



Drama and dynamite in Oakland's old Melrose

By Dennis Evanosky

Mountain View Cemetery holds the remains of the perpetrator and some of the victims of Alameda County Sheriff Department's most tragic day.

At 5:18 a.m., Tuesday July 18, 1898, an explosion jolted people awake in the town of Melrose outside Oakland. The blast killed four Alameda County Sheriff's Office deputies—Charles White, John J. Lerrri, George C. Woodsum and Daniel C. Cameron—and Oakland Township Constable Gus Koch. They had been among the peace officers pursuing Gung Ung Chang, an angry employee of the Western Fuse and Explosives Company.

White was the son of Alameda County Sheriff Calvin White, who had been on the scene before the explosion with his sons Charles and Edward. Edward was also serving as a deputy sheriff.

Chang had killed fellow employee Ham Si Sing the day before during a fight over some lottery tickets. Sing gave a dying man's statement to Deputy District Attorney A. A. Moore Jr. He told Moore that Chang shot him and cut him with a hatchet. Sing said that he did not put up any fight.

"The murderer fled into the magazine, which contained five tons of Giant (brand) powder, barricaded the door and threatened to blow up the magazine if anyone came to arrest him," the *Oakland Tribune* reported.

In the early morning of July 18, Chang announced that he was willing to come out. Instead, when the officers approached the building to arrest Chang, he "fired the magazine," the newspaper reported.

"The explosion blew the murderer and Deputies White, Cameron, Woodsum, Koch and Lerrri into eternity," the *Tribune* reported. "Mrs. (Sadie) Hill of San Francisco was also killed. Forty houses around were wrecked."

People as far away as San Jose felt the jolt that the explosion caused. They supposed there had been an earthquake.

According to the *Tribune*, "Charles White's body was fearfully mutilated." They found his remains nearly 300 yards away from the magazine. The explosion killed Constable Koch instantly. It disfigured Deputy Cameron, who survived a trip in a patrol wagon to the hospital, where he died. Sadie Hill was visiting a friend, who lived across the street from the powder magazine. Sadie fell victim to falling debris.

Deputies Fred Sherrott and Ed White, Charles' brother, were standing about eighty yards away from the powder magazine when the explosion occurred; both escaped with their lives, but were "painfully wounded," the *Tribune* reported.

Sherrott gave the newspaper a first-hand account of the events. He described how the officers approached the powder magazine numerous times the night before, asking Chang to come out.

"The fellow would invariably reply that he would blow up the place if we attempted take him," Sherrott told the newspaper. "So many people believed he would do it, and many of them moved out of their homes."

Around midnight Chang asked for a glass of water. Deputy Charles White allowed someone to bring water to Chang.

White scoffed at the suggestion that the deputies "dope" the water "as the easiest way to effect the arrest."

Just after 5 a.m., Chang said he would come out and give the deputies no more trouble. White and Koch approached the door.

EXTRA Oakland Tribune. 5th Edition
SIX BLOWN TO ETERNITY
THE DEATH ROLL.
CHARLES WHITE, eldest son of Sheriff White.
GUS KOCH, Constable of Oakland Township.
J. J. LERRI, Deputy Sheriff.
GEO. C. WOODSUM, Deputy Sheriff, Berkeley.
D. C. CAMERON, Deputy Sheriff.
MRS. HILL, of San Francisco.
The murderous Chinese was also killed.

Murderous Chinese Fires the Fuse Works' Magazine.
Fuse Works' Magazine.
Held at Bay, He Causes the Explosion Which Kills Five Officers, One Woman and Blows Himself Into Atoms.

ED. WHITE DESCRIBES THE AWFUL DISASTER.

RESUME OF A WOMAN

DEPUTY SHERIFF CHARLES H. WHITE.

DEPUTY SHERIFF GEORGE C. WOODSUM.

BIG NEWS in the *Oakland Tribune*, July 19, 1898 edition.

"They were almost there when Chang closed it with a bang," Sherrott said.

Sherrott speculated that Chang fired his pistol into the gunpowder. "This fact must remain forever in doubt," he added. The deputy said that he suddenly found himself "carried with a cloud of debris and earth swiftly over the ground." When he picked himself up he saw everything was on fire, including a train of box cars.

Funerals for White, Woodsum and Lerrri were held on July 22, 1898. The *Tribune* dedicated three columns, highlighted with thick black borders, to the services. "With Public Honors the Heroic Dead Are Borne to the Tomb," the front-page headline read.

See **BLAST** on page 2

OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM



Oakland's first cemeteries, before Mountain View existed

By Dennis Evanosky

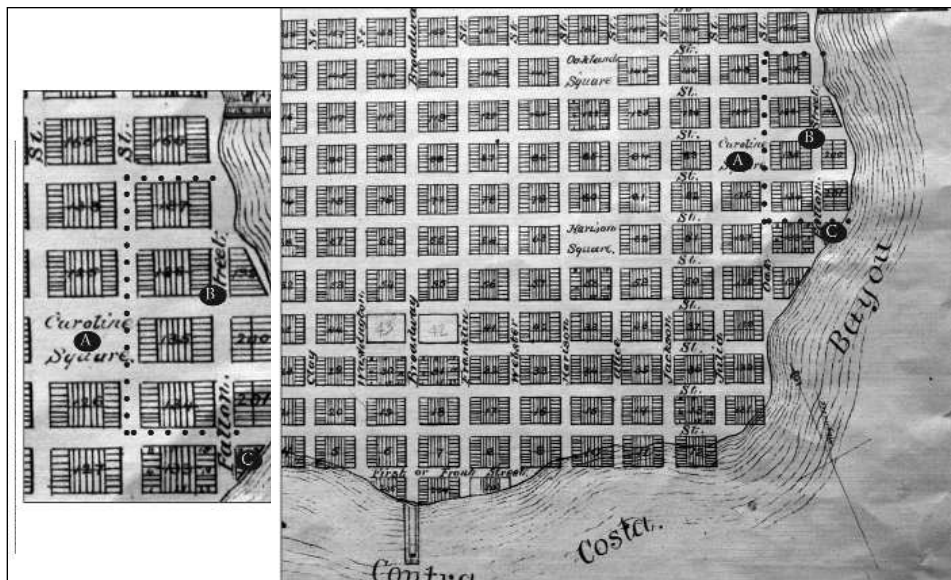
When the city of Oakland was founded in 1852, it faced a dilemma that confronted any city with stark beginnings: What to do with the remains of residents who had breathed their last. From the beginning, the City Council had set aside land to serve that purpose. This property's eastern boundary stretched north along the marsh that stretched from San Antonio Slough—today's Oakland Estuary—to today's Lake Merritt.

Oak Street defined the cemetery's western edge. Seventh and Tenth streets formed the burying ground's southern and northern boundaries.

Early in 1857, the City Council announced that this cemetery had filled to capacity and it was seeking land for another burying grounds. On June 24, Dr. J. C. Horner de Tavel, an eye doctor from Sydney, Australia, offered the city ten acres of land to serve this purpose. Nearby stood George Washington Fountain's prize-winning dwarf-apple tree orchard along "Peralta Road."

On July 1, City Council passed a cemetery ordinance that allowed the purchase of Dr. de Tavel's land. The City Council named the city's new burial place "Oakland Cemetery."

City Councilman Nathaniel Gray no doubt held a special interest in the cemetery; he was an undertaker by profession. Dr. de Tavel's interest was also very personal. Among Mountain View's prized possessions is this second cemetery's register. The book records Oakland Cemetery's first transfer from the Oak Street cemetery as "the body of Madame de Tavel," perhaps the good doctor's wife.



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

OAKLAND'S FIRST CEMETERY (B), was bounded by Oak Street on the west, Tenth Street on the north, today's Lake Merritt Channel on the east and Seventh Street on the south. Julius Kellenberger made this map, naming Caroline Square (A), today's Madison Square, for his wife. Mountain View Cemetery denizen Malachi Fallon lived along the shoreline (C). His house was torn down in 1919. Fallon Street bears his name.

A marshy arm of Lake Merritt defined Oakland Cemetery's northern boundary. The marsh was later filled in and became 20th Street, then Thomas L. Berkeley Way. The city grew and stretched north from its original boundary at Fourteenth Street. Harrison and Webster streets were extended to meet the demand.

Webster Street defined the cemetery's western boundary. Harrison Street cut through its eastern edge, leaving the burial ground's border east of Harrison Street in today's Snow Park. Seventeenth Street formed the cemetery's southern boundary.

By the summer of 1863, Oakland faced a dilemma. Oakland Cemetery was nearly full and no longer "out of town." It was blocking

See **CEMETERIES** on page 3

CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH STORIES



NATHANIEL GRAY

In this issue

Oakland Originals	4
Volunteers	4
Biff's update	5
Preservation news	7
A City for Children	10
Donors, new members	10
President's Message	11
Brooklyn Fire Station	12

Blast

Continued from page 1

The newspaper reported that a pair of white horses drew White's cortège. Fred Sherrott was one of the pallbearers. Woodsmen of the World accompanied George Woodsum's funeral train, while members of the Knights of Pythias trailed behind Lerri's hearse. Cameron and Koch were laid to rest in separate ceremonies, but a floral scroll containing their names accompanied the funerals of White, Woodsum and Lerri.

Lerri, Koch and Woodsum all rest at Mountain View along with remains of the man who caused all the misery. ■



Cemeteries

Continued from page 2

civic expansion: developers were casting covetous eyes on the property where the cemetery stood. A long-term plan was needed.

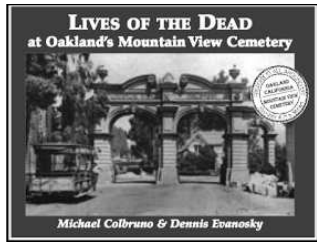
By then, Rev. Isaac Brayton, State Senator Edward Tompkins and businessman Peter Thompson had acquired ownership of, and responsibility for, Oakland Cemetery.

Oscar Shafter sat on the 1863 City Council. He owned property right next door to the cemetery and

drew his colleagues' attention to the need for a new burying ground.

Rev. Brayton had a solution to the city's dilemma. He knew of a piece of property well out of town, the perfect place for a cemetery. That property became today's Mountain View Cemetery.

This story comes from Michael Colbruno and Dennis Evanosky's new book Lives of the Dead at Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery. Both are docents at Mountain View Cemetery, and noted writers of local history. To order a copy, call Dennis at 510-772-5209 or email him at evanosky@gmail.com. ■



OSCAR SHAFTER

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT

Events to keep your interest warm as the weather grows colder

OHA's got you covered for those chilly evenings where it's great to step out, meet like-minded people, and learn about our fascinating city through our lecture series.

7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15: **California Pride: Mapping LGBTQ Histories**, with Donna Graves. New online, crowd-sourced archive related to California sites. Sponsors include California Preservation Foundation, California Historical Society, and the GLBT Historical Society. California Pride is supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The White Horse Inn, 6551 Telegraph Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general

7 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 18: **A City for Children**, with Marta Gutman. Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850-1950. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general

7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 12: **Oakland Tales**, with Summer Brenner. In the novel *Oakland Tales: Lost Secrets of the Town*, two young people travel into the past, experience the city's history, acquire a better understanding of the present, and ask, "Can it be different in the future, too?" Chapel of the Chimes,

4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general

Tuesday, Nov. 17, Networking 5:45, Dinner 6:30, presentation 7:15. Invitation dinner lecture with the Construction Specification Institute (CSI), titled **San Francisco's Jewel City: The Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915**, with Laura Ackley. Scott's Seafood Restaurant, Jack London Square. Reserve and indicate choice of dinner menu at

info@oaklandheritage.org or 510-763-9218. \$45 standard, \$35 OHA/CSI Members.

7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 10: **Christmas Pageant Memories**, with Kathleen Di Giovanni. Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general

INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS: <http://tinyurl.com/oha-events> ■

Highland Partners
BOUTIQUE REAL ESTATE INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

*Proud to Support the
Oakland Heritage Alliance*

The Only Real Estate Office in Piedmont
Debbi & Adam
510.414.6777 | 510.414.1250
www.DiMaggioAndBetta.com



Highlighting what's great about Oaklanders through short films

By Erika Mailman

If you attended a movie at the Grand Lake Theatre last summer, you may have seen a short film before your feature attraction; one of four Oakland Originals documentaries. These eight minute profiles, created by Oakland filmmakers Jim McSilver and Erin Palmquist, highlight the innovators and stereotype-breakers who call Oakland home.

For instance, one film features Asiya Wadud, who created a community barter system for harvesting and sharing unwanted fruit in the Temescal District, comparing apples to oranges in a fruitful way. Another Oakland Original is Tim Monroe, who undertook the challenge of inline skating all of the city's 837 miles of street: conceivable perhaps in the flatlands, but can you imagine bolting down Redwood Road without brakes? Michael Christian, who creates

extraordinary large-scale sculpture (um, 40 feet any-one?), including Burning Man commissions, and DJ Agana, a multi-talented graffiti artist whose colorful murals grace almost every corner of Oakland, round out the list.



KOILOS by Michael Christian.

Beyond the first four documentaries, a successful Kickstarter campaign in August ensured the creation of one more; the filmmakers continue to fundraise for three additional films.

Want a chance to win an Oakland Originals tote bag? See photo on page 7.



OAKLAND ORIGINALS documentaries feature Oaklanders like Asiya Wadud, top left, and Michael Christian, at right.

The project began five years ago, when McSilver received a grant from the City of Oakland's Cultural Funding program. His experience producing and editing documentaries for PBS, the History Channel, and The Smithsonian Network proved invaluable. He teamed up with cinematographer and producer Palmquist, whose similarly impressive resume included working with Lucasfilm, National Geographic Explorer, and PBS.

"Oakland has inspired me in so many ways as a filmmaker over the last 23 years," McSilver says. "It is extremely rewarding to give back to the community and share some of the stories and achievements of these impressive and fascinating local artists, thinkers and do-ers."

Learn more about the project and watch the documentaries online at www.oaklandoriginals.com. You can follow them on Twitter at @oaklandoriginal (no S), at Instagram at @oaklandoriginals, and on Facebook at OOdocumentaries. ■



OAKLAND ORIGINALS

Thanks to our volunteers

Walking Tour Leaders:

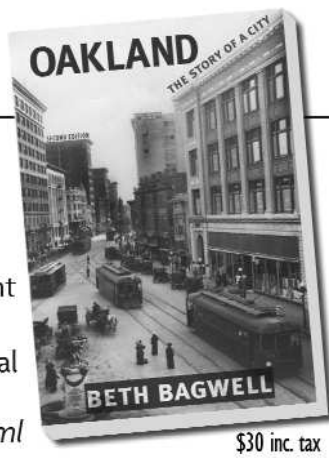
Annalee Allen, Holly Alonso, Gene Anderson, Phil Bellman, Tom Debley, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Dennis Evanosky, Diane Heinze, Anisha Gade, Ruby Long, Pamela Magnuson Peddle, Sue Mark, Betty Marvin, Sean Morales, Maria Sanchez, Alex Saragoza, Stuart Swiedler, James Vann, Brock Winstead

Walking Tour Volunteers:

Charles Bucher, Claire Castell, Myrna Dean, Laine Farley, Alison Finlay, Alicia Goldstein, Ernie Grafe, Tom Haw, Wally Holmen, Kitty Hughes, Daniel Levy, Ruby Long, Melodie Lorell, Amelia Marshall, Joann Pavlinec, Enid Pollack, Steve Rynerson, Naomi Schiff, Hugh West, Sue West, Betsy Yost

Sequoyah Volunteers:

Gene Anderson, Birgitta Bengtsson, Suzanne Brennan, Kevis Bronson, Charles Bucher, Claire Castell, Laurie Chait, Laurie Craise, Joan Dark, Myrna Dean, Tom Debley, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Jeanne Dunn, Anne Emerick, Laine Farley, Alison Finlay, Margitta Gardner, Patricia Lipscomb Hadden, Tom Haw, Marie-Ann Hill, Wally Holmen, Kitty Hughes, Judy Jacobs, Greg Jurin, Evelyn Kennedy, Allysyn Kiplinger, Ronile Lahti, Debbie Martin, Tamara Nicoloff, Richard Orlando, Denise Parker, Joann Pavlinec, Jenny Peck, Jean Quirk, Claudia Reet, Steve Rynerson, Naomi Schiff, Carol Sheerin, Barbara Skelly, Sam Skelly, Charles Smith, Joyce Stanek, Mary Stevens, Linda Taylor, Sandra Tillin, Joel Toste, Hugh West, Sue West, Alyson Yarus



THE PERFECT GIFT

For all the Oaklanders and local history readers in your life

- Give it as a birthday remembrance
- Bring it as the perfect housewarming present
- Or get it for yourself, even!
- Patronize Oakland's wise and wonderful local bookstores and selected retailers, or go to

<http://www.oaklandheritage.org/Store.html>



Could Biff's flying saucer hover spacelike again?

By Joyce Roy

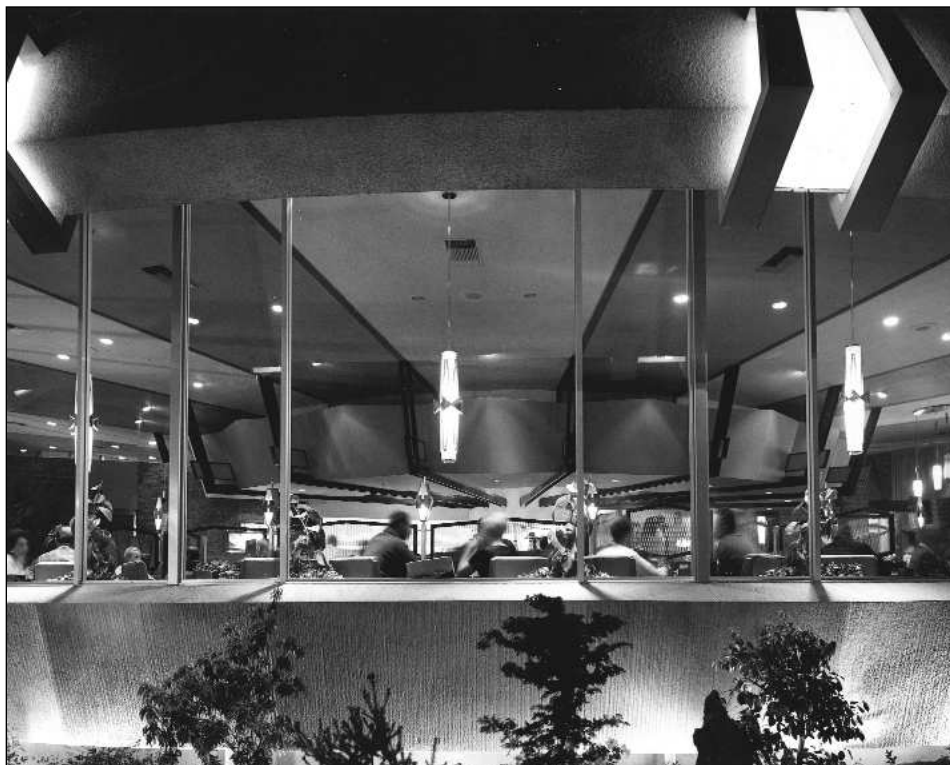
Biff's, the empty flying saucer diner at Broadway and 27th Street, may have a last chance to be restored as a full-service restaurant.

Its former owner, Chevron, forced its closure in 1996. At that time, the popular diner was called JJ's. Chevron wanted to replace it with a combination McDonald's and gas station. The community was so outraged that they succeeded in obtaining its recognition as a historic resource. A few years later, Chevron gave up fighting the public and sold the property.

OHA strongly supported that grassroots feat. But the really big success would be its restoration as a popular, profitable diner. The Los Angeles Conservancy has aided in the restoration of many space-age diners, even one that was partially, illegally demolished. It will take effort now on our part to educate the developer and the city about the value of reusing this historic resource. In this case, the diner also has social and economic value.

After an L.A. restaurant owner saw a prominent story on Biff's in the Jan. 14, 2014, *San Francisco Chronicle*, he became interested in operating a restored 24-hour, 7-days-a-week Biff's. The historic diner would be an asset rather than an encumbrance for developers.

The name of that owner is Biff Naylor! And it's not coincidental. Biff was born in Oakland, where his father had opened his first restaurant, Tiny's Waffle Shop. Tiny Naylor named his big new Oakland restaurant Biff's, though by then the family had moved to LA. It was among the first restaurants in the space-age architectural style known as Google. Today, decades later, Biff Naylor owns Du-Par's restaurants, four in



ARMET DAVIS NEWLOVE

CLASSIC GOOGIE ARCHITECTURE makes Biff's a showplace of the future. This night view is from the 1960s.

Southern California and one in Las Vegas.

Currently, housing developer Hanover, Inc. is in contract to purchase the property from owner Steve Simi. Mr. Simi apparently has seen Biff's as an old, unsuccessful restaurant and was just going to wipe it out. He did not realize it had been very popular before Chevron closed it; he would not sign more than a five-year lease, which made it infeasible for would-be operators.

Hanover did not know about Biff Naylor. So they went ahead with plans to cover the whole lot with seven stories of housing and ground floor retail.

But they know now. Mr. Naylor and his daughter flew in when OHA scheduled a meeting with Hanover on June 11. Scott Youdall of Hanover and Mr. Naylor met privately for an hour. Experienced with similar stand-alone 24/7 restaurants, Mr. Naylor expressed his interest in exploring a restored Biff's/JJ's.

According to Naylor, the lease could be \$20,000/month. The developer's estimated cost of its restoration is \$3.1 million which is about 3% of the estimated cost of the entire project. It would employ 60 to 65 people. I'll let you calculate the sales tax revenue that generates.

The purpose of the new Broadway/Valdez zoning is to encourage retail development. The property is designated as a Retail Priority site. In fact, initially staff wanted to ignore the status of Biff's as a historic resource, and wished for a department store on that site.

The developer hopes to fill the same envelope with housing. But the right to build housing is a bonus awarded for retail devel-

See **BIFF'S** on page 6

FAIR USE



VINTAGE ADVERTISEMENT for Biff's shows that it was a Chevron site from early on. The original owner was Standard Oil, who also established a service station on the west Broadway frontage of the property around the same time. This represented an experimental undertaking, a blend of a service station and restaurant.



ARMET DAVIS NEWLOVE

A PENSIVE DAY inside Biff's, called JJ's at the time of the photo.

Biff's

Continued from page 5

opment. According to a May 14, 2014, staff report for the city's Landmarks Board, and confirmed by an email from staff, the minimum footprint of retail to qualify for the Residential Bonus is 50% of its area, or 22,745 sq. ft. in this case.

But since retail in a historic building would count double, Biff's at 6,200 sq. ft. would account for 12,400 sq. ft., so only 10,400 sq.

ft. of retail on Broadway would be required in order to build 184 units of housing.

We hope the stars are aligned for the restoration of this special diner. The architectural firm that designed it, Armet & Davis, known as the Frank Lloyd Wright of space-age coffee shops, is still in business. It is now known as Armet Davis Newlove and is very busy.

Newlove started as a draftsman for the firm and his first job was the working drawings for Biff's.

The big question is whether the city wants to attract retail to the area: what will draw people? Biff's was a real destination before it closed, and would be even more so now.

Millennials love space-age architecture. In L.A., neighborhoods are even built around such 24/7 restaurants. Biff's has a separate dining room that was often used by organizations for meetings. And this could once again be a family restaurant serving a full breakfast, and attracting customers in the daytime.

The location is the destination for the free Broadway Shuttle on weekend evenings. It could be the north terminus for every run, so downtown workers could lunch at Biff's, and even shop nearby.

Biff's was a regional draw, as about 8,000 signatures protesting its closure proved. With restoration, it would be eligible for a Historic Point of Interest sign on the freeway. The press coverage a reborn Biff's would attract means the developer might not need a publicity budget for its project on Broadway.

This could be a perfect example of how reuse of historic properties can fuel economic development, as historic preservationists have long emphasized. OHA members can weigh in as environmental documents and proposed plans are presented to the Landmarks Board and Planning Commission, expected this fall.

Joyce Roy is a retired architect and a former OHA board member. ■

ARMET DAVIS NEWLOVE



JOYCE ROY

BIFF'S THROUGH THE YEARS: At left, Biff's before the rooftop shingles were added (and before the zany-font, freestanding sign was taken down), and at right, the coffeeshop today. The cars in front have changed significantly too.



Preservation news: No need to play taps for Tapscott (and more)

By Naomi Schiff

Big building for Broadway: A 345-unit high-rise residential tower has been approved for Broadway between 19th and Thomas Berkley Way, and OHA members were relieved to find that the plans include restoring the historic Tapscott building at the corner of 19th. This excellent building has been vacant since the earthquake of 1989, but is substantially intact. Following a lead from the invaluable Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, OHA found a wonderful photograph of the building in its original state, from the 1920s, at the Oakland History Room. (See photo at right), and hopes it can be used to guide the restoration plan.

Park plan for 9th Avenue Terminal platform: OHA and the Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt have been commenting on plans for a huge open space area on public (“tidelands trust”) land surrounded by the planned “Brooklyn Basin” development at the site of the 9th Avenue Terminal. The historic building, the last break-bulk terminal on the East Bay waterfront, will be about 90% demolished. The retained portion of the building is the subject of a design by Michael Willis, Architects, showing the restored front and two bays of the building, with an open-air roofed pavilion making a transition to the open area. Roma Partners’ plan for the park shows a huge rectangular platform with wooden decking, fixed benches, some planters, and at the far western end, an area of formal allées of potted trees.

Commenters and commissioners expressed hopes for improvements to the attractiveness, flexibility, historic commemorations, amenities, and usability of the huge park design. The terminal building, which is still standing, is roughly 180 x 1000 feet, and the platform is even longer. The enormous area could be a fine public asset, but the proposed design appeared barren, not conducive to recreational activity, short of parking, hard to use, short of shade and windbreaks, and thus often windswept. Bicycle advocates generally approved of trail facilities, and the Bay Trail will be completed through the area. Plans are to retain the old curved train trestle to the southeast of the terminal building as a feature of the trail.

Small house may be moved to safety: The familiar small stucco house at Children’s Hospital, now in the way of an expansion and acute-care building replacement project, may be relocated across Martin Luther King Way. Its late owner and resident Lawrence Bossola held out for years, refusing to sell as the hospital built around him. After he died, it was sold to the hospital and used as offices. A proposal before the Planning Commission requests approval of a variance to place the



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

TAPSCOTT BUILDING in the 1920s.

See **PRESERVATION** on page 8

Identifying streets could really be your bag, baby!



By Erika Mailman

Jim McSilver of Oakland Originals (see article on page 4) says, “We ran into a woman at Jack’s Night Market whose Oakland-based family goes back five generations. She gave us this great photo of her aunt taken around World War I. She would love to know what street the photo was taken on, and so would we.”

Email your best guess (or downright assertion!) to contact@oaklandoriginals.com. Two lucky respondents will be chosen at random to win an Oakland Originals tote bag. The logo was designed by DJ Agana, an artist featured in one of the documentaries, and screened courtesy of Oakland Originals’s partners at Oaklandish. Additionally, the respondent who is closest to the correct answer as determined by our experts will also win a bag.



Preservation

Continued from page 7

moved house on a lot that already holds other structures.

Oakland to work with Orton Development on Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center/Oakland Auditorium: On July 21, the City Council voted to enter into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with Orton Development to come up with plans and financing for reuse. The public auditorium was the subject of an RFP that drew two qualified proposals. The chosen plan focuses on reusing the auditorium itself; the other plan had proposed a tall hotel placed between the Oakland Museum and the auditorium building. Now the investigation of the building's structural and functional status will proceed, and the Orton group has promised to engage in a robust public process to collect ideas and suggestions for its reuse. The building's feature glazed terra cotta reliefs by Alexander Stirling Calder, and was opened in 1915.

Threat to Waterfront Warehouse District, or promising new project?: Carmel Partners proposes to raze a block that is a part of the Waterfront Warehouse National Register Historic District, between 4th and 5th Streets, Jackson and Madison. The 1937 former S&W Fine Foods warehouse building currently houses the headquarters of Cost Plus, Inc. Over the years somewhat altered, the building forms part of the fabric of the

PORT OF OAKLAND COMPASS, JULY 1937



CARMEL PARTNERS proposes to build a large residential project on the site of the 1937 S&W Fine Foods warehouse, the area bounded by 4th, 5th, Madison and Jackson streets. This block is within the Waterfront Warehouse National Register District.

National Register district, and its loss should require major mitigations. The proposed new residential building would not reuse any of the old structure, and does not reflect its style. Area neighbors are requesting firmer mitigations, with contributions that would help strengthen and consolidate the remaining historic district. OHA agrees that the proposed mitigations are too weak, generally limited to documenting what was lost and contributing funds to the city-wide facade improvement program.

New Downtown Plan process begins:

Consultants for the city are beginning work on a Downtown Specific Plan to address zoning, priorities for public infrastructure investment, housing policy, and land use and transportation recommendations. At a kickoff meeting, city staff and consultants mentioned our irreplaceable stock of historic buildings as part of Oakland's identity. A series of public workshops and charrettes will be held, including open studios at 1544 Broadway, from October 19-28. For details on times and agendas, go to www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland. Then, plan to participate, and help ensure that the plan reflects the wishes of Oakland's citizens.

Landmarks Board candidates!: Two seats on the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board are vacant. The board, which meets monthly, particularly needs people with expertise and interest in historic preservation. It would be wonderful to have representation from East and West Oakland neighborhoods, currently underrepresented on the board. Do you know someone who might be interested? Contact the OHA office for more information, or request information from LPAB by email: Bmarvin@oaklandnet.com

Signal tower to be preserved: City Ventures proposes building a 44-unit residential development north of the 16th and Wood Street train station. On the property is the 1913 signal tower, a three-story concrete building with a hipped roof. Here were the signals and switch controls that helped organize train and transit traffic at the station, an early example of intermodal transportation. The proposed plan includes preserving the tower, which has been determined eligible for the National Register. Plans for the interior of the signal tower are still to be determined. ■



OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

SNOWBALL GIRLS at the Oakland Christmas Pageant. Between 1919 and 1987 a unique partnership between the public schools and the Oakland Recreation Department produced this annual extravaganza of holiday music and dance, guided by pageant director Louise Jorgensen. Hear Kathleen DiGiovanni tell the story of this beloved local tradition through OHA's lecture series 7 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 10 at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general. Tickets: <http://tinyurl.com/oha-events>.

Learn about the PPIE

Laura Ackley, author of *San Francisco's Jewel City*, about the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE), appears Nov. 17 at Scott's Seafood in Jack London Square. Cost includes dinner and program starting at 5:45 p.m. To reserve: info@oakland-heritage.org or 510-763-9218. \$35 OHA members, \$45 general. Cost at door: \$50. Student discounts; call for info.



THE ACKLEY COLLECTION

TOWER OF JEWELS at the PPIE's opening plaza.

Mapping LGBTQ histories through California Pride

On October 15, 2015, join us to learn about a new project called California Pride: Mapping LGBTQ Histories. California Pride is an online, crowd-sourced archive of memories, stories, and images related to sites throughout the Golden State associated with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) experience.

Did you know that the White Horse Inn is the longest-running LGBTQ-friendly bar in the Bay Area? The East Bay holds many places associated with important events in queer history. Our event will be held at the iconic bar.

Project director Donna Graves will present an overview of the project and show attendees how to “pin” their favorite LGBTQ history sites to the California Pride map.

California Pride can help bring awareness to the powerful, diverse stories that make up LGBTQ history — from major events to commonplace histories of daily life.

People with stories, photos, flyers and other ephemera associated with LGBTQ history in the Bay Area are invited to help build this online archive. Additionally, people interested in learning about preserving California’s LGBTQ history are encouraged to attend.

For information on California Pride, visit www.historypin.org/project/469-california-pride/ or contact sflgbthistory@gmail.com.

This event is sponsored by the Oakland Heritage Alliance. Community sponsors include California Preservation Foundation, the California Historical Society and the GLBT Historical Society. California Pride is supported by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Members of the above groups will be admitted at OHA’s member rate; no one will be turned away.

Mark your calendar for 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, at The White Horse Inn, 6551 Telegraph Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general. To get tickets in advance, go to <http://tinyurl.com/oha-events>. See you there! ■



STEVE RYNERSON

THE WHITE HORSE INN is the Bay Area’s longest-running LGBTQ-friendly bar.

Time travel to early Oakland with a great novel

On Nov. 12, join us and author Summer Brenner, who will discuss her middle-grade novel *Oakland Tales, Lost Secrets of The Town*. She’s also the author of many other books, including *Richmond Tales, Lost Secrets of the Iron Triangle*, illustrated by artist/muralist, Miguel Perez.

In these cross-cultural, inter-generational novels, two young people travel into the past where they experience the history of their city through their own eyes; bring the experiences of the past forward into a better understanding of the present; and ask themselves, “If a place was different in the past, can it be different in the future, too?” Also recommended for adults!

Oakland Tales has been selected for the “common core” curriculum in Oakland Unified schools and received a Proclamation from the City Council in 2014, shortly after its publication. *Richmond Tales* won an Historic Preservation Award (2010) and



a Human Rights award (2013) from the city of Richmond. In 2015, it was selected as one of five books for “Read Across America” by the California Teachers Association. In 2013, a theatrical version of *Richmond Tales* was co-produced by the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts and the Richmond Rotary. In 2014-2015, theatrical versions of *Oakland Tales*, co-directed by San Francisco’s Word For Word Theater Company, were performed

at Edna Brewer Middle School, Skyline High School, and the Bay Area Book Festival.

The research, writing, and production of these two site-specific novels were supported by generous grants from the Creative Work Fund, the Rex Foundation, the Rogers Family Foundation, and the San Francisco Foundation; and the partnerships of Community Works West, the Oakland Unified School District, and the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Ms. Brenner is a native of Atlanta. She has made her home in the Bay Area for many years. Come hear her talk about crafting her novel set in our fair city!

The event takes place 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 12 at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA members, \$15 general. To get tickets in advance, go to <http://tinyurl.com/oha-events>. Books will be for sale at the event; get yours autographed for yourself or as a special gift. ■



How Oakland created spaces to improve children's lives, 1850–1950

American cities are constantly being built and rebuilt, resulting in ever-changing skylines and neighborhoods. While the dynamic urban landscapes of New York, Boston, and Chicago have been widely studied, there is much to be gleaned from West Coast cities, especially in California, where the migration boom at the end of the nineteenth century permanently changed the urban fabric of these newly diverse, plural metropolises.

In *A City for Children*, Marta Gutman focuses on the use and reuse of everyday buildings in Oakland, California, to make the

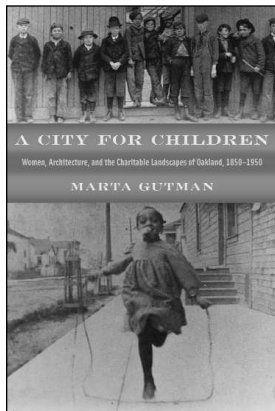
city a better place for children. She introduces us to the women who were determined to mitigate the burdens placed on working-class families by an indifferent industrial capitalist economy. Often without the financial means

to build from scratch, women did not tend to conceive of urban land as a blank slate to be wiped clean for development. Gutman shows how, over and over, women instead turned private houses and even a saloon in Oakland into orphanages, kindergartens, settlement houses, and day care centers, and in the process built the charitable landscape—a network of places that was critical for the betterment of children, families, and public life. The industrial landscape of Oakland, riddled with the effects of social inequality and racial prejudice, is not a neutral backdrop in Gutman's story but an active player.

Spanning one hundred years of history, *A City for Children* provides a compelling model for building urban institutions, and it demonstrates that children, women, charity, and reform, along with incremental construction, renovations, alterations, additions, and repurposed structures, are central to the understanding of modern cities.

Times Higher Education named *A City for Children* a book of the year in 2014, calling it "a monumental achievement."

A City for Children won the Historic



THE WEST OAKLAND Free Kindergarten, Peralta Street, 1895 at left. Elizabeth Betts set up this school for working class children near the Southern Pacific Railroad yards. She repurposed a saloon and insisted that the kindergarten be racially integrated. At right is the West Oakland Settlement, looking toward Peralta and Atlantic streets, 1900. When Elizabeth Watt launched this settlement house in 1896 she rented space in the two-story, working class house on right. By 1900, she had added two buildings to the complex—renting the small house in the center for housekeeping classes, and paying for the construction of the building at the left, used as a cooking school and then library.



BOTH: OAKLAND HISTORY ROOM

Preservation Book Prize from the University of Mary Washington Center for Historic Preservation and the Gene E. and Adele Malott Prize (honorable mention) from the Langham Charitable Trust.

Come hear Gutman discuss her book as part of OHA's lecture series. Her talk takes place 7 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 18 at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave. \$10 OHA

members, \$15 general. Purchase tickets in advance at <http://tinyurl.com/oha-events>. ■

A big thank you to our kind, thoughtful donors

We're grateful to the generosity of our donors, who make our programs and advocacy possible:

Sequoiah House Tour Advertising:

Lorri Arazi, Leslie Avant, Anna Bahnson, Adam Betta, Teri Carlisle, Joan Dark, Mavis Delacroix, Debbie DiMaggio, Jennie Flanigan, Patricia Lipscomb Hadden, Sharon Ho, Sandi Klemmer, Susan Kline, Dee Knowland, Jeffrey Neidleman, Denise Parker, Tom Schunn, Sequoyah Country Club, Kathleen Sims

35th Annual Walking Tour Season grant support: Kaiser Permanente

Regular Donors: James & Rebecca Austin, Jo Ann Baca, Carol Brookman of Heinholds First & Last Chance, Stephanie Cimino, Kevin Dwyer, Bill Essert of Wooden Window, Alison Finlay, Robert & Kathryn Gustafson, Bill Iracki, Jonathan Lammers, Stephen Lowe, Frances McBride, Christopher Marshall, Jim Ratliff & Eren Berkenkotter, Andrea Saltzman & Richard Marcus, Naomi Schiff, Dolores Thom, Sandra Tillin, Thomas White

Welcome to our new members!

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

Bill Adams, Mario Albert & Melissa Deadrich, Darrell Anderson & Niluffer Taspinar, Norman Banks, Terri Barbour, Elliot Barenbaum, Jais Booth & Brnton Cheja, Amy Borharquez, Paul & Katrina Brekke-Meisner, Vicki Breton, Joe & Doris Brown, Karen Dickinson, Merle Easton, Velda Lee Egan, Mickey Ellinger & Scott Braley, Robin Freeman, Diana Ghermann, President Cristina Grappo, Allyson Hance, Steve Heide, Jim Hopkins, Michelle Williams Jackson, Lazane Jobe, Judith Johnson, Carolyn Jones, Michael & Catherine Keene, Susan & Jay Kline, Anita Kratka, John Kunze & Mary Sylvia, Shari Kuvita & Sean Boyle, Mindi Lassman, Amy Leibowitz, Debbie & Bob Lentz, Jesse Lucas Jr., Kristina Mariscal, Chris Marshall, Suzanne Masuret, Beverly W. Matson, Anthony Merrill, William & Carland Nicholson, Geoffrey Pete, Linda Plecha, Cole Powell, Myra & Bob Redman, Claudia Reet, Adrienne O. Richardson, Harvey Rosenthal & Jim Edwards, Robin Seeley, Melanie Smith, Christ Suranis & Tamsin Orion, Elisa Uribe & Jon Axelberg, Susan Waters



Evolving OHA, evolving Oakland, evolving advocacy

By Alison Finlay, President

It has been a busy summer as well as a challenging one. Christina Herd left OHA's office in July to undertake a teaching career, and Joann Pavlinec left early in August. Joann helped make the Frank Lloyd Wright Buehler House Tour a big success, and also wrote a strong letter on behalf of Club Knoll, urging its retention and restoration. We'll miss them both!

In the office you'll find two new faces. Carla Lease, a former journalist with a degree in historic preservation, runs a Bed and Breakfast in Vallejo with the help of her two dogs and a cat. Amelia Cass, a longtime volunteer with the San Francisco Maritime Museum and the Golden Gate Conservancy on Alcatraz Island, has an M.F.A. in creative writing from Mills College and experience in project management and social media. Welcome Carla and Amelia!

We're also transitioning to a new database system. Bear with us, and if you think something isn't right, please let us know. We'll do our best to get it right.

The recent summer Walking Tour season included 10 new tours—from the Ghost Spaces of the Golden Gate, to the West Oak-

land Waterfront, to tracking the concrete contractors' stamps dating the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood, to name but a few. The Sequoyah Neighborhood tour was lovely, highlighting a little-known area and the urgent situation of Club Knoll, currently slated for demolition. Thank you to Tom Schunn and his team at the Sequoyah Country Club, for inviting us to tour the club and for their warm hospitality.

Our 2015 Partners in Preservation awards program is slated for early 2016, and nominations are open now. If you know of a worthy project, person or group, please download a nomination from our website (or call our office at 510-763-9218, and we'll mail you a form). If it is a project, it should have been completed within the last five years, and before and after photos are appreciated, if available.

I would like to say thank you to all our members and friends who stood up to say no to squeezing a tall hotel between the Auditorium and the Oakland Museum. We were in excellent company – folks from CALM, the Oakland Symphony, Ballet and Museum encouraged our City Council members to vote against a hotel in that location, and the Council came through, unanimously. We are



JUSTIN DAVIS: CREATIVE COMMONS

A LARGE neighborhood-funded mural by Rocky Rische-Baird portrays Key System history. This elaborate scene, on the western wall of the former Piedmont Avenue station, was removed and its remnants covered over by a recent renovation to accommodate Kronnerburger restaurant. Learn more about this Key System spur at our walking tour led by Daniel Levy, 10 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 1. Details at <http://www.spur.org/events/2015-10-01/walking-key-system-s-c-line>.

relieved! Thank you to everyone who wrote letters or came to Council Meetings.

We have a great lineup of fall events (see page 3 for a brief overview, and pages 8, 9 and 10 for more details) and we hope to see you soon! ■

CONTRIBUTORS:

Kathleen DiGiovanni, Dennis Evanosky, Alison Finlay, Kathryn Hughes, Erika Mailman, Joyce Roy, Steve Rynerson, Naomi Schiff

PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alison Finlay, *President*
Tom Haw, *Vice President*
Claire Castell, *Treasurer*
Charles Bucher, *Secretary*

Tom Debley, Kathryn Hughes, Daniel Levy, Amelia Marshall, Denise Parker, Steve Rynerson, Naomi Schiff, Charles C.W. Smith

Administrative Directors: Amelia Cass, Carla Lease

Stay informed, enjoy Oakland's secrets, and get discounts on OHA events. It's a great gift, too!

\$45 Cornerstone (individual)
 \$65 Pilaster (household)
 \$110 Pediment (organization/corporate)
 \$250-\$499 Doric
 \$500-\$999 Ionic
 \$1,000-\$2,500 Corinthian

Some limited income memberships are available. Call /63-9218 for information

I'll contribute _____ to the Oakland Heritage Alliance Leadership Fund.

Total: _____

Date _____
 Name _____
 Address _____

 City, Zip _____
 Phone (h) (w) _____
 Email _____

Visa MC Card # _____
 CVC _____ Exp. Date _____ Check enclosed

OHA • 116 1 / th St, Suite 301 • Oakland, CA 94612 • www.oaklandheritage.org • 510-763-9218
 Oakland Heritage Alliance is a 501(c)3 organization.



Oakland Heritage Alliance
446 17th St., Suite 301
Oakland, CA 94612

Address Correction Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
Oakland, California
Permit No. 31

Fighting flames since 1865: the Brooklyn Fire Station

By Kathleen DiGiovanni

Tucked into the middle of the block between two 1870s-era houses is the Brooklyn Fire Station, Engine #4, at 1235 International Boulevard.

Engine #4 has its origin in the Brooklyn Township Volunteer Fire Department, formed in 1865 according to a fire department history by Neil Honeycutt. Organized to fight fires in the burgeoning, wood-framed town of Brooklyn, its first home was on East 12th Street between 13th and 14th Avenues. A few years later it was renamed the Brooklyn Engine Company, though it continued to be a volunteer department. After Brooklyn's annexation to the City of Oakland in 1872 the company was designated Engine #4, but for reasons of municipal finance, it and its sister company Clinton Hook and Ladder #3 operated independently of the city until 1877.

Retired OFD Captain and OHA supporter Edmund Clausen told this anecdote about the Brooklyn Engine Company at August's "Downtown Brooklyn" walking tour. He heard the story from the nephew of the principal character involved. "When the city of Oakland annexed the town of Brooklyn, the deal included two volunteer fire companies, the Brooklyn Engine Company and the Clinton Hook and Ladder Company. When the fire chief's job opened in 1872, the Brooklyn lads, filled with pride, believed that one of their own should be the next chief of the

Oakland Fire Department. The Oakland boys thought otherwise. To settle the issue, the Oaklanders and the Brooklynites met at Lake Merritt, at the center of the 12th Street Dam, and 'duked it out,' the winner of the donnybrook getting to pick the next chief. George Taylor, recently of the Brooklyn Volunteers, served as chief of the Oakland Fire Department from 1872 to 1874."

The station moved from East 12th Street to its current address in 1874. Today's station was built in 1909, according to building permit records. It was designed by Oakland architect Fred Soderberg who had an active practice in Oakland in the first quarter of the 20th century. Besides the Brooklyn station, Soderberg designed at least three other Oakland fire stations: the old Elmhurst and Magnolia stations, both now demolished, and the former Chinatown station on Alice Street, now a private residence.

He was also responsible for the design of the old Emeryville City Hall and the Jenny Lind Hall on Telegraph Avenue. Soderberg, a curious character, was elected to the Oakland City Council in 1915 where he also served as Commissioner of Streets. In 1920 he was the subject of an attempted impeachment along with two other councilmen. The impeachment effort failed to make it onto the ballot owing to irregularities in the petition-gathering process.

According to newspaper accounts, Soder-



KATHLEEN DIGIOVANNI

BROOKLYN FIRE STATION today.

berg in 1907 accused his former partner of absconding with more than his share of the proceeds when they broke up their business partnership.

Though the original arches over the doors are gone, the old station retains much of the look it had when it was new. One of its notable features is that it still has a hose drying tower out back. Oakland's newer stations don't have them. Best viewed from the 13th Avenue side of the building, the three-story tower was used to dry water-saturated fire hoses. Drained cotton canvas hoses were hoisted up to the top of the tower with pulleys and left there to drip-dry. This fire station was designated an Oakland city landmark in April, 1980 and after 115 years, still has a lot of life left in it. ■