

Oakland Rotary Club is world's third oldest, still going strong

By Kitty Hughes

On May 31, a new book joined the selection of local history titles, this one focusing on Oakland's Rotary Club, the third in the world and the second in northern California. Linda Hamilton's *The Rotary Club of Oakland: A Century of Service and Friendship* is a 416-page hardback full of narratives and photos that weave a new take on Oakland's history. Hamilton spent over four years researching and writing, unearthing photos and records from the Rotary's archives and other sources. The result is a new understanding of how our city grew and evolved through the vision and commitment of prominent citizens, working together in partnership with community organizations, business and city government to bring good ideas to fruition.

The book reminds us that most projects for the community good don't just happen: they require hard work, viable partnerships and determination, sometimes against all odds.

In 1905, Paul Harris formed the first Rotary club, a group of Chicago businessmen who met regularly for camaraderie and friendship, without any consideration of religion or ethnicity.

The second sprang up in San Francisco in 1908, two years after the catastrophic earthquake and fire. Since San Franciscans were moving across the bay en masse, it didn't take long (three weeks) before the East Bay had its own club, Tri-City Rotary, comprised of men from Alameda, Berkeley and Oakland. They met at the Hotel Metropole at 13th and Jefferson in downtown Oakland. It was officially chartered in February 1909 with an evening banquet at the Athens Hotel.

In 1911, with Oakland city boundaries expanding, businessmen in Alameda and Berkeley started to drop their memberships; the club reformed as Oakland Rotary Club.

The club moved into the Hotel Oakland when it opened in 1912 and met there until World War II, when it became a military hospital. Instead, members met at the Hotel Leamington's California Ballroom at 1814



ROTARY CLUB OF OAKLAND

THE CLUB COLLECTED and, in many cases, repaired 7,000 pairs of shoes and shipped them to French residents who had endured three years of war in their country. Shown is the Shoe Drive Headquarters at 19th and Telegraph in 1917.

Franklin Street, where they have been meeting on and off ever since.

Oakland's was the first Rotary club to establish weekly meetings and to meet for lunch. Many of the original members were young professionals and went home in the evenings to their families, so lunch was the ideal time for business and presentations.

In 1926, a large brass and wood Rotary wheel was placed at each of the four major entrances to Oakland, marking the close

identification of the club with our city. One of those original wheels still hangs above the entrance of the Rotary Nature Center in Lakeside Park.

Early movers and shakers in Oakland's Rotary included businessmen H.C. Capwell, owner of the thriving department store; Frank Bilger, (first club president), who owned a concrete and paving company; Edwin Stearns, who was the first Chamber of Com-



Rotary

Continued from page 1

merce secretary; Harvey Lyon of Lyon Moving and Storage; Louis Breuner (and two generations later, Wally Breuner); and Max Horwinski (and son Ed), a printer, whose printing company still operates in Oakland.

Other important members included Tom Bridges, president of Heald College; Al Carter, United States Representative from California (1935–1945); Fred Morcom, Oakland mayor 1931–1933, responsible for the Morcom Rose Garden; and V.O. Lawrence, shipping magnate and founder of Oakland's Boy Scouts. A frequent speaker during the early years was Ng Poon Chew, an advocate for Chinese-American civil rights and publisher of the first Chinese daily newspaper outside of China (it is not known whether he actually joined the Rotary). He was known as the "Chinese Mark Twain." Oakland Rotary's first president Frank Bilger was fascinated by magic and was a life member of the Society of American Magicians. His activities coincided with the career of Houdini, who visited Oakland about this time.

Robbie Robertson, a dashing figure known for rousing renditions of Scottish songs, was a baker and candy maker. He owned the Queen Anne Bakery on 12th Street downtown. As the club's only two-year president (1911–1913), he is remembered for stabilizing the local club, realigning its interests and programs with those of the National Rotary Association, and most importantly, shifting the club's focus to community service. Before this, business reciprocity was the prominent goal. It was in 1911 that Rotary established its motto: Service Above Self.

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ROTARY CLUB OF OAKLAND

A ROTARY BANQUET at the Athens Hotel, Feb. 26, 1909, a meeting at which department store entrepreneur H.C. Capwell provided the keynote speech.

Larry Moore, a lifelong Oakland Rotarian who managed the Chapel of the Chimes 1911–65, hired Julia Morgan to design its chapel. In 1912, the club contributed toward the construction of her YWCA design.

In 1912, the club funded the beautification of the 16th Street train depot, and in 1914, provided new linoleum flooring for the Children's Home (today's Studio One), operated by the Ladies Relief Society. The club also supported the society's transit operations, procurement of prosthetics for disabled children, and care for orphans.

In 1916, it planted 1,200 trees along Foothill Boulevard, then called Lincoln Highway. They were maintained by the local Boy Scouts.

In 1917, the Oakland Rotary Club had a Shoe Drive, collecting shoes to send overseas to French civilians suffering from the impact of World War I.

In the 1920s, Al Jolson, Sophie Tucker, Governor Pardee and John Phillip Souza were among the many renowned and expert speakers invited to give programs at meetings, reflecting the diverse interests of the growing organization.

We can thank Rotarian Romaine Myers for designing the Necklace of Lights around Lake Merritt. Other Rotary contributions

worth noting were the Save the Sequoia's movement, the formation of the Soroptomists, many Community Chest campaigns, children's aid of all kinds, the Rotary Day Camp and Norwegian Ski Hut at Joaquin Miller Park, the first Chabot Planetarium, the amphitheatre and flamingo area at the Oakland Zoo . . . and the list goes on.

Recent projects of note include the 2004 creation of Oakland's first barrier-free playground in Roberts Park, fully accessible to children of all abilities. Spearheaded by longtime Rotarian Eddie Snow (who kept the million-dollar project alive for 10 years), the park design has become the model for other barrier-free parks across the country.

Today there are four Oakland Rotary chapters: Oakland, East Oakland, Oakland Sunrise and Piedmont–Montclair. The four together raised \$100,000 for the gateway to the Lake Chalet Restaurant, supplementing voter-approved public Measure DD funds.

In the 1980s, the Rotary Club of Oakland entered the global arena in a big way. Member Karl Stucki started a project supplying hospital equipment in El Salvador in 1982 that transformed the country's medical practices. The club has also funded medical equipment in several other countries with



THE OAKLAND ROTARY CLUB used 50 automobiles to pick up 1,600 orphans and schoolchildren from around the area to bring them to City Hall Plaza. There, each received an American flag and paraded down Broadway to Twelfth Street to the Orpheum Theatre to see vaudevillian Will Cressy's travelogues for children (1917).

evident need, has provided educational facilities and supplies, water systems, wheelchairs, housing improvement, and medical operations, like cleft palate surgery for children. In 1994, Stucki co-founded *Uniendo America*, a project fair in Central America that creates partnerships so that North American Rotarians can work on significant humanitarian projects with Rotarians in Central America.

Until 1987, women were excluded from Rotary, but that is not the whole story. The Duarte, California, chapter decided to admit women in 1977, reflecting general dissatisfaction with the international policy. The club was de-chartered for its decision. The Supreme Court ruled in 1987 that Rotary Clubs were required to admit women. Today, half of Oakland's Rotary members are women.

Throughout its rich history, Oakland Rotary has stepped up to the plate when needed to bring a new idea to fruition, assist the underserved, and enrich public services and amenities.

Purchase the book for \$55 at the Oakland Rotary Office, 1736 Franklin St., or online at Oakland-Rotary.org. A copy has been donated to the Oakland History Room. ■

Welcome to our new members!

OHA is pleased to welcome these newest members to our roster:

Carol Brookman, Tynan N. Peterson, Kathleen Hirooka, Cameron Hillyer & Edward Rudnicki, Rebecca Miller, Mark Janowicz

Bright ideas?

Our events committee seeks suggestions for unusual speakers, intriguing topics, and offbeat places to visit. Contact Joan Dark at jdark@pacunion.com.

Thanks to our generous donors!

Arvi Dorsey, Barbara Donald, J. Elaine Macey, Kevin Dwyer, Job Household, George & Helene Strauss, Lesley Johnson-Gelb, Alison Finlay, Bill Iracki.

Special thanks to Bittersweet Café of downtown Oakland for providing breakfast to the Partners In Preservation Awards jury!



Final days of Adrian Ebell's life

Part Three of a three-part series

By Dennis Evanosky

When the alumni of Yale University held their annual meeting in 1877, they discovered that one of their own had passed away in Germany. "He embarked from New York... on board the steamship *Frisia*, and was taken ill almost immediately," the Yale alumni read in a document detailing alumni activities. "He arrived, however, in the harbor at Hamburg, April 10th, and was able with assistance to get on board the small steamer which was to carry passengers to the dock, but died before reaching the shore. The immediate cause of death was listed as rheumatism of the heart."

Ebell died in the company of young women who had joined him in anticipation of receiving an out-of-the-ordinary education on shores far away from the devastation that the Civil War had wreaked on this country. Among them was Mills Seminary (today's Mills College) graduate Emma Wixom. Ebell was accompanying Wixom and other young ladies to the Old World, in part to escape what Frederick Law Olmsted had called "this Republic of Suffering."



NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EMMA WIXOM. After Ebell's death, she stayed in Europe. She voice-trained under Madame Marchesi, and in 1880 debuted at London's Her Majesty's Theater using her new name, Emma Nevada.

Many remember Olmsted as a landscape architect, and locally we recall him as the designer of Mountain View Cemetery. Some nine years before the start of the Civil War Olmsted began traveling through the South and reported on slavery and the economy.

The *New-York Daily Times* (today's *New York Times*) picked up his stories, as did the rival newspaper the *New York Tribune*. His reports

EBELL CLUB OF ANAHEIM



ADRIAN EBELL

were later published in the book *The Cotton Kingdom*.

When the Civil War broke out, Olmsted had already made a name for himself with New York's Central Park, which he had designed in 1857 with Calvert Vaux.

In June 1861, Olmsted left his Central Park

duties behind to take up the task as executive secretary of the U. S. Sanitary Commission, which served the Union effort as the precursor to the Red Cross in this country.

Historian Louis Masur writes, "Olmsted worked to consolidate the many Northern soldiers' aid societies under one central authority and organized a transport system for the goods going to the camps."

Masur writes that the commission looked into nearly every aspect of army life from the point of view of the soldiers' welfare. "Its activities were responsible for saving thousands of lives."

As secretary to the commission, Olmsted devised a plan to use ships as hospitals. He was working aboard one of these ships at the end of May 1862 after the Battle of Fair Oaks in Virginia. The sights and sounds of the wounded and dying Union soldiers on one of these ships led Olmsted to describe America as "this Republic of Suffering."

Ebell had seen this macabre republic firsthand when he served in Minnesota during the Civil War. He saw it after the war when families had to suffer through the loss of loved ones, often not knowing what had happened to them.

At the war's end Ebell went to New York to study medicine at Albany Medical College. The school could proudly point to its contributions to the war effort. More than 200 alumni served as Union Army surgeons; and one as a Confederate brigade surgeon.

In 1868, while still a student, Ebell gave lectures at the Albany Female Academy.

In people's hearts the Civil War had not ended in 1865. It continued across both North and South as wounded soldiers returned and people realized that many of



OHA

JERI HOLAN AND CAMERON WILSON, CPF volunteers and OHA stalwarts, on board the *Potomac*.

Keeping the party afloat

By January Ruck

On May 2nd, OHA hosted a reception aboard the *U.S.S. Potomac* to welcome the California State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) to Oakland for the California Preservation Foundation conference. Those in attendance included Wayne Donaldson, the State Historic Preservation Officer for California, members of the SHRC, and local preservation officials. Docents provided insightful tours of the vessel as attendees sampled local food, beer and wine provided by Swanky Catering, Linden Street Brewery and Urban Legend Cellars. The reception was a great success, thanks to generous support from Kelly Sutherlin McLeod, AIA, in honor of Denny A. McLeod, *Potomac* board member. The reception showcased the ship and provided OHA with increased visibility during the conference. OHA is looking into visiting the *Potomac* again. Please watch your email for news about upcoming events! ■

the "missing" were not missing after all, but dead.

New York sent 399,576 men to serve in the Union Army; 27,000 of them wound up on casualty lists. Over 900 of Albany's soldiers found their final resting place at Albany Rural Cemetery; many more bodies never made it home.

How many of these war dead did the women at Ebell's lectures claim as husbands

See **EBELL** on page 5



Ebell

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or fathers, brothers or uncles, or just as acquaintances?

The question, of course, is difficult to answer. But Ebell struck a chord with his audience at the academy, so much so that, with Ebell's encouragement, the women from the academy founded the Dana Natural History Society on November 19, 1868. "The name Dana was given to a number of societies founded by Prof. Ebell with the idea that at some future time these several chapters should constitute a large society," *The New Albany* magazine reported. In 1876, eight years after he founded the Dana Natural History Society, Ebell visited Oakland where he convinced women to organize a branch of his now international academy.

After Ebell's death in 1877, the Oakland women decided to honor Ebell by renaming their group "The Ebell Society." As such it became the first women's club in California.

Oakland's Ebell Society incorporated in 1884, and "federated" in 1893, when the Dana Natural History Society was celebrating its silver anniversary. In addition to its advi-

See **EBELL** on page 11

Getting recognition for hard work



DAVE CAMPBELL

CITY COUNCIL ISSUES A PROCLAMATION for California Preservation Day and Week, welcoming the State Preservation Conference, and OHA members are there to proudly receive it. From left to right, January Ruck, OHA's executive director; Kitty Hughes and Dea Bacchetti, board members; Cindy Heitzman, executive director of the California Preservation Foundation; and, reading the proclamation, Councilmember Nancy Nadel.

Partners in Preservation awards given to deserving Oaklanders

By Rachel Force

On June 14th, OHA presented its 2012 Partners in Preservation Awards to a diverse slate of awardees. The Partners in Preservation Awards are given to individuals, organizations, agencies, or institutions for activities or accomplishments that promote Oakland's historic and cultural heritage. This year's event recognized awardees in the categories of rehabilitation, restoration, sensitive new construction, stewardship, advocacy and leadership, education, and lifetime achievement. If you couldn't join us, here is the list of awardees:

Rehabilitation:

- ♦ Laurel Avenue, Mint Condition Homes
- ♦ Malonga Casquelourd Arts Center, YHLA Architects project team

- ♦ St. Joseph's Senior Apartments, Bridge Housing Corporation project team

Restoration:

- ♦ 79 Bayo Vista, Brian Wilson, Designer/Project Manager
- ♦ Melrose Branch Library historic windows, YHLA Architects project team

Sensitive New Construction:

- ♦ 4127 Lakeshore Avenue, Jerri Holan & Associates, AIA project team

Stewardship:

- ♦ Jim Rizzo, Neon Works
- ♦ Paramount Theater

Education

- ♦ The Alley Cats documentary

- ♦ *Oakland Landmarks: An Artistic Portrayal of History* book

- ♦ "10,000 Steps: Walking the Invisible City" program

Advocacy and Leadership

- ♦ Jennifer Gates, California Preservation Foundation
- ♦ Adam Lamoreaux, Linden Street Brewery
- ♦ Tony Meadows, Samuel Knight Chapter of the Society for Industrial Archeology
- ♦ Alfonso Dominguez and Sarah Filley, Popuphood

Lifetime Achievement

- ♦ Jane Powell
- ♦ Deborah Cooper
- ♦ Ray Raineri ■



Joaquin Miller Park a testament to poet's obsession with trees

By Phoebe Cutler

This is Part Two of an article begun in the last edition of the *News*.

In Part I of this article we saw the enthusiasm with which poet Joaquin Miller tried to transform his rocky slopes known as the Hights. On a narrow strip of land at the base of the property he built four Lilliputian residences, including the still-standing "Abbey." This south rim of Miller's 75 acres paralleled a crude path now the four-lane, divided Joaquin Miller Road, but County Road #2509 for much of its history. Behind that usable verge the property rose for 300 feet, at a grade of between 20 and 30 percent. From its highest point it dropped precipitously into the wooded canyon of the Palo Seco Creek, where the only trees of any consequence were to be found. In order to plant or forest, Miller had to build sizable stone walls.

Early Plantations and the Cross of Trees:

In front of just such a stone wall the novice forester set out, as he reported to one of the steady stream of journalists who ventured to the Hights, whips of poplars and willows. No evidence of these thirsty, short-lived trees remains. In contrast, stands of descendants of the bard's more commonly-planted species do survive. Eucalyptus is mixed in with Monterey cypress, and, to a lesser degree, Monterey pine. Challenging the dominance of these stately trees are several species of the aggressive acacia prized by the poet.

Only the 19th-century custom of planting honorific trees supports Joaquin's claim for possessing a tree from nearly every state. And there were others: a sassafras from General Lee (who died some 17 years before Miller acquired his land) and a cypress from Shelley's grave. Adolph Sutro, who served as both a model for his younger compatriot and a supplier of trees for the Hights, may have been the immediate inspiration for these boasts. Across the bay at his new estate, he was tending seeds he brought back from Egypt and cypress from the site of Solomon's Temple.

Miller used Monterey cypress to attempt to forest his hillside, initially planting it on the slope immediately above his house. Then near the summit, he planted trees that would form the outline of a cross—basically replicat-

ing the Cross of Trees that a few years earlier, with Sutro's and others' help, he had commanded to initiate Arbor Day on Yerba Buena (Goat Island). A circa-1907 postcard with a view dated 1891 shows scatterings of young trees in a range of sizes spread over the foreground hills. On the left, upper-side seedlings in close, parallel lines form the ascending member of the cross. They rise towards the highest point on the ranch on a direct line behind the peaked roof of the Abbey. The arms of the arboreal symbol are barely visible lining the brow of the hill.

The 1891 date is more or less substantiated by an article in the *San Francisco Call* of Nov. 11, 1892. The article, by Miller, is illustrated with an engraving based on that photo. Given the necessity of planting during the late fall/early winter rainy season and judging by the height of the saplings, the date of installation would logically have been the winter of 1891. Trumpeting his achievement, Miller used the *Call* illustration, with a portrait of himself on his horse Chief inserted in the left foreground, for his stationery letterhead.

Miller's compulsion to recreate the "Crusade Cross of Arbor Day" can be explained by the fact that fire destroyed the forerunner cross seven months after its inception. For this second cross, Sutro again donated sur-

plus trees from his own nurseries, created to supply his extensive holdings in San Francisco. A photo ascribed by Juanita Miller to 1913, the year of her father's death, clearly reveals the dark, dense foliage of *Cupressus macrocarpa*. A contrasting, lighter, leafy texture at the intersection of the two arms of the cross suggests that the mining engineer-turned real-estate-magnate might also have contributed a few eucalyptus.

Sentimental Forestry: During this first round of forestation the driving sentiment behind the two crosses and Miller's other plantations at his ranch was more emotional than practical. For immigrant Californians in general, and Miller the woodsman in particular, the denuded hills were a disgrace. These early residents were also highly conscious that the miners from 1849 on had destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres of forest, drying up waterways and scarring the verdant hillsides. Joaquin expressed the popular outrage at the devastation in lines he read at the ceremony on Goat Island:

God gave us mother earth full blest
With robes of green in healthful fold;
We tore the green robes from her breast!
We sold our mother's robes for gold!

The Goat Island gesture was an act of penitence. Throughout his tenure at the Hights Miller demonstrated an exaggerated attachment to and solicitude about his trees. To his boon companion John P. Irish he penned a letter—a makeshift "will"—before going off on assignment to the Northwest and the Great Plains in the summer of 1889.

Although he shows concern for his daughter Juanita and his wife Abbie, the focus of this testament is the welfare of his many saplings. In it he suggests that Irish and the poet's other intimate, Charles Woodbury, might inhabit one of his cottages to keep an eye on his trees. This, despite the fact that both men had comfortable homes and families in West Oakland two hours away by the travel standards of the day. With not entirely convincing self-deprecation, the bard concludes that his failure to return should "be of far less concern to the world than was the planting of my thousand of trees."

Tours of the poet's Fruitvale ranch typically took in his plantations. Women visitors were



AERIAL VIEW of the Cross of Trees, probably taken in 1936.

BANCROFT LIBRARY

especially impressed by the author's concern for his "baby trees." To a female writer visiting in 1891 he intoned, "Look out for the little trees! They are babies now, so I must protect them. When they are larger, they can take care of themselves." On the same tour he bemoaned the poor health of a stand of pines, expressing the hope that next year "they may reform." Upon the occasion of his mother Margaret's death in 1904, the highest form of praise he could bestow upon her was "It was she who planted the trees that will wave above her."

Inexperience: Joaquin's forestry was not only emotional; it was also highly experimental. His role in promoting the recognition of Arbor Day lent him an aura of authority not entirely earned. Impressed by the achievement of the celebration, the governor nominated him to the State Board of Forestry, but that authority rejected him, citing his inexperience.

Miller proclaimed upon moving to his slope that "My home is, ever has been, and must to the end of life be, in the woods." Yet he had not, prior to the two arboreal crosses, done much in the way of woodland planting—with his claim to having fixed up the mosquito-ridden Roman Campagna the improbable possible exception. So inexperienced was he that Sutro rejected his intended date for planting the Yerba Buena cross: the ground in October would still be too dry.

Qualified Success: As far as arboriculture was concerned, California was new territory, so it was natural that mistakes in the early decades of Anglo settlement were common. Joaquin did his share of fumbling and then some. We have already seen (in Part I) that for the most part his deciduous fruit trees failed, not to mention his bananas and oranges. Six years after his death, the acacia he introduced was pushing out the olives in front of the Abbey. His biggest failure, however, was, paradoxically, his greatest success. In common with a huge number of his fellow Californians, he fell prey to the siren call of the Australian eucalyptus. In the fall of 1909, he wrote to his brother in Oregon saying that he was "planting trees, planting, and planting. Hope to be done by Xmas."

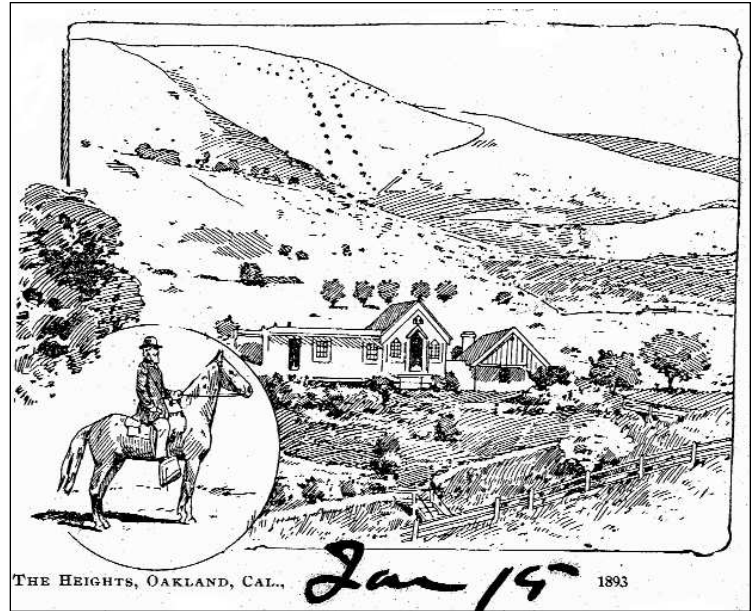
During the period of 1905 to 1912, the gum tree was the new gold. It was supposed to solve a projected shortage of com-

mercial lumber, while at the same time establishing California as the dominant source of hardwood for the whole country. Convinced by a combination of government literature and nursery sales propaganda, Miller set out thousands of seedlings on his place. For the aging author, perennially pinched for cash and coming up

short in real estate schemes, eucalyptus offered a last chance to turn the Hights into a profitable legacy for his Abbie, but particularly for Juanita—always, among his four-plus children, the apple of his eye. Unfortunately, eucalyptus's immature wood was brittle and dry (in Australia usable lumber was harvested from 100-year-old trees). Nor did the expected lumber shortage materialize.

The successful part of the equation was the tree's rapid advance across the hill. It filled in the blanks left by the Monterey cypress (and to a lesser degree the Monterey pine), so that by 1910 Miller could send out a photograph celebrating the Hights' transformation from a "doleful, grewsome [sic] place ... if you looked near about you or down into the mud" into a verdant forest.

Epilogue: In the last hundred years natural and developmental forces have combined to alter Joaquin Miller's cherished forest. In 1917 the Hights became Oakland's largest public park (before Knowland Park was added). Until 1933 the woods flourished undisturbed, except for some ill-considered memorial plantings of redwoods. Then a disastrous brush fire and an internal program of clearing opened up the original east end (enlarged in 1924 by the addition of Sequoia Park with its eponymous trees). From 1933 to 1942 a New Deal-financed system of roads and campgrounds further



JOAQUIN MILLER'S LETTERHEAD based on the 1891 *San Francisco Call* view with cross seen on upper hillside.

compromised the woodlands. The landmark freeze of the winter of 1971 killed acres of eucalyptus, for the first time in decades making the Cross of Trees again visible from San Francisco.

Joaquin Miller's cross is no longer. Along the top ridge a grove of cypress (possibly the originals stunted from lack of moisture) still demarks Miller's stone funeral pyre, the most personal of the poet's network of monuments, while cypress mixed with pine stand near where the cross would have been. Here and there eucalyptus have made their comeback and join the mix. The whole west side, however, is now largely an open grassy slope, one that is continuously threatened by acacia seedlings. Acacia combined with cypress also appear on the hillside behind Miller's still-standing cottage. A few robust pines near the Woodminster Cascade at the east boundary, where the Hights ended and the wooded parcel that became Sequoia Park began, might be survivors of Miller's prodigious planting efforts.

The forest that composed the Hights 100 years ago bears no resemblance to the motley mixture of field and copse that exists today. As it stands, the original core of Joaquin Miller Park is proof that a woodland, even absent the lumberman, can be as fleeting as a garden. ■



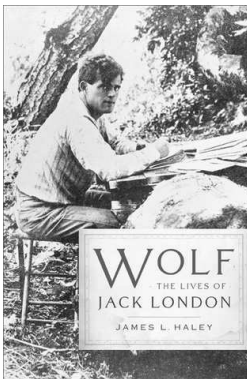
Oakland History Room plays midwife to authors

By Dorothy Lazard

The Oakland History Room's expansive collections are well known to house researchers, local architects, real estate developers, teachers, genealogists, artists, and local residents. But one group in particular offers the OHR staff the most interesting research challenges: authors.

Over the years, dozens of local, national, and international writers have come into OHR to learn not just historical facts but to establish ambience for their fictional and non-fiction works.

They're an interesting group to work with because they always dig widely and deeply into the collections.



They have used newspaper articles and online databases to understand the neighborhoods, industries, and diverse population of Oakland. They browse photographs to get a visual bead on a particular time period or place. They consult original manuscripts to study hand-

writing, personal relationships, and letter writing customs of the past. They peruse nineteenth-century voter registers, police arrest logs, property assessment rolls (aka "block books"), and city directories to flesh out their narratives. Patiently they bring together all these disparate pieces to tell unique and necessary stories set in Oakland.

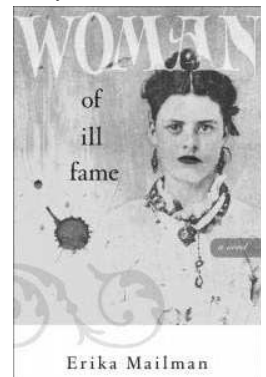
History Room staff has played midwife to a fair number of books that demonstrate what a culturally and politically rich place the East Bay is. Local and not-so-local authors who have used our collections have written on subjects as diverse as the Depression-era Pipe City, the Black Panthers, Oakland's recreational history, the student protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and the Temescal district. We have a growing list of works researched here at the Oakland History Room including Glen David Gold's *Carter Beats the Devil*, James L. Haley's *Wolf: The Lives of Jack London*, Donna Murch's *Living for the City* (about the rise of the Black Panther Party), Amelia Sue Marshall's *Oakland's Equestrian Heritage*, Erika Mailman's *Woman of Ill Fame*, Darlene Joe Lee's *Growing up in Oakland, California* (about Lincoln Elementary School), and Dennis



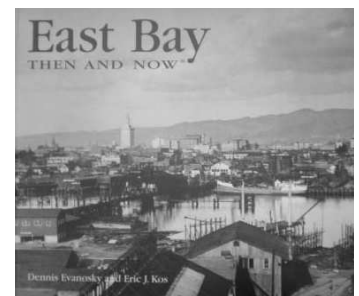
Evanosky and Eric J. Kos's co-written *East Bay Then and Now*.

As the collection grows, we anticipate that the number of writers coming to use the Oakland History Room resources will only increase. To accommodate this

most eager group of researchers, we continue to improve patron access to our collections. Over the past two years we have indexed and inventoried several large collections including the Jack London Research Collection, the newspaper clipping files, the Oakland and East Bay photograph collection, the Oakland Public Schools photograph collection, and the biographical files (clippings) collection.



In the coming year, we plan to upload these collections onto the Oakland History Room website for patrons to access remotely, helping them streamline their research activity. There are still many more chapters to add to Oakland's story! ■



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Two brown shingle residential buildings for sale for \$1 each. The owner will pay for the costs of moving the structures to your site. You provide a lot within the City of Berkeley that can situate both structures consistent with zoning requirements and provide all costs thereafter. Both buildings are two-stories. Interested parties must demonstrate the ability to accept the structures on the new site by May of 2013. Interested parties should contact Mia Perkins at mperkins@citycentric.net.



Party), Amelia Sue Marshall's *Oakland's Equestrian Heritage*, Erika Mailman's *Woman of Ill Fame*, Darlene Joe Lee's *Growing up in Oakland, California* (about Lincoln Elementary School), and Dennis



Walking Tours are here again, the skies are full of cheer again!

We couldn't be more proud of our award-winning, community-building, highly-regarded walking tour series. Dip your toes in with one tour—or join in the footsteps of many others who block off each weekend of the summer to attend *every* tour.

Saturday, July 28, 1 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
MONTCLAIR VILLAGE: OAKLAND'S EARLY HILL TOWN. Meet in front of the Montclair Branch library, 1687 Mountain Boulevard. Explore the history and architecture of Montclair Village, a vibrant hill community. From the early toll road to the freeways, learn about Montclair's social, residential and commercial development. Montclair's distinctive buildings—the fire station, women's club, recreation center, library and more will be featured on this walk. A gently sloping walk. — Kathleen DiGiovanni

Sunday, July 29, 1–3 p.m.
HIDDEN HADDON HILL. Meet on the triangle, at Kenwyn Road and McKinley Avenue. Visit this distinctive neighborhood of predominantly Mediterranean-style houses, built between the wars, and situated on the hill between Lake Merritt and Park Boulevard. Set off as one of the first neighborhoods with underground utilities, its homes and gardens were designed by some of the Bay Area's most distinguished: Dickey, the Newsome

brothers, A. W. Smith, Schirmer. A visit to the Cleveland Cascade and a private garden may be included. A level walk. — Page Yarwood

Saturday, August 4, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

BROADWAY MEETS THE WATER. Meet at C. L. Dellums statue, in front of the Amtrak Station, Second and Alice streets. Learn about Oakland's founding on the waterfront. Shake hands with C. L. Dellums in front of the Amtrak Station at the beginning of the tour. Come explore the estuary from the former Alice Street Bridge to the first ferry landing at the foot of Broadway, then shake Jack London's hand at the end of the tour. A level walk. — Dennis Evanosky

Sunday, August 5, 10 a.m.–12 noon
PIEDMONT AVENUE. Meet at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School, 4314 Piedmont Ave. at John Street. This area, now densely residential, with a mix of single-family houses and condos, with its well-known dining district, was once rolling hills with creeks running through small farms and the large holdings of wealthy landowners. This tour begins in the 1860s, at Piedmont Avenue School. From there, we'll take a steep uphill route to the Pied-



EARLY CONSTRUCTION WORK on Piedmont Avenue.

mont/Oakland border, with estate-like homes on one side and apartment multiplexes on the other. We'll discover an Art Deco beauty with a secret, and a tiny park as we cross Glen Echo Creek. On Piedmont Avenue, we'll pass establishments, such as Long's Drugs and Piedmont Market, which anchored the district in the early 20th century and our route will follow that of the horse car and streetcar lines, past the old Key Route depot, to Mountain View Cemetery. Some steep uphill. — Ruby Long

Saturday, Aug. 11, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
New! ART MURMUR TOUR. Meet at the First Presbyterian Church, 27th and Broadway. Meet at the 27th Street entry to the church complex. Free parking available at the church off street parking area on 27th Street. Tour will start with a tour of the inside of the 99-year-old sanctuary and proceed in a zig zag pattern, walking along 26th, 25th, 24th and 23rd Streets between Telegraph and Broadway. Discussion will focus on the evolving change of use of the structures in this downtown neighborhood, to include building history and urban design issues currently at play in this neighborhood. Tour to end at West Grand and Broadway, a short distance from where we started. A level walk. — Bill Coburn

See **TOURS** on page 10



AN ORNAMENTAL TRIPLEX BIRDHOUSE adorns this home in the charming Picardy neighborhood.

OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

ALAN TEMPLETON



Tours

Continued from page 9

Sunday, Aug. 12, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
NEW ERA, NEW POLITICS. Meet in front of the African American Museum and Library at Oakland, 659 14th St. This tour highlights African-American leaders who helped shape present-day Oakland. Learn how Lionel Wilson, Delilah Beasley, Robert Maynard, Byron Rumford and others changed the city and the Bay Area. — Cameron Wilson & Annalee Allen

Saturday, Aug. 18, 10 a.m.–12 noon
New! THE RECYCLED SHORELINE OF MIDDLE HARBOR. Meet at the mast of *USS Oakland* by main parking lot of Middle Harbor Shoreline Park, Middle Harbor Road and 7th Street. The park is a bold, necessary exercise in land-building, recycling artificial and geological materials to restore an old military port into a replica of the coastal environment that preceded it. Visit the park's geomorphology and contemplate the regional inventory of beautiful, instructive rocks being repurposed for the Anthropocene age. A level walk. — Andrew Alden

Sunday, Aug. 19, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
New! WEST OAKLAND MARSH, WEST OAKLAND RUST BELT? Meet alongside sculpture garden at 20th and Poplar streets. The West Oakland Specific Plan highlights a “Mandela-Grand Opportunity Area,” the neighborhood’s vast industrial middle that just happens to coincide with the West Oakland Marsh. This long, level walk will examine how the marsh has shaped West Oakland and will look at opportunities found, lost, and anticipated on the marsh over the years. Several site visits are planned. — Betty Marvin

Saturday, Aug. 25, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
PICARDY DRIVE: A STEP BACK IN TIME. Meet at 2800 55th Ave. In the Roaring Twenties, Oakland experienced

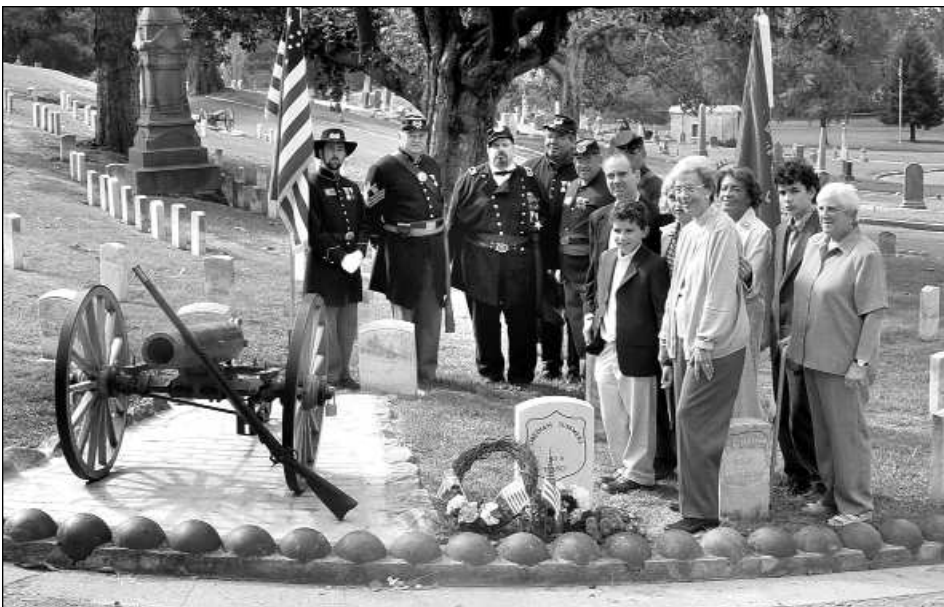


MADISON PARK FINANCIAL

THE OLD GE MAZDA LIGHTBULB FACTORY in West Oakland is planned for rental units.

a housing boom along with new aspirations for old-world styles. We will visit this European village of “modest mansions,” gracefully set around a “castle” in the middle of the city. Now famous for its holiday lighting displays, this collection of unique homes on Picardy Drive was constructed in 1926 to appeal to the changing taste in home styles. Once known as “Normandy Gardens,” it remains a lasting testament to the skilled, architect-developer, collaboration that culminated in this beautiful community of Period Revival homes. A level walk. — Andy Carpentier

ERIC J. KOS



CANNONBALLS ENCIRCLE the Civil War soldiers buried at Mountain View Cemetery. Here, the 2005 reinterment of Obadiah Summers, a slave who fought for the Union and was buried in the unendowed section of the cemetery until docent Dennis Evanosky found him. The ceremony was presided over by members of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War in full historic regalia.

Sunday, Aug. 26, 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
CIVIL WAR MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY. Meet at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. Get to know Civil War-era denizens at Mountain View Cemetery. Meet Senator William McKendree Gwin, David Doughty Colton and Jack Hays. Learn about their involvement in an 1859 duel. We’ll also meet “drummer boy” Annie Glud, Dr. Chloe Buckel and other veterans from both sides of the conflict. The 3½ hour tour highlights the restored Grand Army of the Republic plot, final resting place for over 200 veterans. A hilly walk. — Dennis Evanosky ■



Two big feathers in our cap this summer

By Rachel Force, President

I am happy to report on two recent OHA successes: the re-publication of *Oakland: Story of a City* and the California Preservation Foundation conference recently held in Oakland. Many OHA volunteers and board members participated in these efforts and deserve recognition: Erika Mailman for her authoring of the new chapter in *Story*; board member Naomi Schiff for her work editing and re-designing the book, and ushering it through publication; board member Dea Bacchetti for her work as chair of the steering committee for the CPF conference; and board member Kathryn Hughes for her involvement with various CPF conference planning committees. Last but not least, I want to recognize the stellar work of executive director January Ruck, whose diligence made the publication happen and whose organizing efforts helped make the CPF conference a success. Thank you all, and thank you so much to the many others who participated!

On June 14th we held our annual Partners in Preservation (PiP) award ceremony. OHA honors individuals, organizations, projects and programs whose work demonstrates a commitment to excellence in historic preservation. This year the slate of awardees was

very diverse. Please check our website at www.oaklandheritage.org/Partners_In_Preservation.html for photos of the event.

Oakland: Story of a City is now available for purchase from OHA! Please contact us at info@oaklandheritage.org to learn more.

Are you looking for a volunteer project? We still have board openings and are looking for people with fundraising and marketing experience. We are also looking for people who would like to serve on individual committees without being on the board. Please contact the office if you are interested.

OHA continues to monitor planning efforts in Oakland and suggest ways that new development could accommodate and embrace the existing historic fabric. Thank you so much to our members for your ongoing support of these efforts.

On to our summer walking tours! ■



Ebell

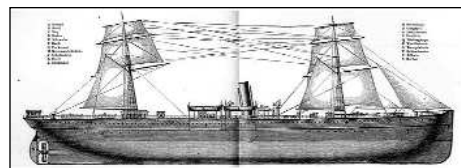
Continued from page 5

sory board, the Ebell Society had 11 committees to attend to the various interests.

The society divided its study classes into 26 sections, including economics, foreign languages and music. By 1892 the Ebell Society had an ordinary membership of 227 and a life and honorary membership of 36. By 1900 it had 447 members.

By then Ebell had passed on, breathing his last on the lighter that carried him from the *Frisia* to the port of Hamburg. We know he passed away before he reached the city. We know little about what happened to his body.

His wife, Oriana, had roots in New York City. Ebell found his American roots in New Haven, Connecticut. More work needs to be done to determine his final resting place. ■



EBELL SAILED TO EUROPE aboard the Hamburg America Line's *Frisia*, proudly rated as the "best and fastest" of the fleet. She stood four-decks tall. Her hull and three lower decks were made of iron and the upper deck was laid in teak.

CONTRIBUTORS: Phoebe Cutler, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Dennis Evanosky, Rachel Force, Kitty Hughes, Dorothy Lazard, January Ruck, Naomi Schiff
PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

OHA News welcomes article submissions. Send to news@oaklandheritage.org.

MISSION STATEMENT: OHA is a nonprofit membership organization which advocates the protection, preservation and revitalization of Oakland's architectural, historic, cultural and natural resources through publications, education, and direct action.

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OHA membership keeps you informed, helps make our city more livable, and puts you in touch with our many events. It makes a wonderful gift, too!

- \$45 Cornerstone** (individual): newsletter, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events and tours.
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Some limited income memberships are available. Call for information

- I'd like to contribute _____ to the OHA Leadership Fund, and help assure the future of historic preservation in Oakland.

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Monster needs bake sale

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

What's green, curvy and playful all over? It's the Lake Merritt Monster, aka "The Thing," the mid-century free-form play structure in Lakeside Park on the beach below the bandstand. And it may be in need of an angel.

The Monster has been at home in Lakeside Park since the early 1950s. It is the work of Bob Winston, who was not a playground designer at all but instead a jewelry designer and artist. Interesting, isn't it?

Around 1950, Oakland Parks Superintendent William Penn Mott saw a piece of Winston's free-form jewelry and was intrigued by the design. He approached Winston and asked if he could make something like that, only bigger. Much bigger. Mott commissioned Winston to create something that would evoke for urban children the experience of climbing on an old tree or on eroded rocks. According to an *Oakland Tribune* article of Aug. 22, 1954, Winston took the job and set to work carving models in balsa wood. Once a final design had been set, the forty-foot structure was built at Macri Iron Works in West Oakland. Metal mesh was fitted over a skeleton of reinforcing bars and concrete was sprayed all over the frame to create the "skin." The color has faded now but it originally glowed "yellow chartreuse." Because Winston donated all his own design work, the final product cost the city only \$3,000, money it won back in prizes at the 1952 California Spring Garden Show where it was featured while its site in Lakeside Park was under preparation.

Who was Bob Winston, creator of the Lake Merritt Monster? He wrote of himself "I cannot remember a time that I didn't build, design or create something." Born in 1915 in Southern California, Winston was a 1940 graduate of U. C. Berkeley. By the mid-1940s he was already widely recognized in the world of contemporary jewelry design for his pioneering work in the lost-wax method of metalcasting. At the time he met Mott, he was on the faculty of the California College of Arts and Crafts, where he taught jewelry, drawing, and painting between 1942 and 1956. In 1959 Winston moved to Arizona where he taught and continued to create works inspired by nature. He returned to the Bay Area in 1987 and died in Pleasant Hill in 2003. He was the subject of an extensive oral history conducted in 2002 by the Archives of American Art. He was also a Fellow of the American Craft Council.

Our own Oakland Museum owns a number of Winston's pieces. His work is also in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution and was featured in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's recent mid-century modern design show "Living in a Modern Way."



KATHLEEN DIGIOVANNI

OUR MID-CENTURY MODERN MONSTER.

The caption of a Jan. 19, 1958, *Oakland Tribune* photo of the Monster described it as "modern play equipment for modern children" and the "only one of its kind in the USA, and probably in the Universe." With the mid-century revival fueled by adults who didn't grow up with Danish Modern, the Monster looks new again. It was even featured last summer in a *Dwell* magazine slide show of mid-century playground classics.

Now sadly marred with tags and some sections of broken concrete, The Lake Merritt Monster's fate may be in jeopardy. Oakland Public Works staff note that its coating contains considerably more than the allowable amount of lead, complicating any effort at restoration. What the Lake Merritt Monster needs now is advocacy, money, and a preservation plan. ■