhere. I hope the court can give the defendant the maximum sentence and penalties available. I also hope that the court can furnish the defendant with some literature on the Bidwells so he might be able to further educate himself on the reality of his crime while he is incarcerated.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Tyler Ash

-----Original Message-----

From: Dave Nopel

Sent: Saturday, March 1, 2025 7:19 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion impact

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Just a brief statement on my life-long association with the Bidwell Mansion and the story of John and Annie Bidwell. I grew up in Chico, with my parents purchasing a house on W. First Avenue in 1946. We lived just a few city blocks from the Mansion, and the areas around Chico High School, Chico State, the Bidwell Mansion, and Chico Creek becoming my childhood playground. My father would develop an interest in Chico and Butte County history in the 1950's, and he would carry that interest to the end of his life, which included him serving on the early Bidwell Mansion Co-operating Association and then the Bidwell Mansion Association during the period of the Mansion's restoration and subsequent period as a California State Historic Monument. I, too, over several decades came to learn and appreciate the story of John and Annie Bidwell as exemplary members of early Chico and California history, and have come to see them as contributing, sharing, even-handed, respectful people who reached toward an advancing, inclusive, equitable future. Those two words, "inclusive and equitable", are not negative words to be pushed aside in this present moment but instead to represent the best of this American story, and it is beyond sad and regrettable that some, even many, have lost sight of the long-playing struggle to create a just and enduring rule of law. I support the full weight of punishment for the crime committed against the physical Mansion building and even more importantly, the blasphemy hurled at the very foundation of our American story. The erosive influence of dis-information must be challenged, and the positive balance of the American story be held above the current challenge of authoritarianism. The destruction of the Bidwell Mansion has stripped away something vital and instructive and elevating at the very core of our Chico community and left the present moment to drift precariously toward collapse.

Dave Nopel Chico, California

From: Karen Traynor

Sent: Saturday, March 1, 2025 8:44 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion victim-impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my sadness and anger at the senseless loss of a treasured piece of history at the hands of an intentioned arsonist. As a Bidwell myself, it makes the loss all the more personal and hurtful.

My residence is on the East Coast of the US, and while I had not yet had the opportunity to make the cross-country trek to visit the Bidwell Mansion personally, it was on the list of places I wished to see. Sadly, that opportunity is now lost. It was a beautiful building and had a significant history in Chico. As we lose more and more artifacts from times past, our connection to an earlier time, way of life, and sense of personal history weakens.

It is unfathomable that this young man clearly concocted a specific plan to destroy this building. His premeditation is evidenced in his purchases of items used in this act days before, and taking steps to conceal his whereabouts and identity. We may never know what prompted such an unthinkable crime. Was it a personal vendetta against the Bidwell family, the University where it was located, or was he just a hateful and angry man who found joy in destroying something? Did he burn this building particularly for some reason, or is he someone who just likes to burn down any building he might get access to? The destruction of this beautiful structure is magnified by the fact that it housed irreplaceable artifacts and items. Did he not know this or did he know this and not care? He had no right to trespass and destroy this building and its contents, and it strikes me as such a cruel act.

The defendant's callousness and disregard for the significance of this building to the community, the Bidwell Mansion and Park's many visitors, and Bidwell family members which span across this country should be considered fully in his sentencing. He has hurt us all with his actions and should be sentenced to the full extent of the court's ability.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Karen Traynor (a Bidwell descendant)

Halifax MA

From: Tiffany Owens

Sent: Monday, March 3, 2025 3:50 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Chico Mansion fire impact

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Seeing the mansion burnt down is very sad in many ways . The person responsible for this disaster/ crime should not be allowed to walk the streets anymore , thus could have been a family of 5 with pets and little children that could have possibly died due to the severity of how this crime took place . This man is sick and has no remorse for the community and or the state as his actions spoke louder than words . If this man is let free as a arsonist he could potentially cause more harm and more fires that need not to happen . I'd like to see a very long sentence for him and as if he was ever parole status I think he should pay for all damages and have to go through extensive mental evaluation to be let out in the community and have to teach young adults how to handle their behavior without committing any crimes . Thank you

From: Robin Keehn

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 8:35 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement Due 2/28 to Judge

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway

Nothing will bring back the Bidwell Mansion!

I live on E. 3rd Ave. Bonding to my hometown Chico was enlightened every time I drove by, walked through or took "out of town" visitors for tours.

I do care:

WHY did this young man do what he did?

HOW could he feel the right to take something from thousands of people?

WHO influenced him?

WHAT restitution, besides jail, will he experience? (Fire crew for life, public meetings to hear who he hurt? (Reconciliation Process)

In Sorrow

Robin Keehn

-----Original Message-----

From: Lynda Harder

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 9:21 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject:

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

My parents in Dos Palos, Ca sent us girls to Chico State in the 60s. Most of the grandchildren went to Chico State. All of us loved and appreciated Bidwell Mansion...the cornerstone of our beloved Chico. The memories will always be very dear.

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Lynn Swaim

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 11:14 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Loss

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

The loss of Bidwell Mansion has caused all Chico Natives and most residents, I believe, such heart ache! It was such a hateful act to burn it down and for what purpose?!!! It hurts Chico so much and cannot ever be replaced. Asinine! I only wish he'd done it a few days later in order to receive the maximum sentence under the new law.

From: Tim Swaim

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 2:49 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Kevin Carolson Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

As a 76 yr old Chico native, I was fortunate enough to be raised as a neighbor of John Nople (now deceased) and his son Dave who each spent a life time working to preserve and honor the history of Chico. I'm heartbroken for them by the self-absorbed, callous action of Kevin Carlsen and, on their behalf, wish the maximum punishment for him.
Tim Swaim

-----Original Message-----

From: Marianne Heaton

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 5:28 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: What the Mansion Meant to me

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

When I first came to Chico in 1974 to attend Chico State University, I was immediately struck by Chico's small town charm. I had moved from the "Big City," Los Angeles, and had never before been to the northern part of California. My young son and I drove here sight unseen so I could pursue higher education and a teaching career.

Part of the charm of Chico, of course, was the Bidwell Mansion. I wasted no time in taking a tour of the big pink house and learning about its history.

Although I was born in San Diego and had been a beach bunny in high school, after a year or so in Chico I began to think of Chico as my true home. I know my son, Joel, considers Chico his real home.

Since then, I have visited and toured the mansion many times, even singing Christmas carols in the mansion, and always learning something new about it. The Bidwell Mansion was a beloved icon and historical home in Chico. When I first drove by her burned out shell, I was shocked. I do not understand why anyone would want to deliberately destroy such a magnificent reminder of the past. I can only guess that Mr. Carlson bore a grudge against the Bidwell family or someone connected with the Mansion. Or, perhaps he was protesting the treatment of Native Americans by early white settlers. This is purely speculation and only Mr. Carlson knows the motives behind his actions.

In closing, I just want to say that although I live in Paradise now, the Bidwell Mansion meant something personal to me and I shall miss her presence in Chico.

Thank you,

Marianne Heaton
Paradise, CA
Sent from my iPhone

From: Amanda Meyers

Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 6:01 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Re: My Impact Statement (Amanda Grace Meyers)

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

As a person who calls Chico home and someone who spent most of my life here, Bidwell mansion has always been a special place for me. I am a photographer and videographer, and so I have used Bidwell Mansion for many of my projects since it was such a gorgeous location. The thought that my children will never see the mansion breaks my heart. I wish I could go back and see it one last time. Carlson took something precious to our town and ruined it. Our town has already had hard times with the Camp Fire, homelessness, and other tragedies. Why can't we ever have something nice without a selfish person ruining it? I am angered at the selfishness of Carlson's actions, and I hope the judge delivers justice to the full extent of the law.

-Amanda Grace Meyers (I edited this version from the phrase "someone" to "something")

From: H Paige

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 6:09 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Kevin Carlson,

Your act of arson against Bidwell Mansion was not just an attack on a historic building—it was an attack on the history and legacy of a place that stood for something far greater than brick and mortar. It was a symbol of justice in a time of injustice, a place where Indigenous people found allies in a state that was often cruel and merciless to them.

John and Annie Bidwell were not like most settlers of their time. While others sought to erase the Indigenous presence from California, the Bidwells chose to protect the very people who had lived here for generations before them. The Maidu, particularly the Mechoopda, were not seen as obstacles or adversaries by the Bidwells, but as neighbors and fellow human beings.

John Bidwell, rather than exploiting or displacing the Mechoopda as so many others did, provided them with land to live on when the government refused to recognize their rights. He spoke out against the abuse of Indigenous people, offering employment and protection when others sought only to cast them aside. In a state where Native people were subjected to massacres, forced labor, and legalized discrimination, John Bidwell made a conscious choice to stand on the right side of history.

His wife, Annie, was even more outspoken in her advocacy. She learned the Maidu language so she could better communicate with the people of this land. She worked tirelessly to ensure their rights were not ignored, treating them with a respect and dignity that was exceedingly rare in 19th-century California. She fought against the systemic oppression of Indigenous people at a time when most women in her position were silent.

By setting fire to the Bidwell Mansion, you did not strike a blow against oppression—you struck a blow against one of the few examples of decency that existed in that dark chapter of California's past. You targeted a place that stood as a reminder that not all settlers were the same, that some saw the humanity in the people whose land they lived upon. You burned a symbol of what could have been—a different path, a better future.

Your actions were misdirected, Kevin. If your intent was to send a message about injustice, you chose the wrong target. The Bidwells were not part of the problem; they were part of a solution that, had it been more widely embraced, could have changed the course of history for the better.

But history is not erased by fire. The legacy of the Bidwells will endure, just as the spirit of the Mechoopda endures. And while you have taken something precious from our community, you have also given us an opportunity—to remind people of what the Bidwells stood for and to renew our commitment to preserving the truth of this land and its people.

I hope, in time, you come to understand the gravity of what you've done—not just in terms of the damage to a building, but in the deeper harm of attacking a symbol of progress in an era of injustice. I hope you learn from history rather than trying to destroy it.

Sincerely,
Paige family of Chico

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From: ARFowler

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 9:33 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To the Honorable Judge Caraway,

The purposeful destruction of the Bidwell Mansion by Mr. Carlson is an attack upon the historic heritage of not just the City of Chico, but the County of Butte itself. The Bidwell Mansion was a special place for me because it was where I first began my training as a public historian learning the ins and outs of historic architecture. I wandered the grounds and toured the interior, marveling at the survival of this historic timber structure, its blend of four architectural styles to produce a truly unique building, and at the high degree of surviving historic elements it possessed.

I can only hope now that the Department of Parks and Recreation finds the brick skeleton strong enough to begin a long restoration process much like Notre Dame de Paris. Still, to lose the place of my training to arson of all things is a devastating blow. It is one thing should it have been an accident, a tragedy still, but to purposely destroy a historic icon of the community and county is shocking and appalling on new levels. The purposeful and wanton destruction of something you do not like must never be tolerated for once the genie is out of the lamp, there is no way of easily returning it without further damage.

Arson is terrible by its very nature, especially when it consumes the lives of innocents and renders people without a home. The destruction of a noted and nationally recognized historic building is equal in magnitude to a human life to me as a historian, especially when it was, rather poorly, planned and implemented. District Attorney Mike Ramsay suggested in earlier statements that Mr. Carlson was radicalized by short-form content from TikTok, and this builds up a great well of dread within me.

I fear that this event will happen again to other historic recognized properties because of the easy access of readily consumable radical content and lack of protection for historic properties. A lack of protection stemming from community belief that recognized historic buildings are a sort of location no one would try and destroy like this. Yet, here we are amidst the ruin of the Bidwell Mansion, and it makes me worry for the future of other historic properties not just in Chico, not just in Butte, but in the nation as a whole. I am a historian, and I worry for the future of the resources of our past now

more than ever because of Mr. Carlson's violent assault on a complicated heritage that doubled as a community and architectural icon. I dread the result of this becoming a pattern, of arsonists receiving a slap on the wrist for destroying recognized historic properties.

- Regards,
A.R. Fowler

From: Lesley Curry

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 9:25 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Chico's Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Judge Caraway;

Your Honor, I am writing to you on behalf of myself, my family and my community. I have lived in Chico my whole life. As such, I have seen Chico grow, businesses leave, buildings torn down, neighborhoods expand, the general evolution of any community. As times change, there are fewer and fewer things left in Chico that give a sense of community. Visual landmarks that we can look to for our history. The Bidwell Mansion is not just a building, it's a symbol of the City.

The mansion is historical, not just for Chico but the state of California. The mansion is a heartbeat, a gathering place, a member of the family. Many years ago there was a fundraiser for the mansion. For a donation, your name would be placed on a tile in an upper story room. My parents and I had our names as part of the mansion. It was always a joy for me knowing we were a part of the mansion, more than just living in the same town where it existed. Both of my parents have passed. When the mansion burned, not only was it an unfathomable shock and loss. I also felt a loss of my parents again.

After the fire I wanted to stay away from the mansion. I couldn't believe it, I didn't want to believe it. Why? How? I work near the property. It was impossible to avoid. I drive by it everyday. I walk by it everyday. It was ingrained in my day to day routine. The day after the initial fire, I made my way over. I could feel myself getting vulnerable, not wanting to cry but unable to control the tears when I saw the still smoldering rubble. I was in mourning. Others were doing the same. We were all

quite, wandering, looking, sad. I found myself comforting strangers and vice versa. None of us could talk without tears.

The mansion has stood since 1868. What roll has the mansion played, in thousands of people's lives? Something that Chico could be proud of and share with others. In 2006, Huell Howser came here as part of his California's Gold television series to highlight Chico, the mansion and other iconic businesses in town.

Enjoyed by so many. It only took one person, with intent to destroy, to create a literal black mark on the City of Chico.

Thank you for your time.

Lesley Curry

From: Carl von Bargaen

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 7:58 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Victim Impact Statement: The Arson of Bidwell Mansion

The destruction of Bidwell Mansion is an immeasurable loss to our community, severing a vital and irreplaceable link between our past and present. For generations, this historic landmark stood as a tangible connection to John and Annie Bidwell's legacy, offering a window into the life of a prominent citizen whose contributions shaped our region. Now, that window has been reduced to ashes, leaving future generations without the opportunity to step inside history, to walk the halls where decisions were made, and to gain a deeper understanding of the struggles and triumphs that built our community.

This fire has robbed our children of an accessible, hands-on way to explore local history, making it harder for them to connect with the figures who

shaped their home. Without the mansion's presence, their learning is confined to books and photographs, missing the irreplaceable experience of standing where history happened. The absence of this landmark creates a void not just in education but in our collective sense of identity, weakening the pride that comes from knowing and preserving our roots.

Beyond its historical significance, Bidwell Mansion was a source of community pride: a symbol of endurance, legacy, and cultural heritage. Its loss is deeply felt by all who cherished it, from lifelong residents who took comfort in its enduring presence to newcomers who found inspiration in its story. The sense of violation and sorrow that comes with such a senseless act of destruction is profound. No punishment handed down to the arsonist will ever be equal to the pain inflicted on this community. While justice may be served in a courtroom, it cannot bring back what was taken from us, nor can it restore the generations of history that have been lost forever. The impact of this crime will linger for years, leaving an absence that no sentence can ever truly heal.

Karen von Barga

Oroville

From: Michele Shover

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 1:20 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionimpactstatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Deposition concerning Bidwell Mansion arson case

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

BidwellMansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net.

Your Honor:

I write as a fifty years resident of Chico and as the author of three heavily researched books on the city's nineteenth century history. Important to each book were roles taken by John Bidwell . He and to some extent his wife, Annie Kennedy Bidwell were central to every aspect of the

town's founding years. In the first place, this would be open Valley land today had Bidwell not established his ranch here. He alone envisioned and ten years later initiated the townsite, which he provided with constant investments. He regularly helped others willing to settle here. He showed kindnesses to hard working poor people, often donating land to churches and every kind of good cause.

One of his most splendid contributions was his lovely home. The mansion was not just some, big house. It was designed by Henry Cleaveland of San Francisco, the principal West Coast architect who specialized in the erection of Downing Cottages, a notable style especially suited to country homes. Bidwell hired Cleaveland who came here to design and then personally to oversee its erection.

Over the years there the Bidwells welcomed Civil War General Sherman, environmentalist pioneer David Muir, rancher Leland Stanford and Francis Willard to share dinner with local residents. Also welcome were Mechoopda. Those women brought their children there to roam the house while they learned to sew and visited.

I have seen some comment that the defendant defended his crime as "anti-colonial." I gather that he refers to the Bidwells' relationship with the Mechoopda. That the Mechoopdas in the 1840s had no options was of course inevitable in the continent-wide population shift. All the rest of the Valley Maidu tribelets were simply pushed off their lands with nowhere to go: they drifted apart anywhere they could find to survive. When Bidwell arrived here and launched his ranch on their historic territory, the Mechoopda did lose control. But, they chose to accept his appeal to stay and work because their other choices were far worse. Their only alternative was to flee and disperse through the valley. They could not flee to the foothills or the mountains: foothill and mountain Maidu were their mortal enemies. Even to step on across borders meant they could be killed. Of course, they would prefer to have kept control of their land and they did make an attempt at leaving but only found worse. Therefore, they decided to stay on their land under Bidwell's control. He moved their village behind his house to protect them from at least three attacks by Mountain Maidu raiders, in one of which they killed a Mechoopda target. To some degree he respected their cultural practices, but he taught them and then they taught one another to ride horses, herd cattle and work with crops. Those were important economic skills in the new world the Mechoopda faced.

In other words, the arsonist has deprived this entire community to satisfy some contrived moral justification grounded in ignorance.

I sincerely hope that the court will assign all the most severe penalties available for his crimes. The maximum sentence doesn't begin to reflect proper restitution for the enormity of his crime to this community, which was good to him. Chicoans can never recoup the loss he imposed upon all of us and all our descendants hereafter. No memorial or reconstruction could equal the value of the building we loved for what it represented in our community.

From: Candace Chew

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 1:20 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Arsonist

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway,

My family lived in Chico until the mid 2000s and I attended Chico schools including CHS and CSUC. I visited the mansion often, produced a large pen and ink drawing for a class project and held my wedding on the veranda in 1985. It was a very special place to me and the community. This magnificent structure was a symbol of community pride and history. That it fell at the hands of an arsonist is both tragic and incomprehensible.

I visited Chico recently for my 50th CHS reunion and drove to the mansion to walk her grounds once again but the scaffolding was still up and the structure was inaccessible. Not long after I returned home, now Idaho, I read about the fire. As heartbreaking as it was to know, it was so much worse to find out that an evil human deliberately set the fire. Heartbroken doesn't cover it. Devastated, distraught, disgusted is closer to the pain. I'm sure you are a fair and just person and whatever sentence he receives will not bring back our beloved mansion, but as a service to the community I truly hope it is a maximum penalty with monetary restitution.

Thank you for your time,

Candace Coder

Candace Chew

From: Steve Feazel

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 1:14 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

In the late 1980's I was assigned as the lead Ranger at Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park, and as a result, I have a unique insight into the importance and special nature of the Mansion to not just Chico but to the entire State of California as well.

I am sure that many people will rightly write and discuss the importance of Bidwell Mansion, and John and Annie, to Chico and the thousands of adults and school children who tour the Mansion each year. Some may even address the economic impact the Mansion has on the community of Chico as a result of tourists who visit the Mansion and the many vendors who serviced the various needs of the State Historic Park.

However, I want to emphasize another aspect of the the Mansion that may be overlooked. It is important to understand that the Mansion became a State Historic Park only as a result of the efforts of many dedicated Butte County residents. People such as Ted Meriam, John Nopel, Dorothy Hill, Hester Patrick and Dr. Clarence McIntosh, just to name a few, worked tirelessly in an effort to have the Mansion preserved as a significant California landmark. Organizations such as the Las Senoras, Bidwell Mansion Interpretive Association and the Bidwell Mansion Restoration Association raised funds to help with the restoration and furnishing of the Mansion. Currently the Bidwell Mansion Association carries on this legacy of support for the Mansion.

Many Butte County residents donated family heirlooms and, in some cases, original Bidwell items to help bring the Mansion "alive". Mansion staff took these donations very seriously and made sure that these items were catalogued, properly displayed and cared for.

So the loss of Bidwell Mansion is not only a tragedy for the community of Chico and the State of California, but it is also a terrible rebuke to the many individuals and organizations who gave of their time, money and resources in an effort to make Bidwell Mansion a unique, one of a kind community treasure.

Sincerely,

Steve Feazel

Chico, CA

From: Michael F Magliari
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 4:56 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway and District Attorney Ramsey,

In response to your request for victim impact statements to help you determine the appropriate sentence for Bidwell Mansion arsonist Kevin Carlson, I'm submitting the statement I posted on my public Facebook page on December 11, 2024, the day of the fire. In it I tried to capture my own immediate feelings about the loss of Bidwell Mansion, as well as what I believe to be the essential shared feelings of most Chico residents:

With the destruction early this morning of Bidwell Mansion, the city of Chico has lost its defining landmark, its symbolic heart. The mansion was not merely one of California's most historically and architecturally significant buildings, it was also the single most important material expression of Chico's identity as both a place and a community. A totally unique and irreplaceable cultural resource, many of us in Chico will deeply feel and mourn the loss of Bidwell Mansion as we would the death of a close friend or family member. The destruction of Bidwell Mansion is a genuine tragedy and harsh reminder that the true value of an historic building ultimately is determined not by its financial worth or even historical significance, but rather by the depth of a community's emotional attachment to it. By that measure, Bidwell Mansion was invaluable.

I am a professor of History at California State University, Chico, where I specialize in the history of California and the American West. Since arriving at Chico State in August 1990, I have taken a deep interest in regional history and have been an actively engaged member of the local history and historic preservation communities. I am a member of the Butte County Historical Society, the Chico History Museum Association, and the Stansbury House Association. For many years I also served on the board of directors of both the Chico Heritage Association and the Bidwell Mansion Association. My long involvement with the BMA grew directly out of the biography of John Bidwell that I co-authored in 2003 with my late friend and Chico State colleague, Michael J. Gillis: *John Bidwell and California: The Life and Writings of a Pioneer, 1841-1900*.

Personally, I have no idea what the most appropriate penalty should be in Mr. Carlson's case. Certainly he must be punished, and the punishment should be significant. As an historian, however, I am not so much interested in punishment as I am in explanation: why did Carlson do what

he did? Based on the evidence that has been presented thus far to the public, it appears that Carlson's act was deeply premeditated and carefully planned. *Why?*

When I read the news yesterday that Mr. Carlson had decided to plead "No Contest" and thereby avoid a trial, my immediate concern was that, without a trial, Carlson's motivation might never become known. That cannot be allowed to happen. The community has a justifiable right—and I think a fundamental need—to know why Carlson carried out this destructive assault on its heritage. Regardless of whatever prison term or other penalties are finally deemed most fitting here, I strongly urge that Mr. Carlson, as part of his sentence, be required to submit to the court, and to the public, a full and detailed written explanation of the motives, and the animosities, that led him to deliberately destroy the Bidwell Mansion.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Magliari

Department of History

California State University, Chico

Chico, CA 95929-0735

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 5:38 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: No Remorse, No Regret

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To the Honorable Judge Presiding In the Criminal Desecration of Bidwell Mansion,

Kevin Alexander Carlson has stolen the learning opportunity for generations of Chico children and visitors to gain an historical understanding of where they come from and how the city they are a part of was formed and shaped for over more than 100 years.

The cultural value of historic Bidwell Mansion is beyond calculation and can never be replaced. Eleven years in confinement for such a heinous act is unfortunately not

enough, as this individual has no possible way to provide true recompense for his actions.

Please consider the totality of the loss to our community, for which this individual has absolutely no regard, in your sentencing.

Any potential for rehabilitation of this individual is at his age unlikely to provide a positive pathway to responsible citizenship.

As his actions have renounced any compassion for the citizens of Chico, I have none to spare for him.

With no remorse and no regret, I support the most severe penalty,

Terry Allread

From: Teresa Reid

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 6:27 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

February 6, 2025

To Whom it may Concern,

My name is Teresa Reid. I was born at Enloe Hospital Nov of 1960. My husband Chris was born the same date and place the year before. We are "Chico" through and through. My father Jim Gardner owned a successful H-vac company for many years here in Chico and my husband's father Ralph Reid designed many Chico schools as well as Butte County Library, and the City Plaza building.

As a child I attended the elementary school right next to the Mansion, Amer Jay Hamiltion. I believe that is where my love of John, Annie and their beautiful home first started. My wise mother often talked with me about the Bidwell's bravery in coming west and the impact and foresight they showed in their thoughtful and prayerful design of this little town. I knew that they donated land for many local churches to get established, the Park and so on. Annie in particular became a role model to me as a very young girl in being a visionary, in her generosity, and in standing by her convictions.

As a college girl, I had the privilege of living on Mansion Avenue. I would often go sit on "Annie's porch" and pray, thinking of what life for them was like in the many challenges of their era. I went through the house countless times, read the book about their love story, and continued stopping by even after Chris and I married, as we lived on the Esplanade and I worked at Bank of America down town. Indeed, I thought of myself as a "daughter of Chico" because of the Bidwells.

Chris and I moved to Paradise to raise our four children and he became an administrator for a Charter School. Our kids were grown and out of the house at the time that the Campfire claimed our home and community. I loved Paradise, but was comfortable with coming back to Chico in large part because our children and eleven grands are here. When we bought a lot four days post Fire, it was off the Esplanade. I immediately wanted all of our family to take a photo in front of the Mansion. Since our parents were deceased, I was comforted by my connection with the Bidwells. It was the first place I brought out of town guests, as if sharing one's grandparent's home. Many friends called or texted after the Mansion incident knowing how heart broken I would be.

There is one passion I have that is greater than the Bidwells though; it is caring for young people and helping to guide them. I believe Annie was probably alike on that subject. She wanted Schools, Churches and a love of nature and beauty for young people. I do believe that the Bidwell Mansion and all it stood for are a HUGE part of the beauty of Chico, and I deeply desire it be rebuilt for our children to understand their heritage here. I also believe in justice that leads to redemption. I pray for the dark side of the young man who caused such a hideous crime. It may have been harder for me than the loss of our beautiful home that I raised my kids in. Actually, it was.

I pray the "powers that be" will have the wisdom to mete out justice in a way that will bring humility. God has been merciful to me, but He also has challenged and corrected me often through my 64 years. My mom taught me to "keep an eternal perspective", and that's how I will manage through this great loss.

Thank you for your time. Teresa Reid

-----Original Message-----

From: Robyn Stangel

Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 8:10 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

I was a student at Chico State from 1968 to 1970. These two years were transformational for me. I lived virtually across the street from Bidwell Mansion, at the Esplanade 500 apartments. I took walks through the Bidwell mansion property regularly and that beautiful mansion was a cornerstone for me in Chico. I even had a personal experience one day running with my roommate's dog on the grounds. I was distracted by the dog running between my feet and as I turned my face in the direction I was running I made hard contact with a monkey pod tree. I broke my nose in a very bad way! In no way does this detract from my wonderful memories... Actually It's a bit humorous, considering I was two weeks away from being maid of honor in my sister's wedding with two very black eyes.

I am writing this victim impact statement because Bidwell Mansion is a big piece of my past, and I was absolutely devastated at the damage caused by this thoughtless, cruel person who could so easily destroy something that means so much to so many people. I honestly have a hole in my heart over this devastation.

I hope you will consider my statement along with all of the others in the sentencing decision for Mr. Carlson.

Sincerely,
Robyn Geffel Stangel

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Lora Besser

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 12:35 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Our history burned away

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

The deliberate and malicious act in burning down Bidwell Mansion felt like a personal death. Five generations we have been in Chico. In those times we have often visited the Mansion, and on special occasions, making Christmas ornaments for the holiday tree in the early 1990s, attending and participating in weddings over the years, celebrating pre prom photo shoots and generations sitting on steps at lunch breaks from Chico High School. After so much fire in our county, losing honey run bridge, it felt like a stomach punch, to something so sacred and familiar in this town. Intentionally taken from an entire community, in a horrible small moment of this home's life. This home, full of history and stories, John and Annie- surviving over 150 years, could not survive Carlson's hateful actions. I feel like he robbed us of so many memories and from generations to come. I can not drive down the esplanade any longer. It's too much. Or take walks through the campus. It's too painful. So I will avoid this part of Chico. I don't want to have to look at the ugliness Carlson set forth intentionally and with calculations. I just can't. I had to do that in Paradise. It's a trauma wound he tore open again, after being in the Camp fire and then watching the park fire rob from us, leaving poor Cohasset in despair. I hope he gets the maximum for others like him, who keep traumatizing and stealing our joy. I don't want to be in Chico anymore because of him. I went to school with our Mayor, Kasey Reynolds. When I watched her stand for all of Chico on the news, her bravery, I wailed in pain from our community's collective grief. I hope Carlson serves the entire consequence for his disturbance of our already traumatized community. The full eleven years. Fire, fire, fire. There needs to be accountability to these behaviors and justice for our community.

Lora Besser

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: Cindy Lassonde

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 8:49 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Loss of Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

To the Judge of the Loss of the Bidwell Mansion,

I remember the Bidwell Mansion since I was 3 years of age and I am now 72 years old. I went into it many times in my life and it always made me feel like I had been there during those times.

My whole family that has passed away always went there also. Our children and grandchildren have also enjoyed seeing the Bidwell Mansion. The Bidwell Mansion was part of Chico and brought happy memories to so many. It brought back so much history for others to see. I am a Camp Fire survivor and when I saw this it brought back memories of the losses of so much here in Paradise. This arsonist should not even be let out of prison for he is young and he will start another fire when he is let out of prison. All arsonists should never be let out of prison. As a judge if you let him out and when he starts another fire it is you, who is now partially responsible for the fire. I know I would not be able to live my life knowing I was partially responsible for the fire. Please keep him in prison.

Cindy Lassonde
Paradise, CA

Sent from my iPad

From: Peter Rau
Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 9:10 AM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To whom it may concern

The Bidwell mansion was a beautiful place of historical significance in my and my families lives. My children loved visiting the mansion as a family and during school field trips, my youngest son will not be able to get the same enjoyment as my older sons. This has been a great loss for the community as everyone I know in this community as well as other communities feel this as a great loss. We will never get back what was destroyed in the fire that was caused by such a selfish person, 11 years will not be punishment enough in my opinion, I believe he should be sentenced to a half of a year for every year the mansion has stood.

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From: Taylor, Matthew
Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 9:30 AM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Victim statement please read

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Hi my name is Matthew when I heard the news about the bidwell mansion fire I started crying it felt like I was shot in the heart my mom's side of the family are related to bidwells my 5 time great grandparents are related to the bidwells and lived with the bidwells my 5 time great grandpa planted the trees in bidwell park with john bidwell and my 5 time great grandma did sewing with Anni bidwell please read this statement in court my family needs closure and to know that he deserves more than 11 years in prison if you have any questions for me you can call me at 530-XXX-XXXX please read my statement in court sincerely Matthew sent from my Metro by T-Mobile 5G Device

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From: Barb

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 11:18 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Sentencing of Bidwell Mansion Arsonist

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

We have five generations from Butte County, and Bidwell Mansion has always been a part of our lives. We have so few historical landmarks compared to other states and countries, and now it's gone because of this evil arsonist who meticulously planned to burn this beautiful mansion down as quickly as possible with accelerant. He deserves the maximum sentence WITH NO OPPORTUNITY FOR EARLY RELEASE! Since he is capable of this horrendous act which could have spread to neighboring homes and killed people in their sleep, he is capable of anything, INCLUDING STARTING WILDFIRES! PLEASE LOCK HIM UP FOR THE FULL 11 YEARS WITH NO OPPORTUNITY FOR EARLY RELEASE!

Barbara and Jon Noble

Durham, California

-----Original Message-----

From: Nichole Nava

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 1:46 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Loss

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

To whom it may concern,

Kevin Alexander Carlson took something from this community and the world that can never be given back, our beloved Bidwell Mansion historic landmark. It was a hateful, senseless act and it had forever altered the landscape of Chico.

No more will we enjoy our drives or walks down the Esplanade in the same way anymore because our view of the majestic Bidwell Mansion is gone. Ripped away by someone who thought his need to express his hate was more important than our love for a monument to our collective history, our memories of treasured days from our past; engagements, weddings, prom photos, school tours we took as children to learn about our history. All gone in almost an instant.

I am personally distraught, like others because of pieces of my life that are tied to the graceful mansion. Like the multiple times I was there for tours to be educated on the Bidwell and our City of Chico. About the Bidwell and the Meechoopda tribe. Or when I attended the Christmas events there and got to hear the local vocal clubs or choirs while sitting on the floor imagining the Bidwell doing something similar many years ago. Or the many weekend days me and my friends sat on the wide porch with our legs swinging over the eating our lunch. Or when I was in high school and to deal with some traumatic stuff how I would go sit on the grounds and stare at the mansion because it helped me remember that those moments would pass and become my history and things would get better. Or the many times me and my high school sweetheart, now my husband, would walk that way from Chico High on our way downtown and sit on the grass to talk and just enjoy the serenity that spot offered. Then, as an adult during the lonely COVID times when we were kept from our offices and restaurants, I used my car to sit in the parking lot staring out at the mansion while having my lunch break.

All of those times won't happen in a similar way for anyone else. Ever. Because an arsonist, Kevin Alexander Carlson, decided to act out in rage and take something from us all. I honestly don't care why he did it. That he did it at all is wrong and he should be held accountable for what he did.

There is so much that the Bidwell Mansion represented for so many. And yes, my heart hurts for me. But it also hurts for all the people that have huge events in their life tied to the Bidwell Mansion only to feel like it was lost. The mansion graced millions of postcards, it was featured on book jackets, in paintings, in magazines, and in our collective and individual memories.

Driving down the Esplanade today I feel a gut-wrenching loss when I see the ruins of what was once a beautiful testament to a man's vision of his home and became a landmark most of us treasured. I try to avoid going that way these days, but sometimes I forget and end up on the Esplanade by autopilot. Each time I am freshly horrified when I drive past it, having briefly forgotten it was gone, only to have the scar reopened. I used to drive that way daily as it is within two miles of my home.

I will never understand people who are 'takers' and don't care about the harm they inflict on others. Kevin Alexander Carlson, meticulously planned this crime. He took great pains to try and hide his trips to purchase multiple items he intended to use to burn down the mansion. He scoped out the Mansion ahead of his heinous act to ensure his plan could and would succeed. He followed through and selfishly burned down our Bidwell Mansion.

I believe that Kevin Alexander Carlson should pay for his crime by you imposing the maximum sentence possible. We all have to live forever with the fallout from his actions, so why shouldn't he have to live with them too?

Thank you for giving our community the opportunity to convey our devastation at losing our Bidwell Mansion.

Sincerely,

Nichole Nava
Chico, CA

-----Original Message-----

From: Vivian Anderegg

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 3:45 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Destruction of an icon

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

I would love to know why this man felt he needed to destroy such an icon for Chico let alone the beautiful building, History and antiques. I'm upset beyond words! What a hateful thing to do

From: Joe Fumasi

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 6:14 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Cc: joefumasi@ymail.com

Subject: Destruction of the North Valley icon

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To the Honorable Judge,

I have resided in Chico, located in Northern California, for over two decades. The Bidwell Mansion has always been, in my estimation, the heart of our community. It embodied the spirit of Chico's founding and rich history. Within its walls, the past came alive; one could almost feel the love and dedication of

the founders reflected in the portraits and personal belongings. This is now lost—all that remains is an empty shell. My hopes and dreams, inextricably linked to this cherished place, have been shattered. The Mansion was my sanctuary, a source of immense joy and reflection. The opportunity to walk its grounds, sit upon its porch, and contemplate the legacy of its inhabitants has been irrevocably taken from me. The actions of the defendant have destroyed a place of profound significance, not only to me but to the entire community. The love and spirit that permeated the Bidwell Mansion have been extinguished. He deserves no leniency; he should face the full weight of the law and serve a life sentence. In destroying the Mansion, he stole a piece of ourselves.

Sincerely,

Joe Fumasi

-----Original Message-----

From: tracy vincent

Sent: Saturday, February 8, 2025 11:16 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Victim impact statement

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Sent from my iPhone

I am 4th generation Chico native, my family purchased our ranch, which is now commercial property, due to city growth, from the Bidwell family. Our heritage, our history, our successes, failures, everything... the history of all of us, lives in that house, and on that land. The Bidwells founded this town, gave land to this town, and put Chico on the map with those gifts. We have one of the most beautiful, and largest parks in the US. We have agriculture, a college, and an amazing downtown almost exclusively due to the Bidwells vision and gifts to our city. So many have prospered and flourished with all that Chico has to offer. And we would not be what we are without the Bidwell family. The burning of their home is a terrible, despicable act. To disrespect and purposefully destroy such an important piece of history is incomprehensible to me.

We must cherish our history, learn from mistakes, and always strive to make tomorrow better. The Bidwell mansion, Chico State, the land grants, the gold mines, steamboats, agriculture, the local Tribes, etc., all these are our history, but one thing stands out when you ask folks to “name a historic land mark in Chico...” I guarantee, 9 times out of 10, the first response will be Bidwell Mansion.

That is not to take away from anything, it's just to have a piece of history that you can see, and touch, and experience, well, that really makes the past real. Destroying that, well, I can't even

fathom what punishment could even be effective, as obviously, this person is oblivious the concept of preserving and respecting our past. Whatever his sentence is, it should also require some sort of compensation to the emergency crew who had to respond. I'm thankful there was no loss of life. But our first responders were put at risk, and he should have to pay for the response. I wouldn't ask for any compensation toward the Mansion as there is no monetary value to cover, as it's priceless. And he doesn't deserve to be associated with recovery efforts for the mansion.

Jail time and restitution to the fire department.

The mansion has just "always" been there. For as long as I can remember. There are so many things that make Chico, Chico.

Bidwell Mansion. Miller Mansion. Chico Nut. Diamond Match. Bidwell park. Big Al's. Chico State. Just to name a few. The loss of Bidwell mansion, well, it makes me sad, angry and sick. I can't even explain it, I don't have the gift of words.

From: PAT MC CANN

Sent: Sunday, February 9, 2025 8:00 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Actions Have Consequences

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Judge Caraway,

I am writing to you in regards to the criminal actions of Kevin Carlson, the Bidwell Mansion arsonist.

I don't know where to begin because, this is heart breaking so please bare with me as I try to put my feelings into perspective.

Mr. Carlson, for whatever reason took it upon himself to burn Butte County's beloved Bidwell Mansion to the ground. I don't know his reason as that has not been released to the public so I am guessing.

Mr Carlson why did the mansion and the Bidwells offend you to the point you would make the decision for everyone that the mansion should be destroyed? What you did destroy can never be replaced. What you destroyed was part of Butte County and California history and bottom line Mr. Carlson your deed won't change history. Your actions Mr. Carlson offend me. You are truly a thief of time.

This is why I am asking you Judge Caraway to sentence Mr. Carlson the full measure of the law which is eleven years. I wish it could be more. I know it cannot.

Sincerely,

Linda McCann

Paradise, CA 95969

From: William Nip Boyes
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 1:24 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Your Honor,

I am a native of Northern California and a Chico residence since 1971. I perceive the intentional destruction of the Bidwell Mansion as the premeditated murder of an admired and venerated Old Friend. Disbelief at hearing the news and the experience of profound grief has been shared by me and literally all of us living in Northern California as a result of this heinous act. Bidwell mansion was a huge part of Chico's history and our collective identity.

As a kid, I got to know Annie and the General from grammar school tours. When I was in my 20s, I walked to and from my college classes passing the Mansion as I worked toward completion of my first bachelors degree at Chico State. I did the same thing 30 years later to complete my second bachelors in nursing. This time, older and wiser, I was so much more appreciative of my relationship with that old house. Each time I walked or drove past the mansion, I relived the past. In my mind's eye, I could see the independent Annie Bidwell gracefully ascending the cement steps - still there to this day - as she mounted her horse side saddle. I could look into the kitchen and imagine the elegant feasts and simple but delicious baked goods, jams jellies prepared there. I saw the garage housing their buggies in wonderment. I could see the rocking chairs on the Mansions front porch, pleasantly occupied on simmering summer evenings. When family or friends would visit from out of town we would take tours of the Mansion, the pride of Chico. Of course, no visit to Chico was complete without a hike in Bidwell Park, Annie Bidwell's gift to all of us.

I worked for KRCR-7R news as a stringer reporter for five years beginning in the early 70s. I was assigned to do a story at Bidwell Mansion about a blind tour guide. Her name was Maggie Glasgow. Maggie was so exceptional, inspirational, competent, and she certainly did not appear to have any handicapped to anyone who took her tour. A tour of the old house with Maggie was like an awakening of all your senses. Visual senses were complimented by Maggie, enhanced tactile, olfactory and auditory perceptions, noting the feel of the stairway banisters, the texture of fabrics, the unique fragrances from room to room, even the sound of the floors and doors as she walked through. Maggie so enhanced everyone's experience. And I was beside myself with discovery. This human treasure passed away from cancer several years ago. Maggie was a part of my love for the Bidwell Mansion. We all shared so many magical memories. The Mansion was like our anchor to a kinder, simpler time and tangible source of shared pride for all Northern Californians. I don't know why this young man was motivated to commit this tragic and shocking crime. Nor do I understand if he understands the significance or the consequences of his actions to his future. Motivation is a factor here. Hopefully, Your Honor will consider all the facts, the damage and pain he has inflicted on so many in our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my loss with you.

William Nip Boyes, BA, BSN, MSN, FNP – BC.

[Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

From: Parker Willson

Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 11:44 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

My family came here to California during the Gold Rush. My children are the sixth generation to be born here in this great state. Like anywhere else on this earth there are monuments, markers, and historical places that remind us of those who came before us and that symbolize what it took to get here, to make this place what we know and love it to be. The Bidwell Mansion is one such building that encompassed it all. My wife and I moved up here to the area for college and we never left. We fell in love with this region and what it had to offer us. The mansion was a symbol of what was carved out here for us and our family as well as for the entire community. As our children grew older we would take them on walks around the Chico State Campus and around the mansion. They enjoyed hearing stories about the history of the school and the mansion as well as hearing stories about how their parents fell in love surrounded by it all.

I am sick and tired of our monuments, our markers, and our historical buildings being desecrated, destroyed, and removed. It pains me to my core. Although my wife and I had taken the tour inside the mansion when we were younger we had not made the time to take our children. It frustrates me that we took the mansion for granted, always thinking we would take them inside one day, but not that day. I take solace in the fact that it is another lesson learned. And that is to not put off the visit to a special or historical place, to go to the places you intend on going with a sense of urgency because in the world we live in today some misdirected politician or some misguided arsonist might rob you of the joy of what came before and what stands today.

We lost something last year that cannot be replaced. But the Bidwells, the impact they made up here, and their mansion that stood as a symbol of our great city will never be forgotten. The arsonists act reminds me of the Grinch, you can steal the presents, you can burn the mansion, but you cannot stop Christmas from coming, you cannot destroy what the Bidwell's built here as it is more than just a beautiful mansion. You cannot change the past and you can't stop what came after. The fire is a sign of impotent rage that needs to be contained. The maximum sentence for this cowardly act is strongly recommended if he remains unrepentant.

May Mr. Carlson find Christ and repent for his sins.

Thank you for your time.

From: Christina Grassmyer

Sent: Monday, February 10, 2025 7:35 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: The loss of Bidwell mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To whom it may concern,

The loss of Bidwell Mansion has ripped a wound through me. I have lived in Chico since 1991 and have never had or seen such a hateful act in this community. The “worst of the worst” happened to our beautiful mansion. We have had so much destruction around here since the Camp Fire, that the Bidwell mansion stood proud and welcoming through it all. Or as I thought.

The landscape being around Bidwell mansion provided such beauty with an impressive variety of trees. There is no where like this in our city. In 1993, I took my first tour of the mansion with my parents during my CSUC graduation activities . We had our wedding pictures taken here in 1995 as well as my son’s high school graduate pictures. My family and many others loved the grounds. This was the place that my classroom had a field trip every year to honor the beauty of our past. When visitors come and spend time here in Chico, the one historic jewel that they never missed was the mansion.

The history of the Bidwell is such a beautiful story unlike those who feel like it was otherwise. Chico would’ve never of been if it hadn’t been for the generous Bidwells. Annie was kind and these things we know about them help my community feel much more proud of what the mansion stood for. This past helps a community bond with commonality as well as pride of the aesthetic of the mansion.

To tear down and ruin “Love, generosity, culture, historical significance of the Bidwell’s” wipes out the essence.....the core of Chico.

Thank you for listening,

Christina Grassmyer

-----Original Message-----

From: Gayle

Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 11:52 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion arson

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

I am writing in regard to the upcoming sentencing hearing of Kevin Alexander Carlson, defendant in the 12/11/24 Bidwell Mansion arson case.

I am a local Chicoan, born in 1950. I lived in Chico full-time until the mid-1970s, when I left to attend graduate school. In 1979, I purchased a rental property in Chico. I spent many years since then managing and maintaining this property and visiting family and friends. In 2000, I purchased a second Chico property as a second home. I have a strong connection and love for this town. Bidwell Mansion occupies a large part of my feelings. It is an icon!

I also have a personal connection to the mansion, as my paternal grandfather, Manuel Rose, was a driver for Annie Bidwell. He met his first wife at the mansion, as she was a personal maid to Annie Bidwell.

The loss of the mansion has been absolutely heartbreaking. I sobbed that morning when I heard the news of the fire. I was initially in a state of shock and disbelief. This has subsequently turned into anger and outrage, as information about the defendant's pre and post arson actions have been released. No amount of now expressed remorse on his part, even if genuine, is sufficient to overcome the devastation he has caused. Nothing can restore/replace what we as a community have lost by his actions.

I strongly support the defendant, receiving the maximum sentence allowed by law.

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Bridget Humphreys

Sent: Friday, February 14, 2025 12:28 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Mansion park childhood memories forever altered.

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Your Honor,

First off, thank you to the Chico PD for their tireless police work in quickly locating the suspect that burned down the historical home of the founder of Chico. Thank you also to DA Ramsey and your Honor , for allowing those that call Chico our hometown, the opportunity to provide a statement of how the loss of the Mansion affects me.

I grew up living in Mansion Park. Our family home is still there, where my folks continue to live. The name of the area, not referring to the size of the homes in the neighborhood, rather that it's Bidwell Mansion adjacent. Our home had some of John Bidwells almond trees in our backyard as part of his orchard is where all of our homes within the neighborhood are built . As children, my neighborhood friends and I rode our bikes or simply walked a block to the Mansion grounds and would play for hours around the Mansion on the expansive porch and grounds pretending we had horse carriages delivering us to our beautiful home. The fact that it was always accessible and never fenced off to my playmates and I, made it feel like it was our home too!

I visited the Mansion for fun more often than not, paying the 25 cents to take the tour. My favorite was slowly walking past John Bidwells portrait, which adorned the entryway, when doing so, his eyes and feet would follow you. Magic to a kid! An Optical illusion to amaze us in the days before technology.

There will be no more guided tours for future generations to see and be immersed within, not a replica, but the actual architecture of our past. Where we could learn how John Bidwell played a large part in California becoming a State along with being the founder of the City of Chico and a huge part of Agriculture development in The North Valley.

As the years progress its storied history will certainly fall away. A fading memory . Without the beautiful Mansion, the foundation of The University ,the centerpiece to my neighborhood and most importantly to our hometown of Chico now just a burned out shell. Tragic. That a person can let whatever has failed him in his own life ruin it for me, you and future generations.

I still cannot believe it's gone.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely ,

Bridget Quacchia Humphreys

-----Original Message-----

From: Kathleen Lanpheir

Sent: Monday, February 17, 2025 10:42 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Our mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

I know that our entire city is grieving the loss of our beautiful mansion. I am devastated each time I see it from the Esplanade.

I am currently on the Board of the Bidwell Mansion Association and have been for over ten years. I spent many hours working on activities at the mansion such as Annie's Tea, John's ice cream social and our Christmas open house. These were all splendid events for the public to learn and enjoy the Bidwell family.

My favorite work at the mansion was as a Park Volunteer. I assisted the guides as we greeted many third and fourth grade students and shared with them interesting facts about Victorian times. Each class got a tour plus a lesson on Victorian gadgets, Maidu people or gold panning. The children loved the field trip and learned so much! It makes me sad to think that my grandchildren and others will never know this magical place. We study history to help us understand the future and Chico may never get the opportunity to understand the importance and beauty that we had at the Bidwell Mansion. I do not understand why someone would want to demolish this beauty and I feel that he certainly should be severely punished for his actions.

Kathy Lanpheir, past president of the BMA

Sent from my iPhone

From: Wendy N

Sent: Monday, February 17, 2025 11:56 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: The Heart of Our City-Gone

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Judge Caraway,

I have lived in Chico for almost my entire 61 years. Living in rural Northern California is a tough sell for some. Lots of little towns with not much to differentiate them from one another. Not a lot of industry but a way of life we value and can't wait to share with others. Growing up here and going to Citrus Elementary, I remember taking a field trip to the mansion. Then, at Chico High, the mansion watched over us each day on our way to downtown for lunch as it did for thousands of students. Having graduated from Chico

State, the glimpse of the mansion always made me smile as I walked to classes in Modoc Hall. Then, working at Chico State in the Office of Admissions for 30+ years, the mansion was a highlight of our campus tour. Something that differentiated us from other places. My son took his prom pictures there, and my kids went on field trips there to learn our local history-the good, the bad, and the controversial. That mansion stood sentry for over 160 years. First a home for a family, then a hall used by future teachers and students at Chico State, and finally a place on the California historic registry and used to teach visitors about the history of our area.

Now it is gone. Erased by a person who sought to correct history. But, it was not **his** to correct. He took it upon himself to judge and try to destroy history. But, you can't. He now is forever part of that history. Part of the bad he tried to erase.

This landmark museum belonged to the State of California, the City of Chico, and most importantly to all of us who have our own history with this building. It was the heart of our city. The tangible losses will be the loss of visitor revenue, job loss, and the cost to clean up the site. Millions. The intangible loss is to our city psyche. We will no longer have this museum to teach visitors from, a landmark to celebrate weddings and proms with, and a visible landmark that helped make our community. Many of us still can't drive down The Esplanade at that point. I cry each time I think about it. The thought that someone in our community could deliberately, premeditatively, and with malice burn it to the ground is almost unfathomable. In past times, the community would have said "get a pitch fork" but we are more civilized now. We must make an example of this criminal. He seemed to think he was a valiant crusader righting the wrongs of the past, but in reality, he is just a sick arsonist who burnt down the heart of our city. Others must know they can't get away with similar crimes.

I beg you to give him the maximum sentence possible.

From: Orena Borders

Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2025 7:39 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact of the mansion fire

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I feel like the Bidwell Mansion burning has changed my life. It feels like a part of my childhood is gone. My son and I would go to the Mansion for tours all the time. Or just to take pictures of the Mansion or walk around and look at it. The Mansion burning doesn't just effect us or the people of Chico, it affects everyone. The people coming to town to visit won't get to see it the kids won't get to do the school tour at the Mansion. The Mansion was full of history every where you looked a famous person was there. The banister going up stairs was touched by a President and other famous people that can never be replaced.

Orena Borders

From: Paula Moats

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:28 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement - Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

February 20, 2025

Your Honor,

It was deeply distressing to hear of the arson of the Bidwell Madison.

I am a Bidwell descendant and was very honored and proud that the Mansion was open to the public as a Museum for the people of California and the world. It served as an educational site, teaching visitors about our country's past.

Loosing this building was a tragic loss for us all and future generations.

Preserving historical buildings is important because it helps future generations learn about the events, people, and social movements that have shaped society. Learning history can also help people apply that knowledge to their current lives.

"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future"

I respectfully ask that you consider the destruction of this building a serious crime against all Americans.

Paula Bidwell McNay

-----Original Message-----

From: Teri Salvo

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:33 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

.ATTENTION: This message originated from outside Butte County. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying..

Regarding Bidwell Mansion

If ever there was an icon depicting the heart, soul and history of a town, it is Bidwell Mansion. In the 44 years that I have lived in Chico it became a living, breathing member of my family and on December 11, 2024 it was senselessly murdered in cold blood! The perpetrator, who has pleaded "no contest", ripped this beloved piece of history from the citizens of Chico in a calculated,

premeditated act. His sentencing will probably only be a tiny reflection of a fraction of the injustice he committed, but it should indeed reflect the maximum time of incarceration allowed. Further more, he should be made to read aloud each and every victim impact statement. This should be videotaped and be made available to the victims to view.

Like a murdered family member who can't ever be brought back as they were, it would at least give some closure to many for such a despicable act and the strength to move forward with emotional and hopefully physical rebuilding.

Respectfully and hopeful to the Court for maximum sentencing.

Teri Salvo

From: Marian Gage

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:52 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Loss of Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I've been a member of the Chico community for over 60 years and recall picnics on the lawn of the mansion during CSUC Pioneer Days that provided special opportunities for the community to gather to celebrate and recall Chico's rich history. My family and I have enjoyed numerous tours at the mansion with grandchildren to learn of our town's history with special photos at Christmas time. I was most fortunate to attend the last (sadly) Annie's tea with my 90 year old mother and daughter (3 generations!) My mother and I served as Las Senoras and senioritas in the late 1960's and early 70's that provided a unique opportunity to serve our community. The mansion is an important icon and tourist draw for Chico that will have impact difficult to measure. I strongly hope that the mansion (the gateway to downtown Chico) will be rebuilt as is the iconic Honeyrun bridge. I know the community will support this effort to restore a beloved town landmark and gathering place! Sincerely Marian Gage

From: Lauren Prehoda

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 8:52 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject:

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Hello,

My name is Lauren Prehoda, and I was born and raised in Chico. I am still in town frequently as my parents still live there.

Chico is home. Home means a sense of safety and belonging, a piece of who you are. There are thousands of us around the world who carry Chico in our hearts even though we don't currently live there.

When that man set the Bidwell Mansion on fire, he stole something precious and irreplaceable from hundreds of thousands of people. That building was part of our community and cultural history, a piece of our identity, a part of home. This loss is similar to the people of Chico as the loss of Notre Dame was to France. And this on top of all the community has suffered and lost through wildfires in the past years.

I hope you give him the maximum sentence due to the sheer number of people he has hurt. People need to know they can't get away with this kind of selfish and cruel act.

Sincerely,
Lauren Prehoda

From: Jeanne Smith
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 11:22 AM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Bidwell Mansion Victim Stmt

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Bidwell Mansion Victim Impact

February 20, 2025

As a long time resident of Chico, California, Bidwell Mansion was always a source of pride in my community. It was living history, it was unique and beautiful, but also a symbol of Chico! When I see the Bidwell Mansion exit sign on the freeway, when I see its image on our police cars, my heart breaks again for its loss.

Many years ago when I was new to this area, I couldn't wait to tour the Mansion, then over the years taking my children through, attending events, so many memories; driving the Esplanade to work in the morning and evening the sight of the Bidwell home was a delight to me, then ultimately joining the Bidwell Mansion Association to ensure its future.

To be sure, the 19th Century values are very different from today's views, and I'm sure I would have had very lively discussions with both Annie and the General regarding the Mechoopda Natives and alcohol consumption. However, the preservation of their home was a beautiful way to draw in the community and visitors alike to learn about our past mistakes, so that they are not repeated.

Kevin Alexander Carlson's destruction of Bidwell Mansion ripped at the very heart of Chico's residents. He has denied us of not just a beautiful landmark, but also a value tool for future knowledge. He could have made his views known in so many ways; did he ever really take the time to learn about the history; how the Mansion was being used as a tool for knowledge. I don't think so, he chose violence, and he chose to cause pain to an entire community. Mr. Carlson should serve the longest possible sentence the law can assign.

Jeanne Neveau-Smith

From: Bidwell, Jr., J. Truman

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 10:09 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Loss of the Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Sirs and Mesdames,

I am writing to tell you what a personal loss I feel over the terrible damage done to the Bidwell Mansion in California. Even though I live in New York, the mansion has always held a special place in my heart since I visited it many years ago. Somehow it has always felt like home (although my home is rather less grand as it is an apartment in Mew York City). I have spent many hours talking with my many grandchildren about the Bidwell Family and its history from their arrival in Massachusetts to those who settled in the West (like my grandfather) and the enormous impact our ancestors had on the country from supplying granite for our nation's capital, establishing the first saw mill in Albany New York to the many accomplishments of those who occupied the Mansion in California.

I do hope that Mansion will be restored to its original glory and that the story of those who lived there will remain part of our nation's lore.

Respectfully yours,

James Truman Bidwell, Jr.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 12:58 PM
To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>
Subject: Impact Statement - Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Your Honor,

My name is John Bidwell, Jr. I am the Treasurer of the Bidwell Family Association; a genealogy association tracing family lines of Bidwell cousins from around the globe.

Since the fire at Bidwell Mansion on December 11th, I have been contacted by many members who have expressed the emotional toll the loss of the Bidwell Mansion has caused them. Profound sadness, anger, and the questioning of why someone would intentionally destroy the mansion has been my reaction to the fire.

I have travelled from my home in New York state twice to visit the Bidwell Mansion. I felt such a sense of pride seeing the mansion and learning about the history of John and Annie Bidwell. I was grateful that such a beautiful representation dedicated to my Bidwell ancestors stood proudly in the city of Chico. Now it is gone and I feel overwhelming loss, as if a member of my family has passed away.

I doubt that Mr. Carlson realizes how many people he has affected by destroying the Mansion. Generations of Bidwells who have visited the mansion and the younger generations that have never had and never will have the opportunity to see the Bidwell Mansion as it stood before December 11, 2024. Although it will not bring back the Mansion and the artifacts held inside, I just wish I knew why the Mansion was destroyed.

Sincerely,

John Bidwell, Jr

John D Bidwell, Jr
Treasurer
Bidwell Family Association

From: JBIDWELL2

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 1:01 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement - Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Your Honor,

My name is John Bidwell. I live in Buffalo, NY. I am 101-years-old. I have been a member of the Bidwell Family Association for many years. I am so proud to be a Bidwell, in fact, I tell people I meet about my family history, the reunions of the association, and specifically about the beautiful Bidwell Mansion in Chico, CA.

Over my long life, I have had many ups and downs. When I learned about the fire at Bidwell Mansion and that someone intentionally started the fire, it made me angry...very angry. I last visited the mansion in 2016 when I was 93-years-old. I can not describe how it made me feel to see the mansion. Proud, I think pride was an emotion I had.

Now that beautiful home is gone. I don't know why this was done, but it isn't right and it makes me sad. There isn't much an old man like myself can do these days, but I know I've spent quite a bit of time thinking about the fire at mansion and I have to stop because it causes me such distress.

Sincerely

John Bidwell

From: Tina Bidwell

Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2025 2:50 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement - Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Your Honor,

My name is Tina Bidwell. I am the President of the Bidwell Family Association. The Bidwell Family Association was incorporated on June 14, 1976, in the state of New York. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to all things Bidwell. We gather once a year to renew family ties, exchange genealogical information and enjoy touring and exploring areas around the United States and Canada.

In the interest of the court, I want to state the effects that the criminal actions of Kevin Carlson have had on the Bidwell Family Association.

The news of the devastating fire at the Bidwell Mansion spread quickly throughout our association on the morning of December 11, 2024. Shock, disbelief, and the recurring question of "Why?" was common throughout the communication with members of the association. Some members stated "It hurts my heart," "I am devastated," "I am angry," "What a loss," and many could not express in words the loss of the mansion, they simply shed tears. The fire at the mansion has caused so much pain to the members of our association.

Our association held three reunions in the Chico area, 1977, 2006, and most recently in 2016. At each of those reunions the Bidwell Mansion was the focal point. As a genealogy association, we knew the history of our ancestors John and Annie Bidwell, but to be in their home brought our members closer to their heritage. As we first walked into the mansion, the members were amazed how the eyes on the large portrait of John Bidwell seemed to follow them as if to welcome each member personally into the home. We learned new tidbits of information about John and Annie Bidwell and their amazing life during the wonderful tours given by the mansion. Seeing items in the mansion, some of which were original, brought us all closer to our ancestors.

John Bidwell along with his wife Annie, gave selflessly to the city of Chico. To have their beautiful historic home taken away in such a senseless way is devastating to our members and to the city of Chico. Every member who attended the reunions in Chico have memories of their time at the Bidwell Mansion, but there are newer generations that will never have to chance to honor their ancestors by visiting the Bidwell Mansion. It is a shame.

Respectively submitted,

Tina Bidwell

Newsletter Editor
Bidwell Family Association

From: lindzer2

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 4:13 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: My heart is broken.

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I am writing to recommend that the jerk who burned down Bidwell mansion be sentenced to the maximum allowed by state law.

I have lived in Chico since 1991 and have taken visitors to see the mansion six times. Each time I have learned new things about the history of Chico and even California. I have been waiting for my grandchildren to become teenagers to take them to share this amazing piece of architecture with so, so much history behind it. And now I will never be able to do that and it breaks my heart.

I used to ride past the mansion on my bicycle every day on my way to and from work. I specifically took a route that is slightly indirect, but I did it because I enjoyed seeing the beautiful mansion in all different lights, sometimes with clouds, sometimes in the dark with moonlight and sometimes with bright sunny skies. No, I can't bear to go past it - to see a black shell of what was such a beautiful building.

This individual had no remotely understandable reason for doing this. Who knows what he will do next when he is free. I say we keep him locked up as long as possible.

Thank you,

Linda Calbreath
Chico, CA 95928

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 9:28 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: victim impact statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Having had the honor of portraying Annie Bidwell at community events for the past eight years, I can say with full certainty that the loss of Bidwell Mansion has done damage beyond words. Among the most heartbreaking aspects of the arson, all children have been robbed of their up-close and personal travel into history. My most enjoyable moments as Annie were when children, brought by their Chico and Bidwell loving parents, wanted to be photographed in pictures with Annie and the General. Their precious faces lit up. They loved every nook and crevice of the Mansion and felt extra special to be there. The fact that children can no longer bask in the legacy of our historic site, can no longer truly learn about life for our early city founders in the most impactful manner, can no longer elate at being with the "Bidwells" and their

circle in the Bidwell Mansion - this loss alone defies words. Bidwell Mansion is no longer an intergenerational legacy for our children. Opportunities that hundreds or thousands of children were fortunate to have over the years, have now been killed with the singular act of arson. My heart remains broken for me, my colleagues who poured their all into preserving the Bidwell legacy, and the greater community, especially our children.

Robyn Engel

From: Jacob Needels

Sent: Friday, February 21, 2025 1:15 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Fire Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep sadness, frustration, and anger at the the senseless and pre-meditated destruction of Bidwell Mansion.

The destruction of the mansion has removed a part of the city that holds special significance to me: I took high school prom pictures on the grounds, ran by it in high school cross country practices from PVHS, and have always loved driving by it going downtown. I remember touring the mansion as a young child and learning about the history of my hometown, a history which the arsonist has sought to erase.

The arsonist stole these experiences and memories from me, but more than that he stole them from the community. Bidwell Mansion was a tangible artifact of Chico and Butte County's history, in all its complexity, that connected us with the past. Its removal destroys a physical link to the people and circumstances which have shaped the city of Chico to be what it is today. Beyond the historical aspect, the mansion was a beautiful public resource, just like the university and the park, for citizens of the city to enjoy. In burning it down, the arsonist stole this resource from every current and future citizen or visitor to our town.

I hope you will consider this impact statement in considering the sentencing of the individual on trial for this deed.

Sincerely,
Jacob Needels

From: Keith L Johnson

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 5:55 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Bidwell Mansion, like the Hooker Oak, has long been a symbol of historic beauty and community love. The destruction of the Mansion cuts our city to the core. Over the past 60+ years I have respected it and supported it. I served on the Bidwell Mansion Association board of directors in 2012 when the citizens of Chico rose up and helped rescue the Bidwell Mansion from closure by the State of California. We will work to resurrect this symbol of our town in some form for as long as it takes!

Keith L Johnson

From: Sue Evans

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 11:06 AM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway,

The fire that took Bidwell Mansion to the ground has hit the heart, gut and soul of EVERY PERSON that ever toured that STUNNING HISTORIC MANSION.

Please sentence the fire starter to the MAXIMUM allowed by law. Please make him serve EVERY SINGLE DAY of that sentence behind bars.

THANK YOU,
Sue Evans
Chico, California
Past board member of the
Bidwell Mansion
Association
Board member and
Volunteer, Citizen of Chico
since 1962.

From: Emily Spesert

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 3:07 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement Letter

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

22 Feb 2025

BIDWELL MANSION: VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT

Your honor:

My immigrant ancestor worked for John Bidwell.

My 2nd great-grandfather was a child of parents who escaped to America from the Irish potato famine. He lived in a coastal city on the East Coast until, at age nine, he was kidnapped away from his family and forced to live on a ship until he escaped into the San Francisco harbor when he was 18 years old. After searching futilely for his older sister (who had gotten married and changed her name) and his four older brothers (all lost in the Civil War), my ancestor made his way to Chico because he was looking for work. Mr. Bidwell hired my ancestor as a laborer on Chico Rancho and then my ancestor eventually earned a house for his family. At Mr. Bidwell's urging, he learned to speak the local languages including those of Spanish, Maidu, and Chinese dialects. And his descendants provided farming opportunities for local Chicoans to get summer jobs over those next 80 years or so.

I have heard rumors around town about possible motivations for burning down Bidwell Mansion, but I do not know the defendant's motive(s). I do know that my ancestor was not a Colonialist – he was a refugee of the era. And Mr. Bidwell helped my ancestor to survive. I credit Mr. Bidwell with enabling my family's progeny in that way.

My 2nd great-grandfather's daughter (my great-grandmother) worked for some time as a laundress for Annie Bidwell's household. And my father attended some of Chico State's college classes inside the Bidwell Mansion during the 1960s.

In every year of my life, I have visited Bidwell Mansion with my family members. Usually, we gather a group on Easter weekend and make it an event. We stand on the front stoop and talk about the different people groups who were employed by Mr. Bidwell. We teach our family's children about the rumors of violence that took place on the property. We tell them about our family's values for how we treat people who are different from ourselves. We show them the fun of trying to say words in foreign languages. We invite them to look into the windows at the old furniture: the piano where Annie Bidwell used to play her favorite hymns – the same hymns we sometimes sing on Easter Sunday; the settee where Mr. Bidwell collapsed in his last moments; the office where my 2nd great-grandfather probably visited Mr. Bidwell for instructions and farming updates; the front entryway where my 2nd great-grandfather got his portrait taken (which is now held in a collection at the Meriam Library). We touch walls that our ancestors have touched and we stand in rooms where our ancestors have stood.

We talk to our family's children about how to respect the Park Ranger as they lead us through the house; how to respect a museum; how to be courteous to other people in the tour group.

We invite our family's children to ask us questions about the décor, the architecture, and the relics. We take opportunities to tell them about important facts of history and fun facts about our family's activities in Chico: like how my grandpa helped dig the creek deeper in his youth, and how my grandma had a very early memory of meeting Annie Bidwell at the back door.

We join the family members together after each tour, between the back steps and the carriage house, so that we can have a few moments of prayer and of remembering the time we've spent with our ancestors so that we can tell the children about their great-grandparents and other elders.

We have a few moments of silence by the gazebo as we look around at the exotic plants and remember their age and the hands that planted them and tended to them throughout the years.

We are always sad to return to our cars, but we are hopeful to return the next year.

Bidwell Mansion feels like the backbone of our town's legacy. It has been the featured attraction for many years, drawing in tourists to see the Mansion and then tour the paths, waterways, and pools of Upper and Lower Bidwell Park. John & Annie Bidwell are the reason that the town of Chico exists. Their home and its surrounding property brings tourists who visit newer attractions as well: Sierra Nevada Brewery, Chico State, Chico Museum, Bidwell Park Golf Course, the Chico Community Observatory, and the Chico Regional Airport, among others (such as popular restaurants and shops).

The arsonist act against Bidwell Mansion has been such a heartache for my family members. Our communal spiritual honoring of our ancestors is forever changed. We can't imagine what it will be like this year to gather in the parking lot of Bidwell Mansion, to honor our ancestors' memory amongst the ruins.

We don't know what we would wish for sentencing, but we do hope that education will be included regarding compassion for various people groups, the factual history of Chico and its pioneers, and psychological treatment for any cognitive distortions that may exist.

Thank you,
A 5th-generation Chicoan

From: GN B

Sent: Saturday, February 22, 2025 10:36 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: A Bidwell Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The emotional pain that radiates from the intentional incineration of the Bidwell Mansion, and the enormous loss to the community and Bidwell name, extends far beyond the borders of Chico, California. This singular action that could not be possibly justified, has left a gaping wound in the Chico community and the Bidwell Family Association, and all those who have ever visited this delightful park. Additionally, this depraved action will deny future generations and descendents from appreciating the efforts made by Annie and John Bidwell as pioneering founders of this community.

This disgusting individual, Kevin Carlson, deserves nothing less than the maximum sentence in incarceration for the crime he has committed. This crime impacts hundreds of thousands of people. I can't imagine why anyone would want to set the Bidwell Mansion on fire. It was such a beautiful living building providing so much to those who came to see it. I can't help but to think that in the mind of this arsonist, he could kill someone someday, just to watch them die, with the same reasoning he had setting the mansion on fire just to watch it burn, and then plead "no contest". Put him away for as long as you can for the memory of the Mansion, and the safety of the community.

Gregory N. Bidwell

Michelle Chambers

Feb 22, 2025

To: Butte County District Attorney Office

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm writing to express my grave disappointment about the **permanent** loss of an important historic element in our Chico community.

I first enjoyed learning about the local history via tours at the Bidwell Mansion 45 years ago while I was a Chico State student during the late 1970s to early 80s. Throughout my college years I fondly took my visiting family and friends there.

After returning to Chico in the late 80s to establish residence, I've engaged at the Mansion through participation in programs, including involving many youths at events there. The Mansion and its programs were a wonderful resource for all ages. (My neighbor lived in the Mansion while it was a girls' dormitory!)

I humbly note that my decades of appreciation and involvement with the Mansion, its staff and volunteers, is just one drop in a huge bucket of visitors and supporters.

Now we no longer have this crown jewel of our community, with its priceless artifacts from the native people, the pioneers, and more. Whatever reiteration of Bidwell Mansion may or may not rise again, there were significant items that are irreplaceable.

Over time I was pleased to see more representation of the region's native people included at the Visitor Center and in the tour information. I believe it was a step in a good direction to mesh the history of the native people with the story of the pioneer-colonizers. Was the information adequate? Was it fair and balanced? We know histories of appropriation and colonization are usually complicated and most often disturbing -- or worse -- whether in our area or anywhere else in the world. However, when facts and history are offered honestly – *without righteousness* – there's a beneficial lesson to be had. I think Bidwell Mansion State Park was slowly improving in this regard, and without the presence of such artifacts to draw attention and opportunity to learn, how does one educate to do better in the future? *Nobody wins from this tragic and permanent loss of history.*

Whatever the motivation – whether premeditated or otherwise -- I find it inexcusable for anyone to have caused such permanent loss, and the consequence for that person should reflect this condition.

~ Michelle Chambers

Sandra (Bidwell) Waalk

February 22, 2025

Bidwell Mansion Association
Chico, CA

Dear Bidwell Mansion Administrator,

It was very sad to hear about the devastating fire at the Bidwell Mansion last December. It was even more disturbing to learn that the cause was Arson.

The family Mansion in Chico was a valuable part of history and a treasure to the community, State, and all of the past and future Bidwell family members and heirs.

Such a profound loss is priceless and will be impossible to replace.

The person or persons responsible for this reckless and senseless act should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Sincerely,

Sandra (Bidwell) Waalk

IMPACT STATEMENT FOR KEVIN CARLSON SENTENCING ON MARCH 5, 2025

When our family moved from So. Calif. in 1978, we did not fully understand the beauty that is the North State. In our chosen city of Chico, living close to Bidwell Mansion has been one perk we have thoroughly enjoyed. This beautiful home, built long ago stood stately; tucked back on the Esplanade since 1865.

Bidwell Mansion was for a tourist on a destination trip. People chose to travel here since it wasn't right off busy roads such as I-5 and so many people did! Our own visiting family and friends got to see the magic of Bidwell's Victorian wonder as we showed off our city's crown jewel. Our children visited many times, and when asked by the tour guide, two of them relished in the delight of playing Annie's piano, the fine instrument that traveled around the Cape to arrive in this rural town many years ago.

When I served on the executive board of the Bidwell Mansion Assn, we met to see how best we could serve the community with school tours for elementary children and maintain Bidwell Mansion through historic preservation funding. The students learned of the specialness of the home as did hundreds of tourists. The special events we hosted to honor John and Annie's birthdays, served high tea to guests, hosted dinners and decorated the mansion for the holidays were some of the special projects for us. This was done by the BMA in cooperation with State Parks to keep this history alive. We were happy to help the City of Chico Police get permission to have a mansion logo put on patrol cars.

Also during my time on the BMA board, we were tasked by our citizens to try to "Save the Mansion" from being shuttered by the State. Due to budget constraints, the State slated 11 State Parks to close and Bidwell Mansion was one of those. Many hours were spent finding a way to keep it open and many trips were made to the State Capitol to plead our case. The most important thing that came from this impending closure was the rallying cry from a massive number of citizens wanting to do everything to keep the jewel open. The Town Halls, the special City Council meetings, the enormous number of signatures on petitions asking to save the mansion, the fundraisers like the Bidwell Mansion Fun Run, were just some activities that showed how much this "pink house" meant to all of us. In the end, our small voice echoed bigger at the state level and the State was forced to look closer at their shortfall. Eventually, money was found to keep all state parks open. One could hear a massive sigh of relief from everyone in this area; the amazing 26 room Victorian Mansion stood to live, teach and entertain for yet more days. The citizens of this city were proud to have won the battle and this episode brought people from all walks of life together for this cause. As the mansion stood the test of time since its' completion in 1868, it would still be our jewel to cherish and take care of.

The thought of our citizens was that the mansion was now safe. Little did anyone even fathom an arson fire would destroy our pride and joy. Little did we think there was a single person in this community that didn't love the home! We wanted to keep it standing in order to add more history in the coming years. The impact this one selfish person has had on our city is indeterminable. How does one wrap their head around destroying a beautiful piece of history, let alone plotting the disastrous deed and finally seeing that plan succeed? How this evil act by an insensitive and self-absorbed person has affected our town is immeasurable. The physical history is lost, only to be viewed by pictures and memories.

It does not matter to me if Mr. Carlson is not a repeat offender or had previous contact with the law. What does matter is that it took one solitary heinous act to destroy history of our founder, history of beautiful architecture and the pain this historical loss is to each citizen every time they drive by the remains of the mansion, never to see or walk through it again. This person needs a maximum sentence so that he too has a long time to regret and reflect on his egregious act and how it affected those involved with the mansion and every citizen of Chico. One solo act with far too many victims.

I ask the Honorable Judge Caraway to consider the maximum sentence to this guilty party. If he was able to cause this much pain to so many, he doesn't need to be out soon to harm some other treasure of history in and around our county.

Respectfully,

Dianne Wrona

IMPACT STATEMENT FOR KEVIN CARLSON SENTENCING ON MARCH 5, 2025

From: berne marsh

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:36 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

The loss of Bidwell Mansion "hurts", it is heartbarking.

The fact that the fire was arson, makes it that more painful.

People and families who have donated items to help fill displays, did so for the enjoyment and education of the community.

This person, who destroyed hours, days weeks and years of work from the Historical Society, needs to spend hours, days weeks and years cleaning up the parks, roads and communities that he so thoughtlessly destroyed.

Thank you

Bernadette Marsh

From: LYLE JOB

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:37 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Impact Endless

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

I came to Chico State in 1974 and from that point on Bidwell Mansion has impacted my life. I come from Tahoe where history was instilled in me as a child as my grandfather was a huge part of building the communities on the North Shore of Lake Tahoe. I learned how what he chose to do impacted how it would grow and develop.

Here we have Bidwell Mansion, built by a man and his wife along with so many other investments in Butte County. I toured the Mansion and learned from the history of that place, especially that I didn't want to go back to girdles for women, after climbing those beautiful stairs. We just don't take pride in what we create like they did back then, by hand mostly. Our kids toured that Mansion and loved every minute of it because they were able to experience what the old Chico was like and how far we have come. One of our best friends had the first outdoor wedding there. During my college days I chose to go over there and lay on the lawns and do my school work as I just felt safe, at home, a part of history. I have walked the campus many times with my kids and now they, their kids just to venture close and be a part of such a beautiful site, and have a peaceful lunch, just to enjoy.

This young man does not realize what he has done, Chico was founded on the Bidwells and so many others. You can't replace the original, but I sure hope that the State Parks puts in the effort to somehow restore it so our grandkids and great grandkids can see from where we come.

Heartbroken to say the least. How you repay a community that has lost much, time would be good, lots of it, but also if he ever gets out, then time building back things that people choose to destroy out of pure lack of respect.

Lynnel Job

Richvale, CA

IMPACT STATEMENT FOR KEVIN CARLSON SENTENCING ON MARCH 5, 2025

From: April Verne

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:57 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement - Re: The Loss of the Historic Bidwell Mansion to Arson

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Dear Judge Caraway,

The City of Chico is devastated beyond words by the tragic and senseless destruction of one of our most cherished landmarks, the Bidwell Mansion. The deliberate act of arson that reduced this historic treasure to ashes has not only stripped us of a piece of our past but has inflicted a deep and lasting wound on the very soul of our community.

For generations, Bidwell Mansion was more than just a building—it was a living testament to our heritage, a cornerstone of our identity, and an irreplaceable link to the legacy of John and Annie Bidwell. It was where schoolchildren first encountered the richness of our history, where visitors from across the country marveled at Chico's vibrant past, and where families gathered to celebrate and reflect on the foundation of our town. Now, its charred remains stand as a painful reminder of what we have lost—a loss that can never truly be mended.

The depth of this tragedy extends far beyond the ruins. Our educational programs, historical tours, and community celebrations have been stripped of a centerpiece. The economic repercussions are profound, affecting local businesses that thrived on the cultural tourism Bidwell Mansion brought to our city. The emotional toll is immeasurable; the memories woven into the walls of that mansion are now only ghosts, leaving behind an indescribable grief shared by generations of Chico residents. We have lost not only an irreplaceable structure but a defining piece of our community's heart and history.

We are immensely grateful to our first responders, who fought to save what they could, and to our city officials, who now face the painful responsibility of assessing the full extent of this devastation. However, gratitude does not erase the outrage we feel. The individual responsible for this monstrous act has committed a crime against more than just bricks and mortar—they have violated the heart and soul of Chico itself and we demand accountability and justice for this unforgivable act.

Kevin Carlson's actions have inflicted an immeasurable loss upon the City of Chico. His deliberate and callous decision to destroy a vital piece of our history has forever altered our community. This crime cannot go unpunished. I urge the court to impose the maximum penalty allowable under the law, ensuring that justice is served not only for our city but for the generations who cherished Bidwell Mansion. The severity of this crime demands a punishment that reflects the gravity of the harm inflicted. Anything less would be an injustice to Chico and to the legacy that has been stolen from us.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

April Hauptert

IMPACT STATEMENT FOR KEVIN CARLSON SENTENCING ON MARCH 5, 2025

From: Dawn Nielsen

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 4:57 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Bidwell Mansion Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Every morning we awaken to the promises of the day. Good days, bad days, uneventful days. On the morning of December 11, 2024 the promise was tragedy and heartbreaking loss.

The Bidwell Mansion was the heart of Chico. The home of the founder of the place where I live, Rancho del Arroyo Chico. My husband and I spent most weekends at the mansion playing Pokemon Go with our friends. My son, who was born in Chico, walked by the mansion every day on his way to the campus of Chico State. My husband works nearby and went for a walk around the mansion grounds in the afternoon each day. My elderly aunt just moved in with us; we were looking forward to the mansion reopening after renovation to take the tour and show her the rich culture of her new home. I drove by the mansion every day on my way home from work and smiled at what we had in this grand house and the tangible history it represented.

I have moved from feelings of deep sadness to vengeance-filled anger. One selfish, entitled, narcissistic little prick decided to speak for us all and tell us what we should think and how we should interpret history. 11 years in prison is not long enough for what he destroyed. The worst part is his twisted ideology hasn't changed history it just took away a building that made Chico special, unique and we will never have that back again. 160 years old. A California State Park and iconic historical building. Priceless. Gone.

Dawn Nielsen, RN, BSN
Chico, CA

From: Michele Cooper

Sent: Monday, February 24, 2025 5:20 PM

To: BidwellMansionImpactStatement <bidwellmansionImpactStatement@buttecounty.net>

Subject: Victim Impact Statement

ATTENTION: This message originated from outside **Butte County**. Please exercise judgment before opening attachments, clicking on links, or replying.

Victim Impact Statement – Bidwell Mansion

The destruction of Bidwell Mansion is more than just the loss of a historic building—it is the loss of a deep, personal connection to my family's past, our community's roots, and a cherished landmark that shaped my childhood.

As a child, I spent countless hours at the mansion, walking its grounds, listening to stories of John and Annie Bidwell, and feeling a direct link to the history that built our town. It was a place of wonder, learning, and family tradition. My children, too, grew up with the Bidwell Mansion as a backdrop to their own memories—playing on the lawn, standing in

IMPACT STATEMENT FOR KEVIN CARLSON SENTENCING ON MARCH 5, 2025

awe of the grand architecture, and having our family photos taken there, capturing moments in time that can never be replaced.

But my grandchildren will never have that opportunity. They will never walk through the grand halls, never hear the echoes of the past, never see firsthand the home of the founders who shaped our city. The loss of this landmark is not just about brick and wood—it is about the erasure of a tangible connection to our shared history.

There is no way to rebuild and truly replace the Bidwell Mansion. The stories may live on, but the experience—the feeling of standing in the same rooms where history was made—can never be restored. This is a loss that extends beyond my family; it is a wound to our entire community, a tragedy that takes with it a vital piece of our identity.

This was not an accident. It was a senseless act of destruction that has irreparably harmed our community and stolen from future generations. The person responsible for this crime must be held fully accountable. I urge the court to impose the maximum penalty allowed by law. Anything less would be an injustice to my family, to our community, and to the generations who have now lost an irreplaceable piece of our history. This act cannot be undone, but justice must be served.

Sincerely,
Michele Cooper
4th Generation Chico Resident

What is Bidwell Mansion?

It's much more than a pretty and extravagant house.

It's an icon of the Valley, a treasure of historical and cultural importance.

Think of how THIS plot of land changed in 20 years. It went from having a large adobe building with no conveniences to a grand house with running water and gas lighting. Can you imagine what the speed of that progress must have felt like to those living it? Can you imagine how pleased and surprised that people from more civilized areas visiting the frontier would have enjoyed the hospitality and comforts already known in big cities? This was not a symbol of progress, it was a living demonstration that the frontier could be tamed.

Inevitably, progress encouraged others to settle here and it invited many personalities from all over the world to experience Chico. How many made the long trek up from San Francisco just because they knew Annie Kennedy from DC and were curious how her life in the wild west turned out? How many came to Chico because they had heard about the Bidwells, their causes and interests and wanted to be acquainted?

On a personal note, I saw this house every time I came into town due to its position on the Esplanade. I preferred "The Big Valley" over "Little House on the Prairie" since it showed how life was that first generation after the frontier. Settlers had worked hard and were getting to enjoy the dividends of culture, pleasure and leisure. Life could be more than subsistence activities! Bidwell Mansion was an emblem of a settled life and an example of our land rewarding hard work.

More personally, I have always been interested in Victorian life and longed to visit the Mansion. My parents wouldn't take me but my great aunt and great uncle did and it was a red letter day! It was the first of many visits and the first of many times playing the piano in the parlor. It was place to savor at the holidays and a place to pop into on a bad day when you just wanted to be surrounded with grace and beauty and feel the humdrum drift away.

This miscreant may have felt his points were valid. I don't care – his education should have taught him progress was going to come to the Valley regardless of the names involved. I'm sure he would have been happy to burn down Glenwood if the Comptons had been more prominent.

History can't be changed. It can be written by the victors. The individual who hurt our community has made history but is no victor. I can't imagine what he thought he would accomplish.

I think the ruins should be stabilized and preserved – to show our history and also to show the vileness of misguided ideals, extremely poorly executed.

Mark Jenkins - Richvale