

18. RAMMED EARTH HOUSE  
(The Bradley Home)  
1027 N. Enslen Avenue (1934)



**Landmark Preservation Commission Resolution:** May 17, 1993  
**Designated by City Council:** July 13, 1993

**Architectural Significance:** This home was built by an ardent conservationist who believed in saving our forests and building fireproof and durable buildings. Owen Bradley dug adobe from his back yard and set up the long, 2' x 12' forms in which to ram the adobe earth to make bricks. Six inches of wet earth was poured into the long forms and then tamped with a 12 pound, hand-held tamper until it was only three inches thick. The adobe was allowed to dry a few days and then the forms moved so that seams overlapped. Work was begun in April and the family moved in on November 11, 1936. A friend, Charlie Snediger, built the indoor fireplace and friends helped with the plumbing and electricity. Otherwise, Owen did all the work on the house himself in the mornings, evenings and weekends after work.

This house was built before the discovery that adding bitumen would harden the adobe and waterproof the material, so horse manure was used for that purpose. The home is cool in summer and warm in winter and holds heat well. Beams, ceilings and tile are recycled materials from wrecked houses in Stockton.

**Historic Significance:** Owen Bradley and his wife, Adriene, were the driving force behind the saving of the what is now the South Grove in Calaveras Big Trees State Park. The Bradley Grove in the park commemorates the effort the Bradleys' led in the late 1940s and early 1950s to save one of the most impressive, but threatened, stands of Sierra Redwoods.