

### George Edward King

George Edward King (1852–1912) was a progressive British architect who moved first to the US and then to Mexico. He practiced in the US for about twenty years, and designed a number of grand buildings there, including several private residences in Boulder, Colorado; Old Main at Colorado Agricultural college (now Colorado State University) in Fort Collins; the Tabor opera house, post office and hotel, all in Leadville, Colorado; and a number of offices and residences in El Paso, Texas.<sup>2</sup>

In the 1890s, King set up shop in Mexico City, with Charles Grove Johnson, as King & Johnson. King later established offices in several cities, including Guadalajara, Durango and Chihuahua. In 1908, King managed the Guadalajara office personally, with son Arthur in charge of the Mexico City office.<sup>3</sup> King undertook numerous major commissions. He designed the former customs house (now Museo Histórico) in Ciudad Juárez; theaters in Zacatecas, Durango and Chihuahua; and remodeled the Correo Mayor, the main post office in Mexico City, as well as the Government Palace and Degollado Theater in Guadalajara.<sup>4</sup>

In Chapala, King was responsible for Villa Tlalocan and Casa Braniff, and may have had a hand in other buildings of the period.

When the Revolution began in 1910, King and his family fled to Texas, where both George and his wife, Harriet, died two years later.

To design their Chapala home, Carden commissioned noted British architect George Edward King, who, at one time or another, had offices in several cities in Mexico, including the capital. King brought one of his associates, Charles Grove Johnson, from New York to Mexico City in 1895 to personally direct

construction of the very beautiful chalet that Mr. Lionel Carden plans to erect on the shores of Lake Chapala. It will be modern, beautiful and cost about \$10,000 dollars.<sup>5</sup>

Taking inflation into account, that amount equates to \$300,000 today. The construction of Villa Tlalocan took almost a year to complete.

Villa Tlalocan was not King's only work in Chapala. He was later asked by Guadalajara lawyer and historian Luis Pérez Verdía to build the so-called Braniff mansion, now the Cazadores restaurant. Given their apparent architectural similarities with Casa Braniff, King (or perhaps Johnson) may also have played some part in designing Villa Reynera and Villa Virginia, two other turn-of-the-century residences in Chapala.