

Meet Oakland architect and builder Allen James Yerrick

by Elizabeth Douthitt Byrne

Despite his obscurity today, Allen James Yerrick (1882–1977) made a significant contribution to Oakland’s architectural heritage. Although his early life was full of multiple hardships, he became a creative, highly successful, and prolific architectural designer and builder. During the course of his life, he had three different names—actually four if you count misspelling.

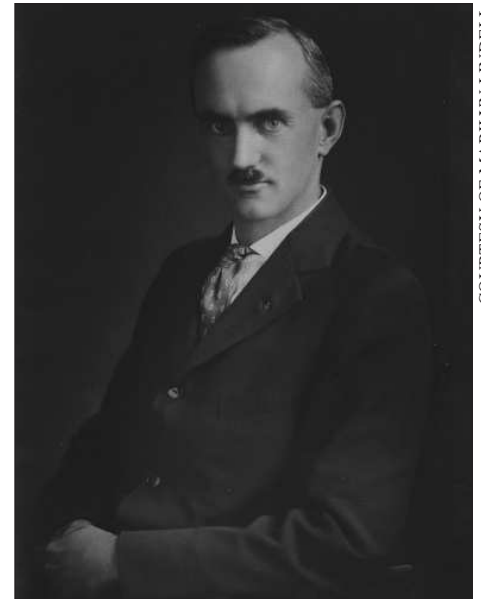
Born in San Francisco to an English-born carpet beater and an Oakland seamstress,¹ Yerrick was one of dozens of mostly anonymous vernacular² architect-builders who designed and/or built the majority of the California Craftsman style bungalows and other popular middle-class homes in Oakland following the 1906 earthquake. The sudden and rapid increase in Oakland’s post-earthquake population, and resultant East Bay building boom, presented a unique opportunity for vernacular architect-builders such as Yerrick, who leapt into action to meet the need for thousands of quickly and inexpensively constructed dwellings. But Yerrick was not an ordinary vernacular architect-builder.

Never a licensed architect, and not a “spec” (speculative) builder, he was an artist and aspiring poet and author. He made his living as an architectural designer and builder/contractor, designing and/or building at least a hundred buildings from 1906 to 1952. They were primarily modest single-family, working-class houses, but also quite a few duplexes and apartment buildings, and a handful of commercial buildings, mostly in Oakland and Piedmont.

My Rockridge home was one of them. Like most other houses built in this neighborhood (originally the Vernon Park Tract), it’s a California Craftsman bungalow. It came with a set of original blueprints dated Nov. 14, 1911, indicating it was “plan no. 28 for Murdoch,” approved and signed by the first owner, J. Stuart Murdoch. The blueprints lacked the cover sheet naming the architect,

so initially, I assumed the design was probably from one of the many house plan books popular at the time; however, as an architectural librarian, and after years of research, I tracked down Yerrick as the architect.³ He was then the architect for contractor and small-time developer E.A. Janssen.⁴ While the house at 5528 Lawton Avenue has many of the same features of other Craftsman style bungalows on my street, and its entry was altered in the 1970s, it has some unusual differences. The original owner, Murdoch, was a grain merchant and a tenor in a popular choral group, and his wife was a pianist and piano teacher. As a result, the living room is larger than most in order to accommodate their piano. The house also has not one but two sleeping porches, and an unusually deep front

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ALLEN JAMES YERRICK

COURTESY OF MARILYN LINDELL



CHUCK BYRNE

THE AUTHOR’S home at 5528 Lawton Ave. in Rockridge, originally built for J. Stuart Murdoch. The entry was altered in the 1970s.



Yerrick

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porch. Two sets of stairs, one from the den/maid's room and one from the living room, join at a landing and lead to the main stairs to the bedrooms on the second floor. I learned that designing to accommodate his clients' special needs was only one of Yerrick's many talents. And the story of his life and names is one that reveals a challenging childhood, making his future success all the more remarkable.

■ **Born, orphaned and renamed:** He was born Aug. 19, 1882, in San Francisco to Walter J. Gould and Jane A. (Jennie) Broad Gould. Walter wanted the child named after him,⁵ although the baby's birth records were lost as a result of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Years later in 1903, Yerrick confirmed his birth name by identifying himself as "Allen J. Yerrick (formerly Walter J. Gould)"⁶ in a notice of Alameda County building contracts in the *San Francisco Call*.

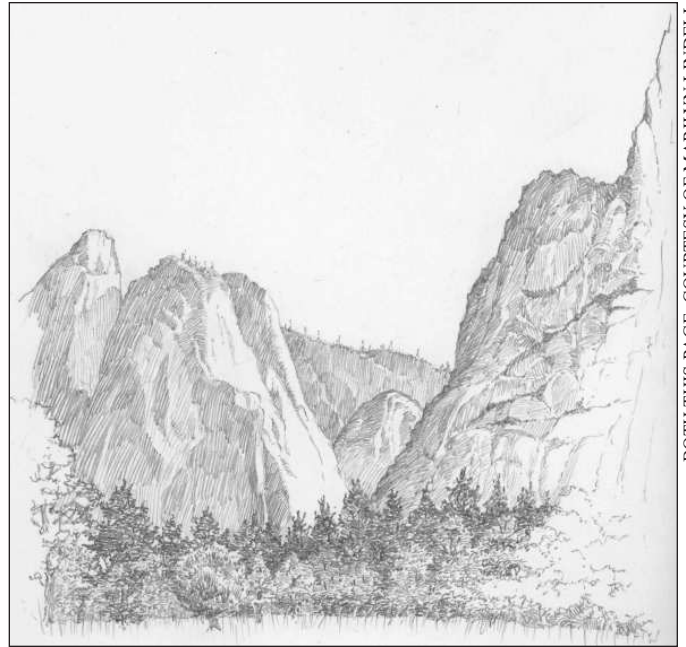
In December 1882, when he was only four months old, his parents moved to southern California so his mother could get treatment for tuberculosis. They left Walter in Oakland in the care of Jennie's parents, Charles Augustus Broad (then age 60) and Sarah Jane McKnight Broad (then 57). Shortly after Jennie's death in June 1883, Walter gave his 10-month-old baby to his Broad in-laws and reportedly left for the Yukon, never to be heard from again.⁷ The orphaned baby was reared by his Broad grandparents in Oakland, and renamed Allen James Broad. His maternal aunt, Mary Broad, was 17 when she married Charles Clark Yerick in January 1883, and she and her husband, known as Clark, developed a close relationship with

her baby nephew. When Allen was a toddler, the Broad and Yerick families lived in the same apartment building on 17th Street.⁸

■ **Schooled in Oakland:** Allen James Broad focused on "Commercial Studies" at Central Grammar School, and was promoted to Oakland Polytechnic High School (now Oakland Tech), which "was among the first of the high schools in California to offer boys and girls a chance to use their hands in manual training and domestic science while at the same time they improved their minds with the usual academic studies."⁹

Yerrick, then still known as Allen J. Broad, entered their mechanical and industrial program, which included art and illustration, carpentry and building. His art and mechanical drawing instructor, Goddard F. Gale, had studied art at London's Royal College of Art and drafting at the Crystal Palace School of Practical Engineering.¹⁰ Yerrick/Broad graduated in June 1902,¹¹ and remained actively involved with his alma mater. From at least 1903 until December 1905, he was one of several "staff artists" for its *Scribe* magazine, where his cover design appeared frequently, even after he was no longer staff artist.

Sometime between 1899 and 1902, his Aunt Mary and Uncle Clark legally adopted him, changing his name from Allen James Broad to Allen James Yerick. The adoption certificate misspelled the surname as



YERRICK'S SKETCH of "evening shadows on Cathedral Rocks and Rocky Point, Yosemite Valley," July 1936.

Yerrick,¹² which he used the remainder of his life.

Following high school graduation, he studied at a commercial art and design school in San Francisco.¹³ Most likely it was the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art, later San Francisco Art Institute, whose records also burned in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire.¹⁴

In 1903, he gave his aunt and adoptive mother, "Mary Yerrick (wife of Clark)," a contract to build a building on a lot on 17th Street near Grove (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Way) in Oakland.¹⁵ Sadly, Clark Yerick was killed in a freak electrical accident six weeks later,¹⁶ so the project was never completed. Following the death of his grandmother Sarah less than a year later, Yerrick continued living with his grandfather Charles Broad in Oakland. In September 1905, Aunt Mary died suddenly and in 1908, Grandpa Broad also passed. From 1903 to 1908, Yerrick lost his remaining immediate family.

So who was he? And how did he survive so many challenges to become an intelligent, talented, and well-rounded person and a successful architect/builder?

■ **Poet, writer, philosopher, nature lover, and Mason:** Yerrick wrote well even in high school. Under his pre-adoption name of

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YERRICK'S FIRST building, his own house at 860 36th St., Oakland, 1906.



Allen Broad, he wrote a humorous four-page “Class Prophecy” for Oakland Polytechnic’s 1902 yearbook, *The Scribe*. In it he cleverly predicted the future lives and careers of his senior classmates, a few of their teachers, and his own. It begins several years after graduation by having himself run into his classmates as he is returning to California after “studying drawing in New York.”¹⁷

During the Depression when he had little work, he wrote at least 23 short stories, two plays, a comic opera, and 48 poems. Many of his poems make reference to Shakespeare, the Bible, and literary classics, displaying his wide knowledge of literature. Several of his poems were published in *Oakland Tribune*’s “Poet’s Corner” column.¹⁸ A number of his poems concern his love of nature, but his best, often humorous ones focus on architecture, building, and relationships with clients, including “The Bungalow,” “To a Realtor,” “What Will It Cost?” and “The Owner’s Dilemma.”¹⁹

His unpublished 34-page short story of 1933, “Romance of a Home,” is told from the point of view of a house. It cleverly describes its initial “birth” (design); infancy (the building process); early life (experiences with the original owners); maturity (eventual sale to and use by other families); and old age (ultimate dereliction). Numerous manuscripts of his writings in the possession of his family reveal that he was a talented and imaginative writer. His grandchildren confirm that he loved to write and would have loved to write for a living, but “it didn’t pay the bills.”

He loved nature and was a passionate hiker. His poem “Au Revoir” concerned his distress at finding fences and “no trespassing” signs in the rapidly developing Oakland hills

BOTH: CHUCK BYRNE



TWO OF YERRICK’S PROJECTS in 1911: at above left, 5536 Lawton, and at right 5540 Lawton. During that time, he also designed the author’s home and at least three other bungalows on Lawton and Ocean View for E.A. Janssen.

Homes in the New Fine Residence Tract of Sacramento



Home of Mr. Walter Longbotham,
Manager Wachhorst's.



Home of Mr. F. B. McKeen,
Fruit Grower and Shipper.



Home of Hon. F. B. Fancher,
Former Governor of North Dakota, now
Sec. and Treas. American Cash Store.

*In the Closest-in and Finest Residence Tract in Sacramento Asphalt Streets
—City Accepted—and Bordered by Growing Maple Trees, 40 Feet Apart;
Cement Walks, Terraced Lots and Perfect Drainage. Three-Quarters of
a Mile Nearer the Post Office Than Cutter Avenue*



Maple Park
OUR HOMES ARE BUILT FOR TOMORROW

Terms 10 per Cent Down and Balance Like Paying Rent
To see these splendid homes take the 21st Street car and get off at Second Ave., West Curtis Oaks,
or phone us and we will call and take you to them.













YERRICK was involved in various home designs for Sacramento’s Maple Park as seen in this *Sacramento Bee* advertisement from April 26, 1913.

during one of his many walks. He frequently sketched the landscape during his hikes (see his Yosemite Valley sketch on the preceding page). In 1913, he and a friend spent a 12 ½ hour day walking the 50 miles from Oakland City Hall to San Jose City Hall.

He was also “quite a philosopher,” and greatly admired Thomas Paine’s 1776

pamphlet, *Common Sense*. Very civic minded, Yerrick frequently wrote letters to the editor that were published in the *Oakland Tribune*. One of the earliest appeared in 1907, in which he pleads for a Southern Pacific Railroad passenger station for Oakland based on the city’s “rapidly coming to the front as a big and important city.” In 1916 he urged city leaders to plant more young oak trees in City Hall Plaza.²⁰

Following his Grandfather Broad, who had been an active Mason, Yerrick joined in 1918 and remained a member until his death. He met many of his friends and future clients through the Masons, and designed the first Rockridge Masonic Lodge in 1917.

■ **Artist to architect:** After attending the San Francisco art and design school, he was employed as an illustrator by an unidentified early San Francisco newspaper and also

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PUBLIC DOMAIN



Yerrick

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worked as a courtroom trial illustrator from about 1902 to 1905. The 1905 Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directory lists him as employed as an artist at Varney & Green Company, which was a large, successful San Francisco and Los Angeles billboard and outdoor advertising company where he worked until about 1908.

His 1905 inheritance of his aunt/adoptive mother Mary's \$10,000 estate (compensation for the accidental electrocution of her husband) allowed him to become engaged to Alice Dale Bowden.

In 1906, he purchased a lot in Oakland and designed and built his first house at 860 36th St. at Market²¹ for himself and Alice. He and Alice had both grown up on that same block.

From at least 1905 to 1906, he served in the National Guard of California and was mobilized to help with the aftermath of the April 1906 earthquake, which caused the delay of his planned Spring wedding until December 1906. The newspaper announcement of their 1906 wedding referred to Allen J. Yerrick as "an artist of ability."²² From 1905 to 1908, he was variously listed in local city directories as an artist, designer, carpenter, and draftsman.²³

From about 1908 to 1910 or '11, Yerrick worked as a draftsman in the Oakland office of well-known architect and plan book author Joseph Cather Newsom (1857–1930), of the multi-generation Bay Area Newsom family



AT 5263 COLLEGE AVE., Yerrick designed and built a two-story apartment building called the "College-Clifton" with ground floor stores, where his family moved in 1915.

of architects.²⁴ In addition to gaining professional architectural training and experience, Yerrick met E.A. (Edward Anton) Janssen, then a contractor for Newsom. Janssen purchased many lots in the then-new housing tracts in Oakland and Berkeley, and hired Yerrick as his "architect" in 1911.

■ **A highly capable architect of much experience:** 1911 was a busy year for Yerrick. From 1910 to 1912, in addition to my home, Yerrick designed at least five other nearby one- and two-story California Craftsman style bungalows on Lawton and Ocean View (originally Bay View) for



BERKELEY HOME AT 2643 Stuart, built in 1911 as a duplex by Yerrick.

Janssen.²⁵ He also designed several homes in other Oakland neighborhoods for Janssen and other contractors and homebuilders. By 1912, Janssen, still a contractor but rapidly becoming a developer and "homebuilder," had Yerrick design "a number of plans for high-class, artistic bungalows designed after Southern California models" for realty brokers Wood & Tatum's new Maple Park tract in Sacramento, "each modified for originality so sameness and uniformity in design will be avoided."²⁶ With Yerrick as architect, the Wood & Tatum Company promised to "sell you a lot and build you a house to suit your tastes, and ideas, on your own terms."²⁷ While working in Sacramento for several months he also designed new homes for Sacramento realtors and builders Wright & Kimbrough Company. Their ad announcing their project referred to him as an "expert home building architect" and a

BOTH THIS PAGE: CHUCK BYRNE

Welcome to our new members!

OHA is pleased to welcome these newest members through August 2023:

- Andrew Alden, David Bradshaw,
- Emily Davis, Lenore Gallin, Sandy Gess,
- Michael Griffin, Edward Guffmann,
- Laurel Habel, Chris Harper,
- Ruth Harteneck, Zoe Heimdal, Lillian Hsu,
- Eric Hughes, Alton Jelks,
- Rosemary Jenckes, Marcus Johnson,
- Marvin Johnson, Katrina Journey,
- Sally Keane, Matt O'Brien, Edward O'Neil,
- Marie Osborne, Laura Buzzo Paratore,
- Nirmaliz Pena, Greg Quist, Reza Rezvani,
- Paul Rohrdanz, Genevieve Shiffar,
- Marilyn Siegel, Ginevra Tehin,
- Carol Van Steenberg & Art Kuhn,
- Robin Wilson-Beattie, Karen Young

We thank our recent donors

- Lisa Aliferis & John Storella, Della Barnett,
- Steve & Terry Beck, Mary Ann Benson,
- Stephanie Casenza, Ted Ellison,
- Laura Habel, Jacci Harris, C. Holmes,
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- Aileen Frankel



“highly capable architect of much experience.”²⁸

Working for developers in Oakland and Sacramento in the nineteen teens, Yerrick “refused to build ‘spec’ houses because he didn’t think he could do that without compromising his standards for quality.” Later, when working for himself, he took pride in carefully designing custom homes for the specific needs of his clients. As a result, “he remained life-long friends with many of his clients because they loved his work and commitment to excellence.”²⁹

Yerrick’s projects as an architect and contractor in the early ’teens included a large two-story apartment building and at least five other homes in Oakland, a home in Piedmont, an office building in Fresno, and a factory for Miller Creamery in San Francisco. In 1913 he formed a partnership, Smith and Yerrick Architects, with licensed architect Harvey Partridge Smith³⁰ and opened an office in Oakland’s Blake Building. Smith and Yerrick designed a house on Oakland’s West Street, a mezzanine for Oakland’s Miller Creamery, and made alterations to an Oakland building on Harrison Street. For developer Janssen, they designed and built a large house in San Francisco’s Richmond district. In 1915, Smith moved to San Antonio, Texas, ending their partnership and closing their Oakland office.

In 1914–1915, Yerrick designed and built for himself a two-story seven-unit apartment building with a couple of ground floor stores on a lot he purchased at 5263 College Ave. at Clifton. Each of its original two-room “suites” (currently seven larger units) came with a “wall-bed” and a private bathroom. In 1915, Yerrick moved his wife and daughter from their 36th Street home into an apartment on the first floor of the College-Clifton apartment building, and opened an office there. He was also the designer of a 16-room apartment building on East Cerrito Avenue. Around this time he designed the New Peralta Theatre, a Mission Revival style 450-seat movie theater at 1488 14th St. at Peralta in Oakland that opened in 1916.³¹ He also formed Yerrick Construction Company, which he operated for 37 years.³²

■ **Every variety of bungalow the architect can devise:** Following Smith’s departure, Yerrick, with all the services he provided,

had no shortage of work. In his 1917 World War I Draft Registration, he declared he was a self-employed contractor and builder, although the Oakland city directory of that year listed him under architects. During this period he designed or built a range of projects including a number of homes, and alterations to a couple of buildings. An ad for his business was

included in a 1918 article about the “Busy Rockridge Vernon District.” This described the Rockridge neighborhood, where Yerrick designed and built many homes, as “... the best developed bungalow section of the whole East Bay. There has been built every variety of the bungalow type of home that ingenuity of the architect can devise.”³³

In addition to residences, he was both the architect and builder of the two-story 1917 College Avenue Free Market building near the corner of College Avenue and Shafter (now the site of the Rockridge Market Hall). In addition to the stores and market, this was the home of the first Rockridge Masonic Lodge, No. 468 (later consolidated with Oakland Durant Lodge 188).

■ **The Roaring 1920s:** Like other architects of the period, Yerrick was extremely busy following the First World War and into the 1920s. Despite his occupation listing as “superintendent of construction” in the 1920 U.S. Census for Oakland, he continued as an “architectural designer” well into the 1930s and beyond.

From 1920 to 1929 he was awarded building contracts for 24 houses, eight apartment buildings, two stores, five garages, and alterations or additions to 12 buildings. Almost none credited an architect, meaning Yerrick designed and built them. While his earlier houses were mostly California Craftsman bungalows, he began expanding his repertoire to include English, Spanish,



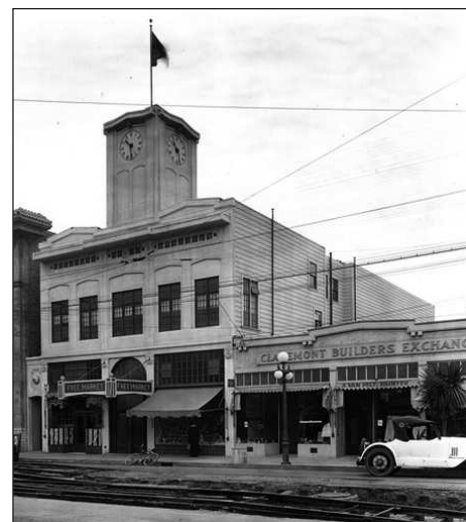
CHUCK BYRNE

5630 OCEAN VIEW, built in 1911, was another of Yerrick’s projects for E.A. Janssen. The street name was originally Bay View.

and Mediterranean styles. A few were located in Berkeley, Alameda and Piedmont, but the vast majority were in Oakland.

Other Oakland projects included three apartment buildings on Grove (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way), including one at 61st and one at 62nd that he built and designed for his friend Charles Newton Shelley in 1922–1923.³⁴ Also in Oakland, he designed and built a three-story apartment building with five stores below, a house in Upper Rockridge, and a residence in Adams Point,

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OAKLAND HISTORY CENTER

YERRICK’S College Avenue Free Market building, site of today’s Rockridge Market Hall.



Yerrick

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as well as a one-story building housing four stores on Berkeley's College Avenue.

He was also the architect and builder of several homes in Oakland's Trestle Glen and Crocker Highlands neighborhoods, and on Lakeshore Avenue and Wawona, that were larger, more elegant, and more stylistically diverse than his earlier homes. In Piedmont, he designed and built a house on Scenic Avenue and two residences for Herbert Sack.

Also in Piedmont he was the architect and builder of his own large 1924 house at 221 Wildwood Ave., where he moved his family from their home in the College-Clifton Apartments. Later he described it as a "distinctive English home, with four bedrooms, three baths, maid's room, rumpus, solarium, double garage."³⁵ He also designed and built several other houses on Wildwood, Wawona, Hazel, and Florida.

■ End notes

1. U.S. Federal Census, California, San Francisco, San Francisco, 1880.
2. In this context, and loosely defined, a vernacular architect is a designer-builder lacking formal, professional architectural training or license, who bases his designs on local traditions, cultures and materials.
3. Thanks to the help of Betty Marvin and Gail Lombardi at the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey.
4. City of Oakland Building Permit no. 2522.3, June 22, 1911, and blueprints in the author's possession, signed Nov. 14, 1911.
5. Letter from Jennie Broad Gould to her parents Jan. 28, 1883, in the collection of Marilyn Anderson Lindell. Allen J. Yerrick's granddaughter. Other family history information provided by Mrs. Lindell through emails and an in-person interview Aug. 11, 2008, and by email and phone correspondence with grandsons Richard Anderson and A. Scott Yerrick.
6. "Builders' Contracts, Alameda County," *San Francisco Call*, Oct. 6, 1903: 13.
7. Email correspondence with Marilyn Lindell, Aug. 11, 2008.
8. *Husted's Oakland, Alameda and Berkeley Directory* (San Francisco: F.M. Husted Directory Co., 1884-85).
9. "Commercial Dept. of the Central School Closing Exercises," *Oakland Tribune* June 9, 1900: 5; and "The Knave: Oakland's Tech High is a Rags to Riches Saga," *Oakland Tribune* April 2, 1972: 15 CM and 18 CM.
10. Felix Kuehn, "Goddard Gale, Art Teacher '07-'32," *Oakland*

Tech Centennial, <https://oaklandtech.com/staff/centennial/2015/02/26/goddard-frederick-gale-art-teacher-1907-1932/>

11. *The Scribe, Oakland Polytech Yearbook*, 1902 and "Graduates in Local Schools, Names of Those Who Will Leave the High and Polytechnic," *Oakland Tribune*, June 9, 1902: 8.

12. The 1902 date comes from Allen's brief handwritten biographical notes supplied by his grandson Richard Anderson, and corresponds to the year he graduated high school; however, a listing in "Alameda County Court Notes" in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 8, 1899, lists "Clark and Mary Yerrick [sic] petitioned Superior Court for permission to adopt Walter James Gould, a minor. They have the permission of the boy and his father, who for some years has failed to contribute to his support." Confusing things further, in the September 1903 issue of his alma mater's magazine *The Scribe*, he is listed as Staff Artist Allan [sic] J. Broad; but the August 1904 issue mentions him as Allan J. Yerrick.

13. Information supplied by granddaughter Marilyn Lindell to the author.

14. City directories indicate he was a student 1902–1904, and that in 1904 he was a student in San Francisco. It is not clear whether he graduated from the San Francisco art school, but family lore is that he was there at least one year. He did not pursue formal architectural training through the few opportunities then available: the University of California's architectural classes within its Engineering Department, classes through the San Francisco Architecture Club, Mechanics Institute, or through apprenticeships.

15. "Builders' Contracts, Alameda County," *San Francisco Call*, Oct. 3, 1903: 13.

16. "Clark Yerrick Killed by Current," *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 23, 1903: 6.

17. Allen Broad, "Class Prophecy," *The Scribe, Yearbook of Oakland Polytechnic High School* (Oakland, CA: Oakland Polytechnic High School, 1902): n.p.

18. "Au Revoir," Sept. 19, 1931: 24; "Memorium," March 5, 1933: 39, and "Life," April 16, 1933: 18.

19. Other nature poems include "Alpha and Omega," "When E'er I Walk," and "A Wildflower's Plea."

20. Allen J. Yerrick, "A Passenger Station for Oakland," *Oakland Tribune*, May 20, 1907: 6; and "Plant New Oaks," Letter to the editor, *Oakland Tribune*, Dec. 30, 1916: 8.

21. The house was demolished in the late 1950s–early 1960s for Interstate 580.

22. "Society in Cities Across the Bay," *San Francisco Call*, Dec. 1, 1906: 4.

23. The 1905 *Husted's Oakland, Alameda & Berkeley and Alameda County Directory* lists him as a designer. The *Crocker-Langley San Francisco Directory* that same year lists him as employed at Varney & Green Company as an artist. *Husted's Oakland, Alameda & Berkeley Directory*, 1906, and 1907; and 1908 Alameda County voter registration.

24. Alameda County, California Voter Registrations, 1908, roll 004; and *Husted's Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda Directory* (San Francisco: Polk-Husted Directory Co., 1909).

25. Oakland building permit no. 2522.3 of June 22, 1911, and blueprints in possession of the author, signed November 1911.



YERRICK'S HOME at 221 Wildwood in Piedmont.

During this time he also designed 5536 and 5540 Lawton and 5605, 5618, and 5630 Ocean View, originally Bay View.

26. "Down River Lands Fine Investment," *Sacramento Union*, March 31, 1912: 33. Originally, Janssen was to build 10 bungalows in the Maple Park Tract, but a dispute with the Sacramento Contractors and Dealers Association forced him to reduce to only four houses

27. "Maple Park, a Model Residence Park," [ad] *Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 12, 1912: 24.

28. "Another Architect," ad for new homes being built or sold by Wright & Kimbrough, who just added "another expert home building architect to the department—Mr. A.J. Yerrick of Oakland...highly capable architect of much experience..." *Sacramento Bee*, May 21, 1912: 12.

29. Interview in August 2008 with Marilyn Anderson Lindell.

30. Architect Harvey Partridge Smith, born 1889, Minnesota and died 1964, Texas.

31. The theater closed in 1952, and was poorly remodeled to house a church. A fire in 2004 caused severe damage, and the building sat vacant until it was repaired and converted into housing, reopening in 2021 as Peralta Theatre Lofts with six units. "New Peralta Theatre," *Cinema Treasures*, www.cinematreasures.org/theaters/5096.

32. Obituary, *The Press*, February 1977.

33. Ad and article, *Oakland Tribune*, March 10, 1918: 39.

34. Both of these, and several other of his buildings, were demolished for the 1950s-'60s construction of the Grove-Shafter Highway 24 or I-580.

35. Real estate ads, *Oakland Tribune*, May 19 through Sept. 11, 1938. In 1947, when he was forced to sell it, his son Allen Gould Yerrick, a realtor, corrected the earlier description to "3 bedrooms, 2 ½ baths..." in *Oakland Tribune*, June 7, 1947: 32.

Enjoying this look at Yerrick's life? We are, too. We'll pick up with Yerrick's fate with Part II in our next issue!

Elizabeth Douthitt Byrne, an art, architecture and design librarian for 42 years, is librarian emerita of UC Berkeley's Environmental Design Library. She and her husband have lived in their Yerrick house since 1985. She'd love to hear from other Yerrick owners. She's indebted to Yerrick's grandchildren, Marilyn Anderson Lindell, Richard Anderson, and A. Scott Yerrick, for providing interviews and sharing family history, photos, and manuscripts.



YERRICK'S diversity in design is shown by how often buildings do not resemble each other. At above left is 4155 Emerald, and at above right is 4040 Broadway.





A brief history of Castlemont High's buildings

By Dorothy Lazard

After the great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906 and Oakland's expansive annexation of its neighboring communities to the south in 1909, a steady migration across the bay and into Oakland occurred. By the 1920s, Oakland was experiencing a full-fledged housing boom. The need for more school buildings became a priority. Oakland voters approved bond measures in 1919 and 1924. New schools sprang up to accommodate the growing number of families settling in East Oakland. For students in the Eastmont and Elmhurst residential districts, a new high school was planned. It was to be called East Oakland High School.

The new school, designed by Chester Miller and Carl Warnecke and built by George Petersen, opened in Fall 1929 to much fanfare due to its elaborate medieval Tudor architecture. Students entered the school by walking past a sunken garden and raised pond and passed through the main building under an arched and vaulted ceiling.

The main entrance had flooring laid out in a "brick and tile pattern," according to a July 7, 1929, *Oakland Tribune* article that touted the school's beautiful features. The administration suite in the main building, whose doors and countertops were made of Bataan mahogany, led to a garden courtyard. Jordan Hall, the school's auditorium, could seat 1500 people on its main floor and balcony. Overhead were stenciled beams of Oregon pine. The boys' and girls' separate gymnasiums were located at the rear of the main building.

Just west of the main building were shop classes and workrooms connected to the main building by a porte-cochere (a wide covered walkway). The school's



THE "YE FALCONET" was the very thin, war-era yearbook for 1944.



CASTLEMONT HIGH in its "medieval" period.

woodwork, executed by Lannon Bros. Manufacturing Company, was specifically praised in the press.

In all, there were about 75 rooms, including a cafeteria, kitchen, and 18 classrooms. The cost of construction was \$520,000. By the end of its first academic year, the name East Oakland High School was retired.

Inspired by the new school's castle-like structures, students and faculty renamed the school "Castlemont." The students chose "Knights" as the school mascot and leaned into medieval themes for the name of clubs, activities, and publications like their newspaper, *Ye Castle Crier* (which I edited in the 1970s). This is a great example of architecture impacting social life. Among the praise heaped on the school's architecture after its opening, the Common Brick



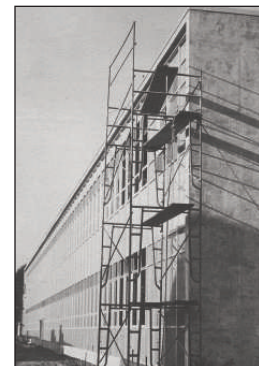
THE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM, circa 1930s.

Manufacturers Association of America voted Castlemont the most beautiful new brick structure in the United States.

For 27 years, Castlemont High School sat regally along Foothill (now MacArthur) Boulevard. But by the mid-1950s, the Oakland school board deemed the beautiful school insufficient for a growing student body and inadequate according to the seismic safety requirements of the time. The school board was also looking to build more modern classroom facilities to keep up with diverse academic and vocational curricula. Architectural firm Anderson and Hyde of

See **CASTLEMONT** on page 10

THE MODERN BUILDING under construction is one of two that replaced the Tudor buildings. This housed classrooms, the administrative wing, the nurse's office, and the school bank. Photo taken circa 1961.



ALL THIS PAGE: OAKLAND HISTORY CENTER



What is next for Sixteenth Street Station?



NAOMI SCHIFF

THE 16TH STREET STATION is still in danger and needs major rehabilitation attention . . . and a reuse plan.

By Naomi Schiff

A long 34 years after the Loma Prieta earthquake, the 16th Street Station remains highly endangered. This outstanding but neglected former Southern Pacific station was a major center of intermodal transit from 1912 on. The long-distance trains met the Key System and the East Bay Electric Lines (IER), and people from everywhere traveled to Oakland. Designed by Jarvis Hunt, the station's 42-foot ceiling, huge windows, and marble floors were a grand experience.

The railroads supported a large local workforce, including many Pullman employees. Beginning in 1925 in New York, A. Phillip Randolph was asked to lead what became the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. In 1929 some of its locals, including Oakland's, were able to join the American Federation of Labor despite the AFL's reluctance to admit Black unions, and in 1935 they managed to join as a national union. The Oakland hub was the baggage wing in the north part of the 16th Street Station. Oaklander C. L. Dellums was the

national union's first vice-president, and later became president.

Originally, the station stood along tracks near the bay's edge. The land now to its west is bay fill. As passenger rail travel ebbed, Southern Pacific closed the station rather than seismically upgrade it. Then, with the 1989 earthquake and the subsequent relocation of the freeway, the station was permanently cut off from the main tracks.

In 2005, OHA participated in a major struggle, when Bridge Housing proposed to demolish the baggage wing. This terrible idea was stifled in a wave of protest and negotiation. At the time, the idea was to use Redevelopment funds from the army base reuse to strengthen the station and make a restoration possible. However, when Gov. Brown ended Redevelopment in 2012, that funding source vanished. While Bridge owned the station, they did roof repairs, occasionally renting out the station for events, to West Edge Opera, and as a movie location. The plaza has been leased as a plant nursery site for Kassenhoff Growers.

But no sustained reuse has been worked out, and the building needs major repairs. It has suffered from graffiti, water intrusion, weathering, and vandalism.

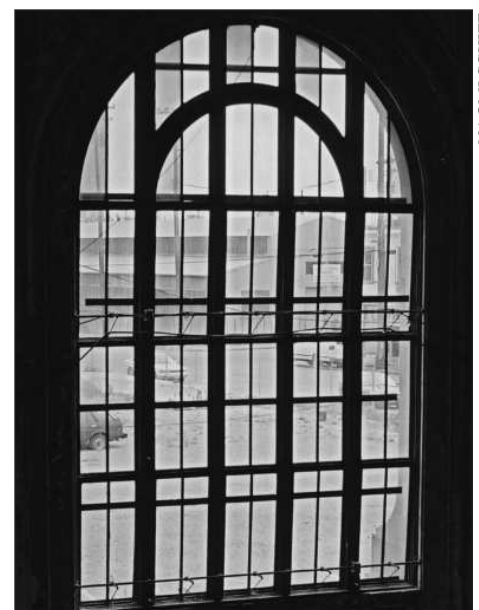
Recently, City Ventures purchased the parcels north of 16th Street, planning a housing development. While the station, its baggage wing, and the signal tower are recognized as historic resources and somewhat protected from demolition, OHA and neighborhood groups

are concerned that preliminary plans show new structures coming very close to the station. Will this inhibit an adaptive reuse? Will there be visual and physical access? We'll watch closely to see what is proposed and how the city's planning department responds. We'll advocate for these valuable historic structures and important cultural history to be reused, restored, and preserved. ■



NAOMI SCHIFF

A PARAPET at the station



NAOMI SCHIFF

ONE OF THE THREE grand entries in the main station hall.

AAMLO, OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY



FOUR PULLMAN PORTERS standing on the sidewalk.



The library's Fall History Series: honoring Dr. Marcus Foster and more

By Emily Foster

Oakland History Center Librarian

In the Oakland History Center we have been busy planning programs for our annual Fall History Series. This year we have eight programs and two new exhibits at the Main Library. We are returning to in-person programs, and all events will be held in the Bradley Walters Community Room on the lower level of the Main Library, except as otherwise noted. Hope to see you there!

■ **Andrew Alden and Jenny Odell in Conversation.** 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 26. Dorothy Lazard will moderate this conversation between two Oakland authors with unique perspectives on history and time. The authors will discuss their recent books: *Deep Oakland: How Geology Built a City* (Alden) and *Saving Time: Discovering a Life Beyond the Clock* (Odell).

■ **Sister Love: Celebrating the Women of the Black Panther Party Exhibit Launch.** 2 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 7. Billy X Jennings will discuss the women of the Black Panther Party, as seen in the exhibit on the first floor of the Main Library.

■ **Oral Historians in the East Bay,** 6 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 11. Liam O'Donoghue will host this panel discussion with local oral historians Elena Botkin-Levy (GEMS Oral Histories), Roy Chan (Chinatown Memories), Shanna Farrell (Bancroft Library's Oral History Center), and Sue Mark and Dr. Saturu Ned (Commons Archive).

■ **Save Your Oakland Stories.** Times vary. Saturday, Oct. 14, in the Magazine & Newspaper Room, 2nd floor, Main Library Sign up for a 20-minute time slot to record your memories of Oakland with Elena Botkin-Levy of GEMS Oral Histories.

■ **Mountain View Cemetery with East Bay Yesterday,** 6 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 24. Liam O'Donoghue presents the history of Oakland's largest cemetery, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Hear about the impressive monuments, famous residents, and more.

■ **Haunted History Bike Tour: Mountain View Cemetery.** 10 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 29. Meet us at the front steps of the Main Library



OAKLAND HISTORY CENTER

DR. MARCUS FOSTER with a group of kindergarteners in 1973.

for a haunting jaunt to Mountain View Cemetery. We'll stop along the way for a few bone-chilling tales of Oakland history.

■ **Santi Elijah Holley on the Shakur Family.** 6 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 7. Author Santi Elijah Holley will discuss his book *An Amerikan Family: the Shakurs and the Nation They Created*.

■ **Imagined Histories: Make New Stories from Old Photos.** 4 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 8 at the Main Library's TeenZone. Join us for a creative writing workshop for teens (ages 12–18). We'll take inspiration from items from the Oakland History Center and come up with stories or poems creating our own versions of history.

■ **Sister Love: Celebrating the Women of the Black Panther Party,** Oct. 1–Dec. 2 On the first floor of the Main Library. Photographs from the collection of Black Panther Party archivist Billy X Jennings, featuring the women of the BPP and the Oakland Community School.

■ **Dr. Marcus Foster: Making Oakland Schools Work,** Oct. 3–Dec. 31 On the second floor of the Main Library. Superintendent Dr. Marcus Foster led Oakland public schools through the chaotic early 1970s. This exhibit commemorates the 50th anniversary of his death and the 100th anniversary of his birth. Learn about how Dr. Foster came to Oakland, his transformative vision for OUSD, and what happened after his assassination in November 1973. ■

Thank you to our volunteers who make all our events possible!

LECTURE PRESENTERS/SPEAKERS

Dorothy Lazard: "Placing Yourself in History; the Challenge of Writing a Memoir," Host Charles Bucher, technical support Lara Amin & Tara Parker-Essig, Amelia Marshall volunteer. Special thanks to the Oakland Public Library for providing the venue.

WALKING TOUR LEADERS

Phil Bellman, Paul Brekke-Miesner, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Nancy Donald, Riley Doty, Dennis Evanosky, John Nicoles, Greg Novak, Dale Ridsen, Stuart Swiedler, Ron Hook, Daniella Thompson, Susanna Conaway (Feral Studio) & The Phillips Temple CME Church, Don Tyler & Paul Silberstein (Pardee Home Museum), Dave Weinstein & Eichler homeowners, Valerie Winemiller, Page Yarwood, Jeremy Cole (Kaiser Home) & Haddon Hill homeowners.

WALKING TOUR VOLUNTEERS

Darrell Anderson, Lara Amin, Laine Farley, Alison Finlay, Ernie Grafe, Mary Harper, Neil Heyden, Robin Heyden, Ann Killebrew, Reza Rezvani, Marilyn Siegel, Nil Taspinar, Jane Wellman



Castlemont

Continued from page 7

Oakland placed the winning bid to design the new Castlemont. They designed two two-story academic buildings that could accommodate up to 1400 students, a 999-seat auditorium, a shop building, and a combination cafeteria-library-music-art wing. Most of these replacement buildings were erected in the footprints of their Tudor predecessors.

The total cost for the new Castlemont was \$3.5 million, financed by the 1956 bond measure that approved \$40 million for Oakland school improvements (including the construction of Woodrow Wilson Junior High School). The Tudor masterpiece was leveled; only one smaller building survived. Builders Williams and Burrows of Belmont began work on the new school addition in January 1960. During the construction of the new school buildings, students attended classes in more than 100 portables at the rear of the campus.

The new Castlemont High School, which opened in September 1961, was a sleek, modern glass and steel building with bright orange and gold terrazzo panels—a sharp departure from the stately “Halls of Ivy” it had once been.

At its formal dedication ceremonies two months later, Oakland Public School Superintendent Selmer H. Berg presented the school to the students and faculty, and Melvin J. Caughell, Oakland school board member, welcomed community members. In a program entitled “The Story of a School,” students related the history of their school, decade by decade. They honored “Memories of the Twenties,” “Dreams of the Thirties,” “The Anxious Forties,” “Fulfillment in the Fifties,” and “The Ongoing Sixties.” The student orchestra, dance band, dance class, and the Castleers performed these segments. The James E. Snyder Memorial Organ was also dedicated during the ceremony to honor the late head of the school’s music department. The Castlemont Choir performed Mr. Snyder’s “Gloria in Excelsis.”

For those who are interested, the Oakland History Center digitized many of the choir’s performances under Mr. Snyder’s direction. You can find them at www.archive.org by typing in “Oakland History Room” in the

search field and scrolling down to Castlemont’s listings.

From the looks of that year’s 1961 Falcon yearbook, the students took to the new facilities right away, perhaps glad to be out of the portables. Yet today, the orange and gold panels that seemed to herald the rainbow-pop color palette of the swinging 1960s have been painted a discordant purple and gray. And sadly, only one of the original Tudor buildings remains on campus, painted an unfortunate salmon color. ■

October 15: save the date!



GENE ANDERSON

HELP OHA CELEBRATE our 2023 Partners in Preservation Awards on Sunday, Oct. 15 at 4 pm. Participate in this wonderful event honoring culture, history, architecture, and community at the Blue Room of the historic Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Drive. Watch for email or check events at www.oaklandheritage.org! ■

Main Library undertakes feasibility study

Help! Weigh in on a feasibility study for improvements or replacement of the Oakland Main Library on 14th Street. Home to administration, the Oakland History Center, and key library services and collections, the library is contemplating its future! A new Hoover-Foster branch is also under study. You can sign up here: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/oakland-public-library-feasibility-study>.

Built in 1951, the building needs updating, possible expansion, or a new structure. The city owns its square block of downtown. What will happen here? ■

Tru-Ade

Continued from page 12

After Acme Scale, and continuing to the present, is Allied Fluid Products, formerly Allied Packing and Shipping and Allied Packing and Supply. Allied is a distributor of such fluid handling products as industrial hoses, gaskets, pumps, and seals. In this case, the “packing” referred to has to do with fluid transfer, not with your Amazon returns. Allied has typically shared the building over the years, often with maritime-connected businesses. For the last several years it’s been Hoses Unlimited, also in the business of industrial fluid transfer products.

From soft drinks to fluid transfer, liquids to liquids. Full circle, in a way, for 5303 Adeline. ■

TRU-Ade
Not Carbonated
THE NEWEST DRINK FOR TRUE REFRESHMENT

*Taste it...
Test it...
Request it Today!*

Enjoy today's newest flavor inspiration... TRU-ADE! It's the delightfully different beverage that's pure and natural. There's nothing artificial added—it's not carbonated... it's made with real fruit... there's no synthetic preservative.

TRY TRU-ADE—the family favorite with the naturally refreshing flavor of real, delicious juice! It's thirst-quenching any time—wholesome all the time!

BUY TRU-ADE—by the bottle and by the case. Let children drink all they want—it's nature's gift for real refreshment!

Here's why Tru-Ade is naturally a better beverage

NOT CARBONATED—It's super-smooth and flavorful—a taste that can't be matched, because it's naturally tangy and full-bodied!

MADE WITH REAL FRUIT—Tru-Ade contains no synthetic flavors—it's made with the finest juice, and other natural ingredients.

PASTEURIZED—Like fine foods, Tru-Ade's purity and flavor is attained with an expensive pasteurization process—your guarantee of goodness!

VACUUM-SEALED—That distinctive, full-rich Tru-Ade flavor can't escape... vacuum-sealing keeps it at the peak of perfect pleasure!

NO PRESERVATIVES—Tru-Ade contains no Benzene or Soda—nothing to alter the taste-essence in every bottle.

The Cold... Wherever Good Beverages Are Sold

BUY IT TODAY! 5¢

25¢ a carton
1.00 a case

OAKLAND HISTORY CENTER

VINTAGE AD for Tru-Ade showing the collectable glass bottle



Recounting a great walking summer

By Mary Harper, President

What a summer it's been! We've visited historic neighborhoods and walked and hiked in bucolic parks. For over 40 years, except for the COVID years, OHA has filled tourgoers' summer plates with 16 tours. We extend many thanks to our tour leaders: Dennis Evanosky, Dale Risdien, Phil Bellman, Don Tyler, Greg Novak, Riley Doty, Paul Brekke-Miesner, Dave Weinstein, Stuart Swiedler, Ron Hook, Nancy Donald, Page Yarwood, Valerie Winemiller, John Nicoles, and Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni, as well as to all the wonderful volunteers, longtime board member Alison Finlay, and our administrator/outreach coordinator Lara Amin. OHA did it again!

Dennis led his classic tour through Mountain View Cemetery, where we stopped at the graves and monuments of famous figures of the past. We visited the neighborhoods of Sheffield Village (declared an historic district in 2005), Bushrod Park (from where many of Oakland athletes hailed), Sequoyah Hills (where four very kind and generous people opened their Eichler homes to us), Haddon Hill (one of the first neighborhoods with underground

utilities), Richmond Boulevard (where you can walk along Glen Echo Creek), Brooklyn (where redwood logs were shipped from the foot of 13th Avenue), and finally the Dimond neighborhood (where Dennis led us on a stroll along Sausal Creek).

We learned about trees at Joaquin Miller Park and Roberts Recreation Center, and about bonsai, bowling and butterflies at Lakeside Park. We saw historic houses in the way of the construction of Interstate 980, which were saved from the wrecking ball and moved to Preservation Park. We took a trip back in time to the Cohen Bray House, where original furnishings remain.

We found out how the jagged Oakland-Berkeley border came to be and heard about the competition between the Key System and the Southern Pacific. No walking tour season would be complete without a walk around what was F. M. "Borax" Smith's Arbor Villa estate. We toured Uptown and saw Beaux Arts, Moderne and Art Deco buildings with terra cotta facades.

But that's not all OHA did this summer. At the suggestion of a long-time admirer of the Asian Resource Center at 8th and Harrison, OHA placed a plaque in its art gallery. The timing was perfect since it was the building's



MALCOLM WALLACE

NEW PLAQUE HONORS the Asian Resource Center

centennial. The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation hosted a fantastic celebration with a bountiful spread and dancing lions.

But, wait, there's more. OHA offered tours of the Posey Tube and immediate area. More tours may be coming, so stay tuned.

Thanks, everyone who contributed to OHA's fun filled, educational summer. We look forward to a happy autumn with our annual Partners in Preservation awards celebration and lectures. ■

Become a member!
Explore Oakland's cultural and historic treasures, and receive discounts on OHA events. Membership is a great gift, too!

- \$20 Student
- \$45 Individual
- \$80 Household
- \$125 Organization
- \$300 Contributor
- \$500 Patron
- Contribution to OHA Leadership Fund _____

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Oakland Heritage Alliance, 446 17th St., Suite 301, Oakland, CA 94612 • OHA is a 501(c)3 organization

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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.

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You could buy one for a nickel

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

On the corner of Adeline and Lowell in North Oakland there's a one-story brick-clad building with a sweet, curved corner. A very beguiling, not-square corner. Today it houses Allied Fluid Products and Hoses Unlimited, but like so many of Oakland's industrial buildings, 5303 Adeline has an eclectic story.

The story begins in 1947 when Martin Lang commissioned a survey of the property, then filed permits to build a bottling plant. Plans called for brick and concrete block cladding over a wood frame with concrete block walls, at an estimated cost of \$40,000. The architect named on the building permits was the locally prolific Ralph E. Wastell. Among Wastell's non-residential projects were the Montclair Women's Club, Burckhalter Elementary School, and the Aviary Club at the Bohemian Grove. An *Oakland Tribune* article on March 26 announcing the project reported that it was being built for the "newly formed" Tru-Ade bottling company, of which Martin Lang was president. The same article described Lang as a "Berkeley businessman." He was then the manager of the Berkeley office of Canteen Services, the vending machine company. Among the items Canteen's machines vended were soft drinks. Synergy.

What about Tru-Ade? Now defunct, it was an uncarbonated fruit juice-based soft drink whose advertisements featured language that would not be out of place describing today's up-market bottled drinks.

"Pure and natural!" "No preservatives!" "Real fruit juice!" "No artificial flavors!" And this was in 1948. As an aside, Tru-Ade's distinctive bottles, with raised ridges and bobbles between them, are stalwarts of the vintage pop bottle collectors' market.

Tru-Ade lasted only a few years in Oakland, disappearing from the telephone directories after 1951. Next up, for a few years, was Lermac, Inc., a Cold War-era supplier of laboratory equipment. One of their products, featured in an undated advertisement, was "The Egghead," a neutron survey meter. After Lermac, Emeryville's Marchant Calculators moved in for a few years, conducting electronic research at the Adeline Street outpost.

Between 1960 and 1965, Canteen Services operated out of 5303 Adeline. It isn't clear from the available records whether Martin Lang, the original developer of the property, influenced this relocation from Berkeley. Building permit records tell us that Canteen added a commercial kitchen to the site. At the same time Canteen was debuting the latest in vending machine technology, the change machine. The *Tribune* reported on August 17, 1960, almost breathlessly, that



A CURVING WALL at 5303 Adeline St. signals mid-century allure.

Canteen's new marvel was being "unwrapped for its first West Coast viewing" in Oakland. Canteen's "amazing machine" allowed the user to slip a single into the slot and get back six nickels, two dimes, and two quarters, just like that. Not only could it tell the difference between a single and a fiver, but it would also reject counterfeits.

In 1965, Canteen moved to San Leandro and 5303's next occupant, Acme Scale Company, moved in and stayed until 1979 when they, too, decamped to San Leandro. Then, as now, Acme Scale distributed scales for industrial and commercial applications. A display ad in the 1969 Yellow Pages shows off their many offerings, including crane scales and something called a dormant.

See **TRU-ADE** on page 10

KATHLEEN DIGIOVANNI