

Oakland's Cultural Heritage Survey



Oaks in Oakland, 1869

In case you question the verity of this artist's view of *Oaks In Oakland*, please refer to corroboration to a drawn-from-life painting exhibited in the Art Department of the Oakland Museum - Ferdinand Richardt's 1869 "The Oaks at 8th and Madison". Yes, there were once *many* oaks in Oakland! Our greatest heritage is a natural one. While native coast live oaks are hard to find in their namesake city, waterbodies, hills and canyons - these remain in abundance. But they must be appreciated and protected, and along with them, our human heritage. The Survey described here was undertaken in 1979 to record and document the natural, human, and architectural heritage of Oakland.

Two years ago, the Department of City Planning sought and received a Survey planning grant from the Department of Interior through the California Office of Historic Preservation. State contractual provisions guaranteed that grant funds (for hiring a part-time coordinator, making

and processing photographs, purchasing supplies, etc.) would be matched by contributed time from city planners and volunteers. An advisory Steering Committee was chosen, composed of local historians, architectural authorities, representatives of local ethnic communities, and interested citizens. The Committee, using a series of state-mandated guidelines, met over a six month period and formulated a Survey methodology. These important directions made possible the Survey work carried out during 1980-81.

When the Committee's advisory role was completed in June, 1980, the members realized that together they brought energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to a cause greatly in need of support - preservation of and education about Oakland's special qualities, especially those rooted in the past and alive today. A majority of Steering Committee members became the founding board of directors of the *Oakland Heritage Alliance*, and the Survey continues to be a primary concern of OHA.

But what of the Survey itself? As directed by the Steering Committee, coordinator and staff recruited over fifty volunteers, training them to recognize, record, and photograph architectural details in the field. Volunteers also learned to research the histories of early occupants and architects in old tax record books and building permits.

Twenty-two small "Survey Centers" were selected to sample Oakland historically, geographically, visually, and ethnically. Future years will expand on these small beginnings until the entire City has been adequately recorded.

The major product of the Survey is a written record of features deemed cultur-
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Oakland Heritage Alliance was formed to bring together community groups and individuals sharing an interest in the history of Oakland, and in the preservation and conservation of the city's archaeological, architectural, cultural, environmental, and historical resources.

OFFICERS 1980-81

President	Beth Bagwell
V.P. Programs and Education	Leslie Flint
V.P. Fund Raising	Marlene Wilson
V.P. Public Relations	Beth Bagwell
Financial Officer	Brad Niebling
Recording/Corresponding Secretary	Marlene Wilson
Membership Secretary	Jon Good

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Marlene Wilson	832-8700
Dean Yabuki	893-1278

OHA was incorporated in 1980 as a California non-profit corporation. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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CREDITS Editor: William Sturm; Design: Blair Prentice; Production: Gary Knecht, Esther Golde, Marlene Wilson; Contributors: Melinda Frye, Charles B. Oakland, Dean Yabuki, Howard Ah-Tye

OHA CALENDAR

The *OHA* Calendar lists events related to history and preservation that may be of interest to *OHA* members. To submit events for listing, contact Dean M. Yabuki, 842 Grosvenor Place, Oakland, California 94610, (415) 893-1278. The deadline for the October-November calendar is Friday, September 4, 1981.

Sun 9 August 12:30pm

Alameda Gold Coast Walking Tour. George Gunn, Alameda Museum Curator. Northern California Chapter, Victorian Society in America potluck picnic and tour. Franklin Park, Paru & San Antonio Streets, Alameda. Reservations required. \$1.00/VSA member, \$2.00/guest. Contact Victoria Boddington (415) 521-2359 or Judy Hunter (415) 935-6528.

Tues 11 August 8:00pm

Alma Film Premiere. California Historical Society and Friends of the Alma and Historic Ships. Film on the two-masted schooner now moored at the Hyde Street Pier Museum, San Francisco. Fireman's Fund Auditorium, 3333 California Street, San Francisco. Reservations required. Free. Contact CHS (415) 576-1848.

Sat 15 August 10:00am-4:00pm

San Francisco Bay History Cruise. California Historical Society. This day long cruise can include lunch at Sabella's Restaurant in Tiburon. Departs from Pier 43½, Fisherman's Wharf, San Francisco. Reservations required. With lunch: \$27/CHS member, \$30/other; cruise only: \$17/CHS member, \$20/other. Contact CHS (415) 567-1848.

Sun 16 August 10:00am-Noon

Oakland Museum Bicycle Tour of Historic Oakland. Museum docents lead a two-hour tour through downtown and nearby landmark sites. Departs from the 10th Street entrance of the Museum. Participants must be 12 or older. Enrollment limited, reservations required. Free. (415) 273-3514. Repeated Sun 20 September.

Mon 17 August

OHA Community Awareness Committee Meeting. Contact Marlene Wilson, (415) 832-8700 for details.

Wed 26 August 7:30-10:00pm

Terra Cotta Preservation and the Rehabilitation of the Hebron Building. A joint program of *OHA* and the Friends of Terra Cotta. 2nd floor meeting room of the Asian Health Services, East Bay Asian Resource Center, Hebron Building, 310 8th Street at Harrison Street, Oakland. Free. Contact Dean Yabuki (415) 893-1278 or David Look (415) 556-7741. For more details, see announcement on page 8.

Tues 1 September - Fri 4 September

Society of American Archivists Conference. Co-hosted by the Berkeley Historical Society. U.C. Berkeley. Contact Gloria Cooper (415) 524-3892.

Sat 12 September

OHA Theater Party - an Evening under the Stars. Woodminster Amphitheater, 3300

Joaquin Miller Road, Oakland. "Sound of Music," 8:30pm. Tickets \$6.50 (regularly \$7.00). Send checks payable to Woodminster Amphitheater to Marlene Wilson, 601 Vernon St., Oakland CA 94610 by August 31. Pre-theater "bring your own everything" picnic in Joaquin Miller Park, 6:30pm, with an informal tour of this historic theater. Contact M. Wilson for more details (415) 832-8700.

Mon 14 September - 11 January 6:30pm
Oakland Tours Program Guide Training. Tom Wolf, Oakland Historian. Laney College Oakland history class and tour giving instruction. Kaiser Center, Employee's Club, Room 211, Lakeside Drive & 20th Street, Oakland. Pre-registration for tour guides required, history class can be taken separately. Free. Contact Oakland Tours Program (415) 273-3234.

Tues 15 September 7:45
The Persistence of Fantasy in San Francisco: the Gold Rush to the Present. Gray Brechin, Architectural Historian. Heritage. Haas-Lillienthal House ballroom, 2007 Franklin Street, San Francisco. Free/Heritage member, \$2.00/other. Contact Heritage (415) 441-3000.

Sun 20 September Noon-5:00pm
4th Annual Oakland Preservation Fair. Camron-Stanford House and grounds, 1418 Lakeside Drive at 14th Street, Oakland. Free. Contact Annalee Allen (415) 654-6791.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.
 Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 3:30pm
 City Hall, Room 221, Washington & 14th
 Streets, (415) 273-3941.

Oakland City Planning Commission. Meets the 2nd
 & 4th Wednesday of the month, 1:30pm, City
 Hall, Room 115, (415) 273-3941.

Oakland City Council. Meets every Tuesday evening,
 7:30pm, City Hall Council Chambers, (415)
 273-3266.

Oakland Heritage Alliance Board. Meets the 1st
 Monday of the month, 7:30pm. For location
 and agenda, contact Marlene Wilson, (415)
 832-8700 (days).

Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association.
 Meets the last Sunday of the month, 7:30pm.
 For location and program, contact BNPA,
 P.O. Box 187, Oakland 94604.

Oakland Design Advocates. Meets the 2nd Wednesday
 morning of the month, 7:30am, Tom Lovely's
 Restaurant, 336 Grand Avenue, (415) 893-
 6834.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED TOURS AND ACTIVITIES

Camron-Stanford House. Free tours are offered
 Wednesdays, 11am-4pm, and Sundays 1-4pm.
 (415) 836-1976.

Paramount Theatre Tours. Tours are offered the
 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am.
 2025 Broadway at 21st Street. \$1.00. Meet
 promptly at the box office entrance on 21st
 Street, (415) 465-6400.

Oakland Tours Program. Free tours are offered of
 Old Oakland, City Center-Downtown, Uptown,
 Preservation Park, and Chinatown. For a
 schedule, call (415) 273-3234. ■

Briefing

● On July 4, a fire gutted the FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH at 24th and Broadway, leaving only the bricks and exterior steel-frame shell. The building had been for sale since January. As of July 13, the cause of the fire was still under investigation.

The fire left the upper portions of two of the exterior walls leaning inwards. The City is awaiting completion of a structural investigation being conducted by the Church before determining whether the shell should be ordered demolished as a public hazard.



Fire remains of First United Methodist Church

● An attempt by the Adams Point Neighborhood Preservation Association to preserve the VICTOR H. METCALF HOUSE, 245 Perkins Street, at its present location was rejected May 19 by the City Council, which also upheld an earlier City Planning Commission approval of a new condominium for the site, a project which
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NEIGHBORHOOD TOURS SUCCESSFUL

OHA's July series of eight Oakland Neighborhood walking tours was well attended and received enthusiastic response. Because of this success, *OHA* is considering repeating the series in September. Watch the newspapers for announcements. ■

 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OHA extends special thanks to the Oakland office of BankCal--The Bank of California, Kathryn L. Sinnes, Manager, for a donation to the *OHA* news.

 BRIEFING, Continued from page 3

threatened the house with demolition. However, the Council retained a Planning Commission requirement that the house be moved to a new site rather than being demolished. The developers have indicated that they expect to move the house to a vacant site in the Oak Center neighborhood.

After the Council's decision, the Neighborhood Association attempted to obtain City Landmark designation for the house. Although the Landmarks Board approved the designation on May 20, the City Planning Commission tabled the designation on June 10, preferring to postpone action until after the house was moved.

- After receiving expressions of concern from the North Oakland District Council, the Sierra Club and *OHA*, the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District has postponed indefinitely the culverting of the section of TEMESCAL CREEK between Grove and Adeline Streets (See *OHA News*, Spring 1981 issue).
- Fruitvale residents, under the leadership of Oakland Community Organizations, have succeeded in shutting down a state-

operated prisoner training facility in the former ST. JOSEPH'S HOME at 2647 East 14th Street. The future of the Colonial Revival red brick building, once a nursing home for the elderly, is now in doubt.

- The City Council on July 7 unanimously reversed an earlier City Planning Commission approval of a new 38-unit condominium along RICHMOND BOULEVARD (See *OHA News*, June-July 1981 issue.) The case had been appealed to the Council by the Richmond Boulevard Neighborhood Preservation Association, which wants to preserve the neighborhood's existing small-scale houses and natural environment. In a follow-up action, the Neighborhood Association requested that the area be down-zoned from its present R-70 high-density to R-50 medium density. If approved, the rezoning would prevent future construction of large new condos. ■

Oakland Landmarks Board Actions

Following is a summary of actions taken by the board at its meetings of May, June, and July, 1981.

Landmark status recommended:

- Grand Lake Theater and rooftop sign. Landmark designation of the Grand Lake Theater and sign was subsequently approved by the City Planning Commission and City Council.
- Victor H. Metcalf House - 245 Perkins Street. See "Briefing" for details.

Landmark studies in progress:

- James De Fremery House - 1651 Adeline Street (in De Fremery Park). Home of early Oakland pioneer, built in early 1860's.
- Dr. William Bamford House - 1235 E. 15th Street. Home of pioneer Brooklyn physician, built 1850's or early 1860's.

Study list:

- The board deleted the First United Methodist Church from the Study List. See "Briefing" for details.

Election of officers:

- Sister Ethel Mary Tinneman was elected board chairperson for 1981-82. Elected for vice-chairperson was Jean Spees. ■



St. Joseph's Home



Oakland's Chinatown: A History



Oakland Chinatown produce market, c.1910

We are all aware of San Francisco's important Chinatown, its size, as compared to other Chinese settlements in the state, its strongly ethnic character. Yet there is another settlement across the bay growing and progressing rapidly - Oakland's Chinatown. It may never compete with San Francisco for various reasons; however, it possesses distinct advantages and potentiality for new community development.

Chinese were first employed in the redwood groves in the Oakland hills in the 1840's, but most became farmers. Although the Chinese were not permitted to own real estate property then, they leased the farms from their white landlords. They

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SURVEY, Continued from page 1

ally significant to Oakland's people. A feature may be a particularly handsome and rare building type, a structure associated with a famous resident or with a group of typical citizens, a monument, a hitching post, a creek, or even an entire neighborhood or district that represents a particular aspect of Oakland's cultural tradition. (In another essay in this issue, Howard Ah-Tye, a member of the Survey's initial Steering Committee, describes one of the Survey's first centers - Chinatown.)

The value of this record will be critically important in the City's planning

process, especially as questions of change arise. A documented history of the feature will be on file at City Hall for immediate reference, rather than necessitating crisis research in the shadow of a bulldozer. It is hoped, in this way, to proceed with Oakland's development in an orderly way and with a minimum loss of desirable physical features from our past that contribute to the richness of the present.

Another important use of the Survey's results is expected to be nomination to City or State Landmark status or to the National Register of Historic Places; in the case of the National Register, this can bring tax advantages to the owner.

Staff is now completing write-ups for the properties inventoried during the first full year of the Survey. By the end of summer this data will be available to the public on request, as well as being reported widely through news articles here and in the general press. In addition, when funds are raised, an inexpensive publication containing the Survey's initial findings, such as an inexpensive walking guide, will be published for the community.

Did you know that Oakland's first brick building still stands? (It's at 3rd and Broadway.) Ever wonder about whole streets of architecturally similar houses? (These were planned neighborhoods, called by their builders "modest mansions".) Do you look above street level remodelings to the upper stories? (You might see visually fascinating details from the past.) These are some of the facts and queries that the Survey addresses.

Reduced federal funding under the Reagan budget will curtail Survey efforts during fiscal year 1981-82, but the Survey will concentrate on documenting as much as possible of the greater downtown, or "Central District". If you are interested in volunteering as a field recorder, photographer, or researcher in the fall, please leave your name with the Survey Office at 835-4620, or the City Planning Department at 273-3941.

- Melinda Frye ■



CHINATOWN, Continued from page 5

grew much of the garden vegetables and fruits and transported them to the Oakland wholesale houses by horses.

In 1860, out of a total Oakland population of 1,549, the Chinese numbered 96. In the early building and growth of the town, the Chinese helped build Temescal and Chabot dams, worked in the jute mills and the explosive factories, labored on the harbors and participated extensively in railroad construction. (Even then, Oakland was a major center of railroad-ing.) The Chinese also participated in fishing and were quite active in the shrimp industry.

Present-day Oakland Chinatown began in the 1870's, having moved four times from different locations. The cycle of progress commenced in the community in 1963 when traffic was re-routed along Webster Street for cars traveling to Alameda. This exposure caused many outsiders to notice the Chinese restaurants and eventually return to patronize them. Chinese cuisine has been popular for some time. Doctors recommended it because of its nutritious food value. (People who enjoy Chinese food should try tea houses - identified by the Chinese as Dim Sum parlors or simply, yum cha.)

When in 1964 changes in immigration law allowed more Chinese to enter the U.S., many chose Oakland Chinatown because of the advantages of job opportunities, less congestion (as compared to San Francisco), ideal weather, rental and living availability and the presence of friends or relatives here to help them along the way. The influx of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and elsewhere has also increased the population here. Consequently, there are considerably more activities in Oakland Chinatown. In addition to restaurants, there are fortune cookie factories, grocery stores, jewelry shops, gift shops, investment brokers, noodle factories, sewing factories, hair styling shops, etc.

For years there were no banks or money institutions here in Oakland Chinatown until recently - now there are three.

OHA Elections Coming Soon

Nominations are being received from now through September 1 for candidates in October elections for OHA's board of directors. This is your chance to have a voice in the future direction of OHA. If you know of someone you would like to see considered for nomination, or if you yourself are interested, please write to the OHA Nominating Committee, attention of Bruce Judd, at OHA's address.

This year only, in accordance with OHA by-laws, all twelve seats are open. Six new board members will serve two-year terms, while the other six will hold office for one year. In subsequent years, all terms will be two years but will end in alternate years so that each year, only half the board will turn over, ensuring continuity. Board meetings are held on the first Monday evening of each month. Board members serve without pay.

The current board believes that in our first year, OHA has made great strides as Oakland's only citywide preservation organization. To continue this momentum by ensuring the election of a strong and active board, OHA needs to hear from members. Get involved.

Members will have an opportunity to meet each other and the current board by attending a special gathering August 26, jointly sponsored by OHA and the Friends of Terra Cotta. ■

The future of Oakland Chinatown is further enhanced by the redevelopment of four square city blocks - from 9th to 12th streets. Originally the Hong Kong U.S.A. project, the original developers withdrew because of litigation. The project is now resumed by Asian Holdings, a joint venture of three real estate companies: Carrion Investments, Island Realty Ltd., and Princehill Investment Co. Their first phase will be a 56 million dollar, six story building now under construction.

Guided tours are now being conducted of the area (See OHA Calendar). Surveys in various organizations are being implemented - two recently completed. For those who enjoy Chinese food, the restaurants are all here to accommodate. An impulse to browse about the various shops will be fulfilling; or even drop by the Asian Public Library, located on 449 9th Street, to speak to Judy Yung, librarian. Visualize its past history as one mingles with the hustle and bustle of the crowd.

Yes, Oakland Chinatown has come a long way!

- Howard Ah-Tye ■



OHA Committees Need You

NOW - *OHA* needs your help more than ever. *OHA News*, neighborhood walking tours, plus countless efforts behind the scenes are presently being accomplished by a small number of people. Greater participation is needed. Following is a list of tasks which need to be done:

Volunteer Coordinator: Contact members and volunteers to help with *OHA* projects, maintain a "manpower file" with information on who can do what, when, etc. Work with Membership Secretary to maintain current addresses and phone numbers; work with Committee chairs to assess needs and goals for *OHA* projects, including human and material resources. Must be able to give at least 1½ days per week.

Writers/Researchers: For *OHA News*, to research and write articles relevant to late breaking events; prepare materials for walking tours, *OHA* events, etc. Must be able to give at least 10 hours per month.

Typists: For *OHA News*, type articles for *OHA News*, announcements, circulars, etc. Occasionally on a last minute basis. Selectric type-writer helpful, but not necessary.

Courier: General assignment; to make occasional

trips to the printers, assist in picking up materials, persons, etc. Must have a car, be available 8-12 hours a month.

Photographers: For *OHA News* and Community Awareness. Persons must be able to photograph various locales, buildings, etc., on an assignment or emergency basis. Must have own 35 mm camera. 4-10 hours per month.

Project Coordinator: *OHA* Monthly lectures. *OHA* would like to present monthly public lecture meetings. Work has already begun to set these meetings up for the fall. We need someone to schedule the meetings, arrange for meeting place, speakers, topics, etc. Must be able to give at least 1-2 days per week.

Committee members for *OHA* Committees: Community Awareness, Fundraising Programs & Education, Newsletter, all need people to help with fresh ideas, and comments about all *OHA* projects. If you are interested in any of these groups, each meets once a month for approximately two hours.

If any of the above descriptions suit your interests, whether you can give some or all of the necessary time, please call Jon Good, 531-5086. Help *OHA*! ■

OHA Continues to Grow

New members of *OHA* since May 5th:

Myles B./Ida Abbott, Bank of California, Ann Barnes, Mr./Mrs. S. D. Bechtel, Patricia Carlton/George Dedekian, Marian F. Carter, Stanley Chan, Robert/Jean Chastain, Richard C. Clark, Deborah Cooper, F. Hayden Curry/Joe Nieberding, M. C. Duffy, Jean A. Elliott, Terry R. Galloway, Günter/Esther Golde, Helen/Chris Hadley, Noah Harms/Richelle Lieberman.

Joolia Harper, Donald/Joanne Hausler, Tamra C. Hege, Margaret R. Henry, Horace/Eileen Herring, Enola Hicks, Kathryn Hughes, Catherine C. Jensen/David M. Roth, DeWitt Johnson, Mr./Mrs. Gustav Knecht, Virginia Lawler, David W. Look, Gerald Lundy, Kenneth Mahaffey, Bonnie Maly, Stephanie/Curt Manning, Arline Martin.

Shirley Massengill, Mrs. Philip McCaffery,

Cookie Meisenheimer, Woody Minor, Joan Morrow, Pamela Morton, Paramount Theatre, Ruth Peck, Edward/Mary Phillips, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Warren Radford, Richard Rothman, George Rowan, Jr., Carole/George Russell, Diane Scarritt, Barbara/Sam Skelly, Peter/Barbara Skowronski, Leota Smith, Helen M. Stackable.

Peggy/Bob Stinnett, John Sutter, Techni-Cal Systems, Sally Thomas, E. Roger Thompson, Sister Ethel Mary Tinnemann, Royal E. Towns, Sr., Carolyn Vermaaten.

If you are not already a member, you too can become a Charter Member of this growing community organization by joining by August 31, 1981. A membership form is provided for your convenience. ■

Oakland Heritage Alliance, 5569 Lawton Avenue, Oakland, California 94618

JOIN OHA TODAY! Your annual tax-deductible membership dues include the **OHA News** and announcements of all **OHA** activities. Additional contributions and your active participation will make **OHA** a more effective organization.

Name _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____

Phone Numbers (H) _____ (W) _____

I am willing to participate in the following ways:

- \$ 5 Senior/student/limited income (1 vote)
- \$10 Individual (1 vote)
- \$15 Family (2 votes)
- \$25 Organization (1 vote)
- \$ _____ Additional contribution
- New Renewal
- Change of Address only

Oakland Preservation Fair

The Oakland Preservation Fair has become a yearly tradition at the Camron-Stanford House in Lakeside Park. The Fair is intended to reach a broad segment of the Bay Area community interested in restoration and Oakland history. The event is sponsored by the Camron-Stanford House and Volunteers for Oakland, with the cooperation of the Oakland Museum. The goals of the Fair are to increase awareness of the many aspects of urban rejuvenation as well as to foster cooperation and public exposure among those involved in the preservation movement.

Once again, members of the Oakland Symphony, Calvin Simmons music director, will give a pops concert performance, conducted by Jerome Neff. Other

entertainment include the Wendy Rogers Dance Company, the League of Black Musicians, and a fashion show from the Museum of Vintage Fashion. The popular Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Parlor will again be functioning on the House veranda.

The last three fairs have featured diversified exhibits ranging from how to rebuild Victorian facades, to information on local history groups, from energy conservation displays, to demonstrating the 19th century art of blacksmithing. Several thousand are expected to turn out this year to visit the Camron-Stanford period room, view media shows and ride the Merritt Queen paddle boat. OHA will participate with a display.

For further information contact Annalee Allen, Fair Coordinator, 654-6791. Applications for exhibits are still being accepted. ■

OHA and Friends of Terra Cotta Meeting

The Friends of Terra Cotta, a new San Francisco-based national preservation group, and OHA are co-sponsoring a program August 26, 1981 on terra cotta preservation and the history, planning, and rehabilitation of the terra cotta-graced Hebron Building at 310 8th Street, now the East Bay Asian Resource Center. This program is held in cooperation with the East Bay Asian Local Development Corp.

The first joint effort of OHA and FOTC, the program will include refreshments and: reports on the activities of both groups and the Oakland Preservation Fair; a slide presentation on contemporary terra cotta production by OHA board member and preservation architect Bruce Judd; a brief history on the Hebron build-

ing and its environment by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey; and a slide presentation on the planning and rehabilitation of the Hebron Building for the East Bay Asian Resource Center by Oakland architect Jim Ishimaru of Ishimaru & O'Neill.

This free evening program is on Wednesday, August 26, 1981, at 7:30pm in the second floor meeting room of the Asian Health Services, East Bay Asian Resource Center, 310 8th Street (at Harrison Street), Oakland. All are welcomed.

If you would like to help with the program or if you have any questions, call Dean Yabuki 893-1278 or David Look 556-7741. ■

OAKLAND HISTORY NOTES

Opening in 1892 at Vernon and 24th Streets, the Piedmont Baths offered the aquatic delights of a huge salt water pool, complete with spring boards, toboggans, trapeze, and flying rings. Serving the needs of health and sport, the Baths continued in operation until 1937 when the building was demolished.

Postcard Courtesy Oakland Public Library



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Oakland, California 94618

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