

Black captain William Shorey's triumphs at sea

By Erika Mailman

One hundred and fifty years ago, whaling was a huge industry—and quite unsafe, as readers of *Moby Dick* know. Sailors took their lives into their hands as they set off on these multi-year voyages. The men were prey to scurvy, shipwreck, their ships becoming locked in Arctic ice and thence splintering, and, of course, drowning, especially when whales' strong tails made carnage of the tiny whaling boats dispatched from the larger ships.

William Thomas Shorey began his maritime career on a whaling vessel in 1876, at age 17. He was born in Barbados, West Indies, in 1859, and emigrated to Boston as a young man. He was the son of a white Scottish planter and a Creole black woman.

Oakland's city historian Peter Conmy compiled a history of Shorey in 1972, and a copy of it is in the Oakland History Room files. In that document, Conmy cites Shorey describing a brutal sea fight where a sperm whale nearly won. "Evidently enraged, the whale attacked first one boat, smashing it, and then a second one, and then attacked the one I was in. By good fortune, we were able to fire a bomb into him which, exploding, killed him and saved us," said Shorey in a 1908 interview.

Shorey acquitted himself well on that North Atlantic and East Arctic voyage, upgrading his status from a greenhand to a boat steerer, the one who handled the boat's course through rough water and flailing whales' tails. On his next voyage, aboard the *Emma H. Herriman*, he went south through the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, to Australia and Tasmania and then via the Pacific to South America and finally, to San Francisco. All told, the trip took three years. He was again promoted, from Third Officer to First Officer

The next time the *Emma Herriman* sailed, it was to the Arctic. Shorey began this voyage

as a Second Officer (apparently, captains selected their men and assigned their status for each voyage, not necessarily honoring a previous voyage's title.) The next outing, he was First Officer again. And the third time the *Emma Herriman* departed from San Francisco, in 1886, he was commander.

It was extraordinary for a black man to be master of a ship only 20 years after slavery was abolished—and with largely white crews. The *Oakland Examiner* called him the "only colored captain on the Pacific coast."

Shorey went on to captain many other ships: the *Andrew Hicks*, the *Gay Head* and the *John and Winthrop*, to great acclaim. In 1907, the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a story about the *John and Winthrop* caught between two typhoons, with winds so strong they actually took the sails off the ship, and later becoming stuck in fog which masked the fact the ship was only 20 feet off a reef. After the return to San Francisco, the crew-

See **SHOREY** on page 2



CAPTAIN SHOREY, circa 1906.

OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

Continental shift at the History Room

By Dorothy Lazard

Patrons coming into the Oakland History Room these days will discover some nice, fresh changes. The ever-diligent staff, with the generous help of members of the Friends of the Oakland History Room, has shifted nearly the entire book collection to put it in a more logical order. Now, when you enter the room, you start at the 000s (that's bibliographies and periodicals, for you laypeople) instead of the 750s (arts), making for a more intuitive orientation to the collection.

This big shift has allowed us to do some long-overdue maintenance of the collection: books are being rebound, repackaged, relabeled, or redirected to more appropriate places. In the process, we've removed several cubic feet of dust! The 300s (social sci-

ences), probably our most popular area for researchers, is now on the back wall, under the framed portraits. Books on sports and literature can now be found along the wall behind the reference desk. The center of the room, which holds fiction, California history, and biographies, has not been changed.

This massive project allowed us to discover hidden gems on our shelves. For instance, did you know that in our vast collection of California poetry, patrons can find volumes written by early Oakland library director Charles Greene? Or that we also carry dozens of plays performed by the Bohemian Club, and exhaustive histories of the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915? Come in some time and reacquaint yourselves with the collection! ■



Shorey

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men told the newspaper that “nothing but Captain Shorey’s coolness and clever seamanship saved the vessel.” And indeed, tales of Shorey’s success were often reported in the daily papers.

The same year he was named commander of the *Emma Harriman*, he married Julia Ann Shelton, a San Franciscan born in 1865. The new bride went to sea with her husband. During their journey in the South Pacific, Mt. Pelee erupted and lava flowing into the sea killed fish for miles around. When the ship sailed into the Arctic for whaling, Mrs. Shorey transferred ships to return to land, not seeing her husband again for a year.

The couple had five children, although as was far too often the case in those times, only two lived to full adulthood. They were all born in Oakland; the family home was at 1774 Eighth St., subsequently renumbered 1782.

Mrs. Shorey and the children often accompanied the captain on his voyages. In fact, a great anecdote about one of the daughters is that she “navigated” her father’s vessel into waters other whalers had not encountered. As quoted in early Oakland columnist Delilah Beasley’s book *Negro Trail Blazers*, a San Francisco newspaper reported that, “The baby is only three years old and it is considered creditable to so young a navigator that she and her father steered their bark further to the north than any other whaler ventured this year. Victoria is the name of this three-year-old child that

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OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

A YOUNG AND GOATEED CAPTAIN SHOREY sits for a formal family portrait with his wife and two of his children . . . or perhaps not so formal, since the youngest child toys with the captain’s watch fob. Date of photo unknown.

Correction

In “Rancho San Antonio: hilltop hacienda was home for horses” (*OHA News*, Summer 2013) it was incorrectly stated that funds from Measure DD were used for City Stables repairs. Other state bond money was used for this purpose.

Yankees strike gold in Oakland's Middle Redwoods

■ An untapped redwood forest in the valley between the Peralta and Moraga ranchos was ripe for the taking

By Dennis Evanosky

Part 3 of a three-part series

When the governor of New Spain granted Luis Maria Peralta his vast holdings in 1820, the deed specified that the property ran to the crest of today's Oakland hills. In 1835, the Mexican government granted Joaquin Moraga and his cousin Juan Bernal the Rancho Laguna de Los Palos Colorados Lake of the Redwoods Ranch).

Like Peralta's land grant fifteen years earlier, Moraga and Bernal's grant extended only to the crest of the hills. Both land grants contained their fair share of redwood trees: Peralta's trees grew in today's Joaquin Miller Park; Moraga's, in and above today town of Canyon. The boundary to Peralta's grant ran to the crest of hills on the western side of the valley that contains today's Redwood Park.

Moraga's grant to the crest of the hills that defined the eastern side of the same valley; the crests and the valley below all rich in redwood trees.

Loggers began removing trees on the steep hill that defined the Moraga Redwoods as early as 1849 when William Taylor and James Owens built a mill near where today's Canyon and Pinehurst roads meet. Fire destroyed the mill in 1851. The following year Hiram Thorn and William Hamilton built a mill in the same spot.

By 1852 trees were falling in the valley to the west of the Moraga Redwoods. Joseph Witherall and Nathaniel Lampon built a mill along Redwood Creek. That same year the Prince brothers, Thomas and William, began milling logs nearby. The brothers built a road to take the half-hewn trees out of the valley; some of this road survives as the East Ridge Trail above Redwood Regional Park.

In late 1852 Chester Tupper and Richard Hamilton built a mill that stood near the entrance to the park. Like the Prince brothers, Tupper and Hamilton built a road, one that we still travel today. The aptly named Redwood Road once echoed to the sound of the whip and the braying of oxen as teamsters coaxed the animals towing logs to today's



DENNIS EVANOSKY

THIS OLD GROWTH STUMP in the Moraga Redwoods reminds us of the 19th century logging activity there.

Oakland Estuary at the foot of what is now 13th Avenue.

Tupper and Hamilton's mill burned in 1854, but that did not mark the end of logging in the valley. Erasmus Brown and

Thomas Eager built a mill that year along Redwood Creek. They competed with the nearby Prince mill that stayed in operation until 1856.

The Mormons remember Eager as a "Brooklyn Saint," a member of the community of Mormons who arrived in San Francisco aboard the ship Brooklyn in 1846.

In 1853 as an Alameda County supervisor, Eager played a role in drawing the boundary lines between Contra Costa and Alameda counties. He saw to it that half the valuable redwood forest would belong to the new county.

Three years later in 1856 Eager proposed to combine the towns of Clinton and San Antonio into a town named "Brooklyn," for the ship that brought him and his fellow Mormons to California.

In 1855 William P. Gibbons, a botanist who lived in Alameda, visited the redwood forest, or what was left of it. Gibbons wrote that he counted some 150 redwood stumps, some measuring from twelve to twenty inches in diameter. At least two of these ancient relics are visible today near the Chabot Space and Science Center.

At least one tree survives in the valley below Carl Munck School on Campus Drive:

See **REDWOODS** on page 4

Shorey

Continued from page 2

has been engaged in hunting whales all summer while most other children have been engaged in less venturesome occupation . . . 'Victoria is a remarkable sailor,' said the mother. 'She knows all the ropes and has perfect command of her father.'"

Shorey retired from commanding in 1909 and died in Oakland in 1919 at the age of 60. He and his family are buried in Mountain View Cemetery.

A probable legacy is Shorey Street, although there is a possibility the street is named for another Shorey. The other contender is an Oakland Police Department detective named Albert Shorey, who died in 1905. Oakland City Council renamed Short Street as Shorey Street in 1907, along with

50 other streets' renaming. The council shuffled names due to Oakland's recent annexations of other cities and the resulting duplication of common street names, such as numbered avenues. Unfortunately, the records make no mention of who, if anyone, was being honored by the name Shorey. ■

Many thanks to Peter Conmy's history of William Shorey and Delilah Beasley's book Negro Trail Blazers, both found in the Oakland History Room.

Landmarked!

In April, the Shorey home at 1782 8th St. became an Oakland city landmark. It's also been included in the Mills Act, a property tax reduction scheme for restoration of historic homes. For more, visit www.shoreyhouse.blogspot.com.



Redwoods

Continued from page 3

an Oakland landmark remembered as “Old Survivor.” Two more trees just down the steep hill may also have survived the lumberjacks who took down this forest more than 150 years ago. ■



BOTH: DENNIS EVANOSKY

REDWOOD PEAK: Boulders compete with redwood trees atop Oakland's Redwood Peak, above. The peak lies above the crest of the hills that ran approximately along today's Skyline Drive as it rises above Joaquin Miller Road. The second-growth trees here have managed to replace an impressive old-growth redwood forest. Near the peak stood the massive “Blossom Rock Tree,” so large that sailors in San Francisco Bay used it to navigate around a hazard that HMS *Blossom* identified on an 1826 map of the bay. At left, this stone in today's Roberts Regional Park marks the boundary between Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Alameda County was carved from Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties in 1853. The county line ran through the redwoods in today's Oakland hills in a way that assured that Contra Costa and Alameda counties had equal shares in the bounty the redwood trees had to offer.

Thank you to our kind donors

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas White,
Robert & Patricia Raburn, Kevin Dwyer,
Joan Dark, Jane Rizzo, Adrienne Morgan,
Kathryn Hughes, Stephanie Cimino

Welcome to our new members!

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

Sean Aung, Gigi Baron, Linda Boone,
Phil Cotty, Deborah Diamond, Robin &
Neil Heyden, Francisco Gonzalez,
Vicki Jacobs, Evelyn Kennedy,
Mallory Lynch, Laura & Kevin McVey,
Robin Nagel, Jack & Barbara Nagle,
Cheryl Pochapin, Pierce Powell,
Adrea Saltzman, Rebecca Schnier,
Nikki Sitzmann, Rhonda & John Smith

Thanks to our 2013 Walking Tour Volunteers

Tour Leaders: Phil Bellman, Linda Brown, Jeff Chew, Bill Coburn, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Riley Doty, Dennis Evanosky (three tours!), Pamela Magnuson-Peddle, Betty Marvin (two tours!), Woody Minor, Chris Patillo, Joel Peter, John Rogers, Naomi Schiff, Stuart Sweidler, Don Tyler

Tour volunteers: Annalee Allen, Taline Ayanyan, Charles Bucher, Claire Castell, Rissa Coplan, Myrna Dean, Mike Detwiler, Paul Detwiler, George Duncan, Alison Finlay, Jen Franklin, Alicia Goldstein, Christina Herd, Kathryn Hughes, Judy Jacobs, Ann Killebrew, Terry Kulka, Ruby Long, Amelia Marshall, Melissa Pauna, Martha Peck, Bob Redman, Myrna Redman, Steve Rynerson, Peter Tannen, Paula Trehearne, Alfred Varga, Hugh West, Susan West, Alyson Yarus

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Consider a gift subscription to OHA for a friend!



OHA comments on Broadway/Valdez Plan

By Naomi Schiff

Many OHA members turned out to speak at a Planning Commission hearing on the Broadway Valdez plan, which extends from approximately Grand Avenue to the 580 freeway, from Harrison Street over to Pill Hill. Oakland Heritage Alliance commented in particular on a proposal to rezone an area between Broadway and Harrison Streets, 23rd to 24th Streets. The plan calls for making new retail a zoning priority in the area. However, two highly rated structures stand within this Area of Secondary Importance.

One is the former Seventh Church of Christ Scientist on Harrison, which the historic building survey describes as: “a low-lying, single story wood frame Arts and Crafts bungalow church with a clerestory, flared gable roofs with exposed beams.” The A-rated building was constructed in 1915 and designed by architect William Arthur Newman, the

architect for the Oakland Post Office in 1931, as well as several other buildings in Oakland. The building is significant for its architecture and for its association with a locally significant architect.

The other is the Newsom Apartment building at Valdez and 24th, about which the historic building study says, “Considered part of the Waverly Residential District, the building was constructed in 1909–1910 by architect/builder/owner Sidney B. Newsom. Newsom was the son of Samuel Newsom and the nephew of Joseph Cather Newsom, renowned and prolific “low-art architects” of California. The building is considered significant for its association with Newsom, and its Craftsman design.

Waverly Street and Harrison hold at least 80 units of privately-owned rental units, including an intact group of 100-year-old single-family houses, and several eminently-reusable multiple-unit



NAOMI SCHIFF

SEVERAL TIBETAN immigrant households are found in the Waverly ASI neighborhood.

dwellings from the 1930s and earlier. The Creative Growth art center and the Google-style Biff’s are nearby. OHA is advocating for retaining these buildings, and for finding adaptive-reuse solutions if warranted. Waverly Street also houses a community of Tibetan immigrants,

See **BROADWAY** on page 6

1911 Adams Point Craftsman For Sale

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North Oakland Conundrum: How to expand Children’s Hospital?

By Naomi Schiff

Children’s Hospital has met several times with OHA and with neighboring residents in an effort to modify its building plans. Required to construct a new acute facility by state earthquake standards, the hospital initially showed plans that would push its campus northward, removing up to 10 single-family houses. Within the present campus, the newer part of the old Baby Hospital is slated for demolition. This wing was built in the style of the oldest part of the hospital, but dates to 1948. The original 1926 Baby Hospital section retains its terra cotta ornamentation, and while not useable under current standards for acute patient treatment, houses administrative tasks. (OHA is hoping that it can be designated as a historic resource, but so far

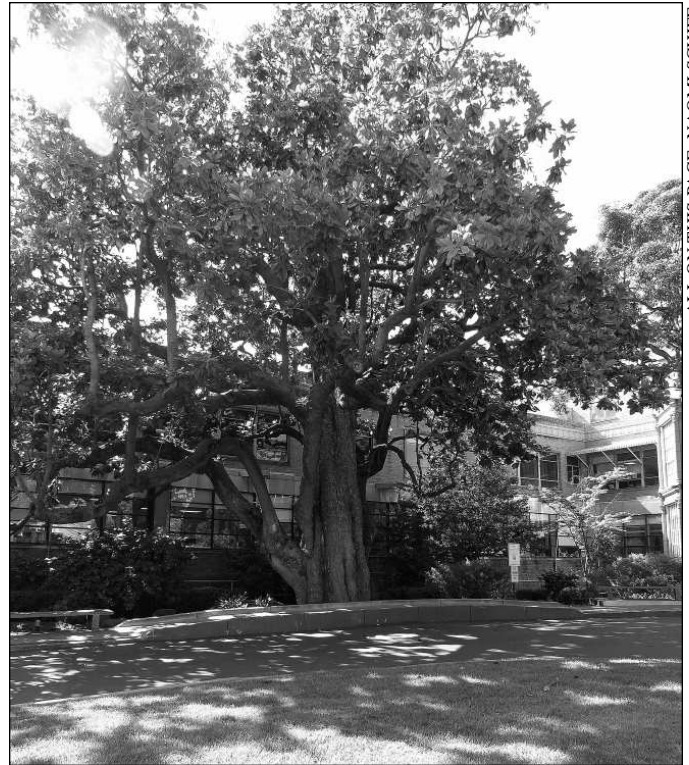
the hospital has been reluctant to accept such a designation.)

A huge magnolia tree stands in an interior courtyard, and may be as much as 160 years old, dating back to long before the hospital. This enormous tree which originally stood next to the late-nineteenth-century McElrath mansion now stands in the footprint of the proposed new wing.

OHA has been reviewing the changing plans. As of the beginning of November, it seems that the hospital has come up with a way to have a less drastic impact on the neighborhood, moving one house and perhaps incorporating several others without wholly demolishing them.

They have also been studying whether they can put the main vehicular access to the hospital along Martin Luther King Way, rather than intruding into the neighborhood along Dover Street, which is narrow, and lined with houses.

Revised plans will be shown to the Landmarks Board and Planning Commission by late November. ■



ALL ON THIS PAGE: NAOMI SCHIFF

FATE OF AN ENORMOUS magnolia tree that stands next to the 1948 Baby Hospital addition looks bleak. Below left, a capital on the old Baby Hospital shows alternating children’s heads and mythical winged creatures, and at right, a medallion of an infant is part of the terra cotta ornamentation on the hospital.

Broadway

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other longterm residents, and families with children.

We and the Audubon Society also objected that the plan called for waiving Oakland’s dark-skies standards and encouraging uplighting and large lit signage, despite the area’s proximity to Lake Merritt—a key bird sanctuary, and an important wintering and rest stop on Pacific bird migration routes. ■



THE A-RATED 1910 Newsom apartment building stands on a prominent corner.





Joann Pavlinec, Oakland planner and landmarks board secretary retires and is celebrated

By Naomi Schiff

The calm and knowledgeable Joann Pavlinec oversaw a number of key initiatives in the historic preservation arena during her decade and a half in the Oakland planning department. She spurred and helped structure Oakland's 2009 Mills Act program, which provides local property tax abatement for owners who restore their heritage properties.

Initially passed by the city council as a pilot program, it is now permanent, has been used in numerous projects, and has produced excellent results. In the post-redevelopment era, it is one of the few remaining incentives that can help owners develop their historic properties.

Joann helped the Landmarks Board push for the 2010 Demolition Findings

Ordinance which requires a study and reviews alternatives before a building can be demolished. And putting her LEED certification to work, she helped the Board figure out how to include incentives for historic preservation in Oakland's 2011 Green Building ordinance. Among many other projects, she used her architecture background to great advantage as the city planner on hybrid developments that combined preservation with practical architectural solutions, such as the 2007 Whole Foods (former Cox Cadillac) adaptation and reuse, the restoration and reuse of National Register buildings along with new structures at the Altheim on MacArthur, and the historic restoration that created senior housing at St. Joseph's, with new family housing built adjoining it on its large site on International Boulevard.

She plans to stay active with the Rosie the Riveter National Park in Richmond, and with the AIA historic committee, and OHA hopes she will remain in touch with Oakland as she enjoys her retirement. At a congratulatory Landmarks Board meeting, she showed a great summing-up presentation of key board achievements as an inspiration for further progress. ■



VALERIE GARRY

JOAN PAVLINEC, PERSON OF HONOR



VALERIE GARRY

OHA BOARD MEMBER Kathryn Hughes and party host Kirk Peterson.



BRIDGE HOUSING

PAVLINEC WORKED with Bridge Housing on its complex development at the historic St. Joseph's on International Boulevard.



Annual meeting rescheduled for February 2014

By January Ruck

For the past several years, OHA has hosted its Annual Meeting in November or December. With holiday festivities taking center stage, this is traditionally a very busy time for many of us. To facilitate greater participation, our next Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, Feb. 20 from 7 to 9 p.m. (location to be determined).

In addition, our Board of Directors voted to host the Partners In Preservation Awards Ceremony in conjunction with the Annual Meeting in February. Please help us spread the word by forwarding the Call for Nominations below!

If you have any questions regarding these schedule changes, contact January Ruck at 510-763-9218 or info@oaklandheritage.org. ■

Join us for our Saturday tours!



TEMPLE SINAI

Here's the latest on our spring tours! You can make your registration online, or contact the OHA office: info@oaklandheritage.org or 510-763-9218. Tour meeting locations are provided upon registration. \$20 OHA Members, \$25 General.

■ Sat. Jan. 11, 10 a.m.-noon. **Lamp-work Lofts Revisited: Tour of the Mazda Light Bulb Factory Adaptive Use Project.** See the progress! 90+ resi-

Oakland's former Councilmember Mary Moore

By Naomi Schiff

Mary Moore, the third woman on the Oakland Council, passed away on August 17. Early OHA members will recall that she was a fighter for neighborhood integrity and historic preservation, at a time when the concept was rather unfamiliar, and OHA had not yet been founded. Because she hoped to keep neighborhoods liveable and intact during the first condo-ization boom, which was emptying apartments, she often found herself working with preservation-minded constituents. She was a key behind-the-scenes person during the fight by Adams Point neighbors to preserve the Metcalf House on Perkins at Adams, which gave rise to a precedent-setting court case requiring the city to produce an EIR addressing cultural resources. (The historic house was moved to 14th and Brush Streets, where it still stands.)

Soon after she was elected to the District 2 seat in 1977, 25 years after the previous female council member departed, *Oakland Tribune* columnist Annalee Allen recalls that she made a big ruckus by demanding office space in city hall. Unlike the male lawyers and businessmen who had generally dominated the council, she did not have a handy private business office from which to operate. She invited the media to come see her, surrounded by stacks of file boxes, as she sat in her spot in the big meeting chamber. She got an office. Thus began the era of councilmembers actually working in city hall.

With strong ideas about citizens' rights and justice, no fear, and a wicked sense of humor,



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

MARY MOORE

she was a prominent member of the council, elected the same year as Lionel Wilson, and reelected through the Elihu Harris period. Mary was loyal to a particular shade of magenta lipstick, and quick to speak firmly on important issues. When the council approved the return of the Oakland Raiders following 12 years in L.A., a 1990 United Press International story reported a single "no" vote was "cast by Mary Moore, who warned that the return of the NFL Raiders could mean the departure of the Oakland Athletics baseball team."

She left the council in 1994 and continued to live in Oakland, in the home where she had raised her three children. ■

dential units are being created in a wonderful but long-vacant historic building in West Oakland.

■ Sat., Feb. 8, 10 a.m.-noon. **Bruce Beasley Studio Tour:** A prominent sculptor and long time West Oakland neighborhood activist invites us to tour his studio.

■ Sun., March 2, noon-2 p.m. **Temple Sinai 100th Anniversary Building Tour:** See where Gertrude Stein went to Sunday school! This fine historic building recently got a modern addition to expand its community space.

■ Sat., April 12, 10 a.m.-noon. **Ted Ellison Stained Glass Studio Tour.** Have

you ever wondered about the stained glass so common in our area? Ted Ellison, a member of the Artistic License group of artisans, shows us around his recently enlarged studio space.

■ Sat., May 10. **Urban Agriculture of West Oakland.** Site Tour with landscape architect, Cat Chang, university teacher and designer, partner at Andrews+Chang, and activist in greening West Oakland.

■ Sat., June 14, 10 a.m.-noon. **Historic Key Route System Building Tour and Discussion.** Get a close-up look at this iconic but empty downtown building! ■



Remembering the Linden Street YWCA

By Dorothy Lazard

Building community is a chief goal of all service organizations. The Linden Street branch of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) supported, educated, and entertained the African American residents of West Oakland for more than three decades. Staff at the Linden Street "Y" worked to build character, community, and job skills through a variety of activities.

Formed in 1920 by a group of local African American women, this branch provided religious training, counseling services, vocational training, art classes, adult education classes, and all types of cultural events. Due to its rapidly growing membership, it was recognized by the central organization as a full branch only three years after its founding. Located at 828 Linden Street, the branch was housed in a two-story building with four club rooms, a business office, a meeting room, reception area, and two dormitory rooms that could accommodate up to eleven girls.

Job training was an important service that staff provided. In 1928, for example, 128 women applied for work through the agency. Sixty-eight women were placed in full-time positions, sixty in part-time jobs. These services were especially needed during the Depression.

The Linden Street staff responded with a continuous roster of services such as free meals, housing, and job training and placement services to the homeless and the



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

GATHERED TOGETHER: The 1936 Business and Professional Club of the Linden Street YWCA.

poor. By 1938, the Linden St. "Y" had a membership of over 750.

The branch also offered fun, practical classes in dressmaking, crafts, music, knitting and drama. Intramural basketball, the Challengers Tennis Club, the Carolers Glee Club, and trips to Camp Chabot were popular activities among the youth.

The Linden "Y" nurtured the body as well as the spirit. Staff delivered occasional meals to residents of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People, held an annual Easter break-

fast, Mother's Day teas, and Christmas parties for needy children. They also sponsored conference attendance for youth attending meetings elsewhere like the Northern Mid-winter Conference of Business Girls. By 1939, its Building and Hotel Committee reported that a total of 23,878 people had used its club rooms, gym, and pool.

Linden Street's efforts and influence stretched well beyond the West Oakland community. Their staff worked cooperatively with other groups such as the Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters, North Oakland Improvement Club, and the Colored Citizens' Committee. Their wide-ranging activities were chronicled regularly in *The Spectator*, the branch's official newsletter, and in Delilah Beasley's *Oakland Tribune* column, "Activities among Negroes." Distinguished members include Tarea Hall Pittman, Ida Jackson, and Hettie B. Tilghman.

Following a new national policy, the board of directors of the central Oakland YWCA integrated the Linden Street YWCA in November 1944, "to make its program available to all women and girls irrespective of race, creed or color." It was then renamed the West Oakland Center of the Young Women's Christian Association. Its two-story building was razed in the early 1960s. ■



Would you like to move and re-use a house? A 1930s house at 333 MacArthur, just south of Temple Beth Abraham, must make way by spring for an expansion project. Contact Rayna Arnold, 510-832-0936 or rayna@tbaokland.org, for information.



The Oakland Song: it has a good beat and you can dance to it

By Charles Bucher

There are many famous songs written about San Francisco. In San Francisco you can find “cable cars that climb halfway to the stars,” and “flowers in your hair,” but have you ever heard “The Oakland Song?”

Also titled just “Oakland,” this someday-to-be-famous tune was written by the Goodtime Washboard 3 in 1963, and so has now reached its fiftieth birthday. It was included in the Three’s 1964 album “Don’t Blame PG&E, Pal.”

“Oakland” achieved a kind of cult status. One of the band members later said “It got enormous airplay.” Because of this song the band was invited to perform before the Oakland City Council, and later played atop the marquee at the Tribune Tower (maybe just because it was mentioned in the song).

The Goodtime Washboard 3 was a local Bay Area band that got some notoriety, possibly due to the unusual character of their instruments. The band included Bruce Bratton on washtub bass, Wayne Pope on washboard and musical saw, and Peter Arnott on

banjo. They played Friday nights in 1959 at the Monkey Inn in Berkeley, a venue on Shattuck Avenue currently occupied by La Peña cultural center. In 1963 when “Oakland” was written, Arnott was absent from the band for two years, working his day-job in Japan. Dick Fagarstrom took over banjo duties at this time.



RHYMING "LEADER" and "Alameda," the Oakland Song makes use of the Posey Tube.

The band’s quirky style and cult popularity even got them invited to the Bohemian Grove to perform for the powerful people.

Bratton later joked that he organized a meeting of the Bohemian Democrats, held in a telephone booth! This exposure also translated to a TV appearance in 1967, when Bing Crosby invited them to perform on his show “The Hollywood Palace” after seeing them at the Grove.

Another Bohemian club member, then-Secretary of State George Schultz, had invited them to perform at the White House in 1986 during a state visit by Philippine President Corazon Aquino.

Wikipedia states that the band continues to make “the odd public appearance”. In fact, they were the headlining act at the 50th Anniversary party for Arhoolie records, held at the Freight and Salvage in 2011.

Nowadays you can hear “Oakland” by chance if they perform it at The Alley on Grand Avenue (where Rod Dibble holds forth at his piano). I heard it there myself last New Year’s Eve. Even better: due to modern technology “Oakland” can be heard on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DujCHFVHKQI&feature=youtu.be> ■

JOIN US FOR LIVELY TALKS, PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES

All OHA lectures take place at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Avenue.

- Thurs., Jan. 16, 7 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. **“Oakland Resources of the Bancroft Library”** with former University archivist, Bill Roberts. Find out what is hiding in the collections at UC Berkeley.
- Thurs., March 20, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **“History of Blues, Gospel and Soul in Oakland”** with Lee Hildebrand, consummate expert and longtime music journalist.
- Thurs., April 17, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **“Ohlone Indian Language”** with Vin-

cent Medina, assistant curator of Mission Dolores, who is working to revive the East Bay tongue known as Chochenyo.

- Thurs., May 15, 7 p.m.- 8:30 p.m. **“Oakland’s Sport History”** with author, Paul Brekke-Miesner, who explores why our city has contributed so many outstanding players.
- Thurs., June 19, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **“Public Art of Oakland”** with Steve Huss, City of Oakland Cultural Arts Manager. How do those interesting looking things get there? *Events are subject to change; updates are available at www.oaklandheritage.org.* ■

Lyrics to “Oakland”

Verse: I am sure that you’re aware of famous cities everywhere, the ones they write about in song and verse. There are songs about Chicago, London, Paris and St. Paul, Buffalo, Miami, and for God’s sake Beaver Falls. Beaver Falls! But Tin Pan Alley did us wrong; they never wrote a song about the greatest city of them all. Now don’t go ’way; I hope you’ll stay and hear this song I wrote today:

Chorus: Oakland’s got the Tribune Tower. Oakland’s got Lake Merritt too; she’s got Jack London Square. The Alley Cat is there! The Kaiser Center sticks up everywhere. Where did all the people go when ’Frisco burned? They all went to Oakland and they never returned. Right outside the city limits scoots a freeway called the Nimitz. Of all the pretty cities she’s the leader. And don’t forget the tube to Alameda.

Well, she’s got pride (PRIDE!), hope (HOPE!). Oh, what a view: Oakland, we’re for you (DON’T MEAN MILPITAS!). Oakland, we’re for you!

BOTH: STEVE HUSS



PUBLIC ART: Children’s Fairyland, left, and the Uptown Art Park.



Thank you one and all

By Alison Finlay, President

2013 has been a busy year for OHA, with the Upper Rockridge and Claremont Pines House Tour, Partners in Preservation awards, lectures, building and walking tours and the ever-important, ever-vigilant preservation watch and action. A hearty thank you to our board members, leaders, lecturers, volunteers, and to our sponsors and advertisers. Thank you to our generous donors, the DeLong Sweet Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, Clorox Corp, Village Market and Terrace Café and Gifts. Thank you, too, to our book-sellers and retailers who continue to sell *Oakland: Story of a City*.

Two longtime board members are stepping down at the end of their terms, former president Dea Bachetti and treasurer Doug Dove. Dea helped with the California Preservation Foundation (CPF) conference held here in Oakland last year, and Doug has been keeping us on track with our finances. We will miss them both and hope they will continue to be active members in years to come.

If you are a member who might like to take a more active role in OHA activities, we'd like to chat with you. We have room on most committees and a few board spots. If you

have a bit of time, we'd appreciate your sharing your talents.

This year we've opted to combine the annual meeting with the Partners in Preservation Awards. We hope this will be an easier fit for most schedules. Please join us 7-9 p.m. Thurs., Feb. 20, for a short annual meeting followed by the PiP program. We are scouting a venue and will share details when firm.

Also in February, look for a joint OHA/BAHA weekend with two events celebrating renowned sculptor Bruce Beasley. We're invited to his studio complex in West Oakland and coordinating with BAHA a UC

Berkeley campus tour of his sculptures. Bruce and his wife are long time West Oaklanders and worked with their neighbors to increase homeownership and protect their neighborhood. If you came on Betty Marvin's West Oakland tour this summer, you heard Bruce tell how the neighborhood stood together to become a cohesive group to be reckoned with. It is a heartening story. Thank you to Bruce and his wife for inviting us back and to Melissa Pauna, Ann Killebrew, Steven Finacom and January Ruck for coordinating the weekend.

Lastly, a grateful thanks to Joann Pavlinec, who retired as secretary for the Landmarks Board in October. We were lucky to have her as an ally for all the years she served. ■

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- \$500-\$999 Ionic**: same as above plus four tickets to a walking tour.
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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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Macadam from McAdam Street

By Kathleen DiGiovanni

Have you ever wondered about the big, watery hole in the ground next to the Rockridge Shopping Center? This is all that remains of one of Oakland's earliest businesses, the old Bilger Quarry of the Oakland Paving Company.

According to the company's own reports, quarrying began at this site in 1866. The Oakland Paving Company incorporated in 1870 and continued operations until about 1930. The "Bilger" name is from Frank Bilger, the company's longtime president. This vestige of the Bilger Quarry is only a small of what the overall operation was in its heyday. Old maps found in the Oakland History Room show a property that encompassed all of the current Rockridge Shopping Center and extended back into Claremont Country Club property and to the edges of the California College of the Arts and St. Mary's Cemetery. A spur of the San Francisco-Oakland Terminal Railway entered the quarry property from Broadway to haul the stones away. If you'd like a demonstration of the amount of quarrying done at the site just look at the height of the cliff between the shopping center and CCA and imagine it sloping down to meet the current Pleasant Valley Avenue.

In his Oakland Geology blog, Andrew Alden writes that the quarry mined traprock on the east side of the quarry and Franciscan sandstone on the west side. The sandstone may be used as landfill while the higher

quality traprock was crushed and used to pave the streets of Oakland.

According to the recollections of Temescal old-timers, the earliest quarrying was done by prisoners from the Oakland city jail put to hard labor. Later, work was taken up by Temescal's Italian immigrants who called it La Cava. "Con le Nostre Mani," documenting the work of the East Bay's Italian Americans, says that La Cava's quarrymen came from the Piemonte and Ligurian regions. Mostly bachelors, many of them lived in boarding houses on or near the quarry.

The Great Depression ended quarrying at the site. At least one set of quarry neighbors welcomed its closure. The membership of the Claremont Country Club, having long had their mornings on the links disturbed by all that noise and dust, acted quickly to purchase the property for \$15,000. They thereby achieved a "permanent abatement to the nuisance" according to Robert E. Patmont in his "History of the Claremont Country Club." The club used a portion of the quarry property to realign its "unsatisfactory" 10th hole.

Why is the old quarry filled with water now? The Claremont spent another \$8,500 to turn it into an irrigation reservoir by diverting a branch of Glen Echo (formerly Cemetery)



ITALIAN QUARRYMEN at Bilger Quarry, 1898.

OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

Creek into it. The overflow drains out the other end into a culvert that rejoins the main creek further downtown. For a while in the 1960s the club even placed a practice tee above the reservoir. Golfers swatted floating practice balls out over the water. A duck boat in the pond was sent to net the balls out daily.

That practice came to an end because of the attraction posed by floating golf balls to neighborhood children. The Bilger Quarry has been the site of many deaths over the decades, the latest as recently as 2012 when a local man fell while searching for a lost pet. A 1955 headline described it as a "death menace." Over the years, fences, brush clearing, and patrols tried to make the site safer.

The quarry was at Broadway and McAdam streets. McAdam Street, now long gone, was a pun of a street name, slyly referencing the gravel with which to make macadam paving, and John McAdam, the Scottish surveyor and roadbuilder who invented it. ■