

Early Life and Times in Rockridge

ROCK RIDGE PROPERTIES
OAKLAND CALIFORNIA
LAYMANCE REAL ESTATE COMPANY
EXCLUSIVE AGENTS
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The name "Rockridge" appears on maps as early as 1878, designating an area north and east of Broadway where prominent citizens built their estates among dramatic outcrops of sandstones and lava flows. But the rock ridge? According to the daughter of Horatio Livermore, one of the original subdividers of Rockridge, her mother coined the name to commemorate a favorite "Big Rock" on the

Brochure c.1912 showed early homes in and around the tract to establish its prestige, including "villa homes" in older area between College and Broadway. Map shows how the age-old course of Temescal Creek has been borrowed by Chabot's water company, the Sacramento Northern RR, "59th St. or Vernon Ave." (Chabot Rd.)--and later the Warren Freeway and BART. (Bancroft Library)

eastern portion of the Livermore property where the family often picnicked, today near Glenbrook and Bowling Drive. The Livermore home was located near today's Broadway Terr-

Rockridge House Tour May 19 - see p. 6

ace and Acacia Avenue, and their horses pastured on what is now the Claremont Country Club golf course.

Ohlonean Rockridge. Recalling the recent Rockridge past prompts the observation that just a few hundred years earlier, this area's first inhabitants, the coastal Ohlone Indians, experienced a far different landscape. The rock ridges had not yet been dynamited to prepare building sites; no eucalyptus silhouettes were visible on the ridges; instead, luxurious groves of oak and bay trees thrived wherever there was moisture to support them, especially along Temescal Creek. The flatter terrain was probably marshy from the uncontrolled spreading of swollen winter streams: some long-time residents still remember vacant lots that provided a watery habitat for frogs, polliwogs, water snakes, and fresh water turtles.

Meadows of native wild flowers and perennial native bunchgrasses (later completely replaced by annual European grasses) supported a diverse fauna now glimpsed only occasionally in the protected hills of the East Bay Regional Park District: deer, foxes, bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes. And, completely absent today from even the regional parks, preserved in California only on the state flag, grizzly bears patrolled Temescal Creek during the annual upstream migration of steelhead and salmon, and competed with the Ohlones for the acorn crop.

Spanish soldiers, on reconnaissance through this area, recorded what they called "temescals" along the creek, an Aztec-derived word for the tule sweat lodges used daily by Ohlone men.

Spanish Vistas. Rockridge may well be the spot where, in 1772, Captain Pedro Fages' expedition looking for an overland route from Monterey to the harbor at "Puerto de San Francisco" first saw the full panorama of San Francisco Bay, its islands, and the Golden Gate. The group turned inland to avoid creeks and marshes and, finding themselves on the sloping plain east of the Bay, they climbed to the top of a small bluff where their observations changed the course of history. The expedition's maps and journals support the belief that this hill is the one above the intersection of College Avenue and Broadway, now occupied by the California College of Arts and Crafts and the Claremont County Club, reportedly also a good vantage point, in 1906, for viewing the San Francisco earthquake and fires.



CCAC students and gardener in 1942, on hill overlooking the bay at what may be the Fages expedition vista point (CCAC archives)

Peralta Dreams and Nightmares. A later exploratory party, the de Anza expedition of 1776, included 17-year-old Luis Maria Peralta, who resolved to live among the oak woodlands and flower-studded meadows of the East Bay. When he retired from the Mexican army forty-five years later in 1820, he requested of the Governor of California and was granted "El Rancho de San Antonio," bordered on the south by San Leandro Creek and on the north by El Cerrito Creek, by the Bay's shore on the west and the summit of the hills on the east. Here Peralta grazed his cattle on the flatlands and forested timber in the hills until 1842 when he divided his holdings among his four sons, with Vicente Peralta receiving the "Encinal de Temescal" which included Rockridge. Beginning in 1850, Anglo squatters and poachers began to encroach upon many of the East Bay ranchos, and Vicente, like many other California rancheros, was soon in dire straits.

Early Movers and Shakers. Faced by these fast-moving threats, Vicente Peralta was, by 1852, glad to sell what was left of his "Encinal de Temescal" for \$10,000 to Col. John Coffee Hays and his associates. Hays was a Texas Ranger who became the first sheriff of San Francisco at the age of 33 and turned his abilities toward ranching and real estate development. His portion of the Peralta purchase included Rockridge where, from the mid-1850s, many of his well-to-do friends and acquaintances built elegant homes. One of these was J. Ross Browne, writer, world traveler, government agent and minister to China, whose "Pagoda Hill" mansion (1873), visible for miles, graced the rise above Ross Street and Chabot Road with "a Moorish dome on a French roof, a Sara-

cenic belfry with a Japanese temple."

In 1879, along with the brothers Charles and Horatio Livermore (not related to the Livermores of southern Alameda county), Hays filed a subdivision of the Rockridge tract. This was a propitious time: the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 irrevocably connected the East Bay to the rest of the country and Oakland's population started to take off. Already during the 1860s, urban Oakland's demand for water prompted Anthony Chabot to dam Temescal Creek, creating Lake Temescal.

Rockridge was still considered to be "country" and in the 1870s and 80s, the first farmhouses--built in the Italianate style of the day--dotted the area. On Keith Avenue, an unknown architect built a large farmhouse that is still graced by an old palm tree. Neighbors were few and very far between: perhaps the nearest would have lived on the other side of Temescal Creek in the handsome Italianate villa-farmhouse at 6165 Chabot Road.

Scattered farms lined the creek between College Avenue and Lake Temescal, among them Andrew Pryal's nursery (upper Chabot Road was known as Pryal's Lane). As late as the 1910s, mining man Charles Butters operated an explosives plant and metallurgical lab along the creek in the area between today's Chabot Court and Presley Way.

From the Ground Up. A different type of settlement was occurring on the west side of College Avenue where, by the 1890s, many Italian immigrants began to congregate. Vegetable gardens were one source of livelihood for residents who sold produce from their spacious kitchen gardens. Orchards and extensive truck gardens, watered by Temescal Creek, were common in this section. One of the largest truck gardens was operated by the Gighlione family whose property ran along College Avenue. Farther downstream, in the Temescal neighborhood, the big Lusk Cannery combined gardening and industry.

The Blake and Bilger Quarry near College and Broadway, still visible behind the Rockridge Shopping Center, supplied rock for street construction in Oakland and Berkeley, and many Italian quarriers were drawn to the neighborhood by the promise of jobs. When the 50-acre quarry merged with the Oakland Paving Company (whose distinctive triangular logo can still be seen on many local sidewalks), it employed hundreds of men--most of them Italian immigrants. Portions of the



Ross Browne's wildly ornamented Pagoda Hill (above) and the refined Bivins house on Chabot both date from 1873, and share many Italianate stylistic features (CCAC archives; Phil Bellman)

hill from which Spanish soldiers first viewed the Golden Gate were dispersed throughout Oakland, integrated into the new construction triggered by the population influx after the 1906 earthquake, and spread over the earth as part of the new road system required by the automobile and the expansion of public transit.

Getting Around in Rockridge. One of the tenets of development is that it follows transportation. The twenty years between 1890 and 1910 saw a trebling of Oakland's population, a dramatic leap from less than 49,000 to over 150,000. By 1920, more than 215,000 people lived in Oakland. The developing infrastructure that crisscrossed College Avenue encouraged and supported this population explosion, making it possible for people to live farther away from their work.

Electric street railways revolutionized transit all over the country in the early 1890s. By 1905, College Avenue was served by an Oakland Traction Line streetcar (Route



The Blake and Bilger quarry in operation c.1905 (above), and the quarry site today, adjoining the Rockridge Shopping Center on Pleasant Valley. (collection of Ted Wurm; Phil Bellman)



Owned by the Realty Syndicate, the Key Route was an integrated system of ferries, trains, streetcars, and extensive East Bay real estate holdings. Transforming bucolic parts of Temescal and Rockridge, the Key Route's "E" train followed Claremont, crossed College, and continued onto the grounds of the Claremont Hotel which, not coincidentally, was built by the same investors as the Key Route. In 1909 the fast-developing Rockridge was annexed to Oakland.

6), and it became possible to commute from almost anywhere in the Rockridge area to downtown Oakland or downtown Berkeley and all points between. Transbay commuting was facilitated in the same period when the San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose Railroad, nicknamed the Key Route or Key System, was extended throughout Oakland.



Sacramento Northern train crossing upper Chabot Road behind Chabot School and opposite Roanoke Road, February 1940. Running parallel to Temescal Creek, this train is headed for College and Shafter and thence to the Key Route Pier. (Ted Wurm)



By 1913, Rockridge was also traversed by the Oakland, Antioch and Eastern Railroad (later called the San Francisco and Sacramento Railroad, and Sacramento Northern RR). From the east, the trains passed northeast of Lake Temescal, crossed upper Chabot Road and descended along a now non-existent stretch of Shafter where they stopped at the College Avenue Station (later called Rockridge Station), where the Rockridge BART station now stands.

A "Bedroom" Community. A community of commuters, served by the new transportation network, grew up among the farms and estates, filling in vacant lots that were near transit lines. Their homes were usually designed and built by local architects and developers, simple, convenient (by the standards of the time), cozy bungalows built in vast numbers in variations on the "Craftsman" and "California" bungalow, sometimes with such a combination of styles that they are categorized as "bungaloids."

To attract more affluent buyers, Laymance Real Estate Company opened a subdivision named "Rock Ridge Properties" in 1910. Fred E. Reed, hired by Laymance to design the development and to sell the lots, fashioned a landscape that would appeal to the wealthy status-conscious buyers he was targeting in

his advertising. Influenced by communities he had visited in southern California, he designed streets that followed the natural contours of the ridges and ravines. Rockridge Boulevard was allocated special treatment as the main entrance to the property: elaborate Italian stone pillars (designed and built by Reed's brother, Walter) still announce that this is a special place. Arizona date palms flanked the boulevard, which encircled a small landscaped park.

To reach the development, Reed encouraged prospective buyers to take the College Avenue line from Broadway, alight at College and Lawton, and walk one block east where an auto would meet them at the entrance. In his tireless promotion of Rock Ridge Properties, Reed wrote personal letters to every local dignitary--even the well-known architect, Julia Morgan--inviting them to view the meticulously-prepared lots. Advertisements touted such "improvements" as gutters, curbs and sidewalks, water supply, sewer connections, electric and telephone service, grass plots and parkways, and a classic entrance. Obviously the timing was right: Reed sold \$186,000 worth of lots on the first day.

The Club, The Hut. The earliest residents of Rock Ridge Properties joined with those of the neighboring Vernon district (the area between College and Broadway) in forming the Vernon-Rockridge Improvement Club, subsequently known as the Rockridge Improvement Club, reportedly one of the first neighborhood associations in Oakland (its Women's

Rock Ridge prepares for buyers: intersection of Broadway, Lawton, and Rockridge Blvd. c.1910. The familiar white pillars are under construction; houses are on Lawton and Ocean View. The office is labeled "Rockridge Place," one of three sections in the tract. Note rocky soil. (Oakland Association of REALTORS)





In the 30s and 40s commercial activity centered on the block of College between Shafter and Lawton. The building at left foreground is the Improvement Club, and the streetcar tracks are the #6-College Avenue. The Uptown (originally Chimes) Theater site is now the BART parking lot. (Vernon J. Sappers)

Rockridge House Tour

Oakland Heritage Alliance and Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC) are co-sponsoring a house tour in the Chabot Road section of Rockridge on Sunday, May 19, from 1 to 5 pm. Here is your chance to explore the architecture and lifestyle of this popular North Oakland neighborhood, distinctive for its mix of Victorian, Craftsman and Period Revival houses.

From its origin along the banks of Temescal Creek to today's lively neighborhood, Rockridge's Chabot Road Area invites the walker to investigate its ambience. Eleven houses and two gardens will be open, within an area about three blocks square. Terrain is flat to moderately hilly. A descriptive brochure allows you to take the tour at your own pace. The tour will commence on College Avenue quite close to the Rockridge BART station (call the OHA office, 763-9218, closer to tour date for exact location).

Donation is \$18 for OHA members, \$22 general. Tickets can be obtained from OHA, P.O. Box 12425, Oakland 94604. Docents are needed for the tour, and are admitted free: please call 763-9218 to volunteer.

Auxiliary later became the Rockridge Women's Club). Initiating a continuing tradition of neighborhood participation, club members cleaned and weeded their own streets, lobbied for a fire station and transit service, and, in 1911, built a clubhouse at 5515 College Avenue. It still stands, though remodeled, now occupied by a tavern and poolroom known as "The Hut." Although the clubhouse was eventually sold, the Rockridge Improvement Club continued its civic works into the late 1950s, when one Claremont Avenue resident recalls her father mounting speakers on the top of his '47 Cadillac and driving around the neighborhood to protest the proposed freeway construction.

Things change: the social history of Rockridge spans temescals, solitary farmsteads along a creek that is now almost completely buried, and an improvement club whose resistance to a freeway marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. But that's another story... --Kathy Walsh

Kathy Walsh has a Ph.D. in geography, and is the recently-elected president of the Rockridge Community Planning Council.

Oakland Briefing . . .

The "Oakland Briefing" column is prepared by the OHA Preservation Action Committee. If you would like to help monitor preservation issues in Oakland, please call Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370.

■ WEST OAKLAND--CYPRESS FREEWAY REPLACEMENT

In January, OHA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (DEIS/R) for the I-880 Cypress replacement. Our concern is the impact of the freeway reconstruction on historic resources in West Oakland. There are many structures--single-family houses and housing complexes, warehouses, factories, churches, stores, machine shops, railyard and military facilities--of historic and architectural merit in West Oakland, testifying to the diversity and richness of the development history of the area. Many of these resources were identified by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey in their ongoing West Oakland survey, and the special survey funded by Caltrans as part of the background documentation for the Cypress replacement environmental analysis (see last OHA News).

OHA submitted written comments to CalTrans on the DEIS/R. OHA was not alone in its concern that the draft was inadequate in identification of impacts, analysis of alternatives and discussion of mitigations.

A major failing of the Draft EIS/R is that it considers impact only on those resources determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. That group includes 13 structures and districts evaluated as eligible by the Oakland Survey or Caltrans staff and accepted by the State Office of Historic Preservation:

Merco-Nordstrom Valve Company, Oakland Point Historic District, Peralta Villa Housing Project, Southern Pacific Railroad Industrial Landscape District, Southern Pacific 16th Street Station and Tower, Southern Pacific West Oakland Shops Historic District, Standard Oil Warehouse, Wempe Bros. Co./Western Paper Box Co., house at 3604 Adeline Street, Interurban Electric Railway Bridge Yard Shop and 26th Street Junction Bridge, Oakland Naval Supply Center, and Oakland Army Base.

The DEIS/R mentions that there are additional properties and districts identified as locally significant by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, but gives no subsequent impact analysis. There are no

location maps or descriptions of these resources. These locally significant resources include: Coca Cola Bottling Co. on Cypress Street, Bachman-Jackson-Netherland House at 714 Pine Street, Fisher-Finch-Myhre House at 941 Pine Street, Pacific Coast Canning Co. on Pine Street, Stephen Porter Cottages at 1517-29 3rd Street, O'Brien House and Stable at 1453 5th Street, Hodkins Glove Company at 1115-19 7th Street, Berry-Shorey House at 1782 8th Street, Bay View Homestead Tract/South Prescott Neighborhood, Bret Harte Boardwalk District, Campbell and 18th Street Brick Warehouse District, Haven-Harlan-34th Street District, Peralta and 26th Street Industrial District, Oakland Point (Phoenix) Neighborhood District, West Clawson Neighborhood District, and 16th Street Southern Pacific Station Commercial District.

As is evident from these extensive lists, historic resources are defining elements of the greater West Oakland area; most of the study area is included in one or another historic district. The DEIS/R provides no sense of the importance of those existing buildings and districts to the cultural and physical context that defines the various West Oakland neighborhoods. In our comments on the draft, OHA called for additional text and a location map identifying the buildings and districts of local significance.

Ultimately more important than identifying those resources is the assessment of the alternative projects' impacts on them. The impact and mitigation discussion in the DEIS/R is very weak. It does not discuss impacts on locally significant resources, although such assessment is required by both



941 Pine Street, behind the Phoenix Iron Works, was probably built by carpenter Beriah Fisher around 1867. Tarpaper brick siding disqualifies it for the National Register, but it is one of the oldest houses in West Oakland. (Phil Bellman)



Proposed freeway route will remove all four of the early brick buildings in the S.P. West Oakland Shops District, relics of Oakland's role as the transcontinental terminus. (Phil Bellman)

selectively--only when it is asserted that there will be no impact.

Moreover, the DEIS/R does not address the effect of either removal of properties or indirect impacts on the several historic districts in the path of the alternative corridors. This is a particularly glaring omission since so many of the resources are contributing elements of historic districts, where context and compatibility establish a district's integrity.

Finally, OHA expressed concern voiced by others, particularly residents of the South Prescott Neighborhood, that the DEIS/R did not present an adequate alternatives analysis. Some alternative freeway routes were withdrawn from further study early in the planning process. A brief table in the mitigation section indicates that many of the alternatives that were not analyzed in the draft avoid the impacts on the cultural resources that will occur with the Cypress and Railroad Corridor alternatives. Fuller evaluation of the other alternatives must be provided, indicating whether different cultural resources would be affected or if other impacts would occur that are judged to be more costly. As it stands in the draft, the documentation does not allow the public to evaluate the decision to limit the alternatives chosen for detailed analysis.

OHA also made some specific recommendations for mitigation measures to be included in future planning for the I-880/Cypress replacement. More detailed mitigation plans must be presented in the Final EIS/R. For example, houses which are taken should be moved to vacant lots elsewhere in West Oakland, thus avoiding a net loss of housing, retaining the historic residential building stock, providing compatible structures for infill in residential neighborhoods, strengthening the streetscape in the neighborhoods to which the buildings are moved, and potentially enabling current residents to remain in the neighborhood. Under the Railroad Corridor alternative, Caltrans should consider modifying the alignment at 7th and Wood Streets to preserve more of the fragmentary but historic 7th Street commercial district.

OHA has been invited by CalTrans to attend meetings to discuss mitigation measures for cultural resources. We will continue to participate in this and other ways in the planning for this project so significant to West Oakland, the City, and the entire Bay Area.

--Sally Nielsen

state and federal environmental review.

Furthermore, most of the impacts identified are only those involving direct use of land or air space from historic properties. The Cypress Corridor Alternative would remove the Merco-Nordstrom Valve Company building and the Peralta Villa housing project and use air space above the Interurban Electric Railway 26th Street Junction Bridge. The Railroad Corridor Alternative would use the space above the 26th Street Junction Bridge as well as above the Oakland Army Base Historic District. That alternative would remove two tracks at the SP 16th Street Station, and, more importantly, four of the 12 structures in the National Register-eligible Southern Pacific West Oakland Shops District.

The EIS/R provides only sketchy discussion of potential indirect impacts due to proximity of the alternative freeway alignments. There is not enough information to determine that noise, air quality, visual intrusion, and access alteration would not have a significant impact on National Register-eligible or other historic resources in the vicinity of the alternative corridors. These topics are mentioned, but



■ FRIENDS OF LANDMARK CHURCHES

Concern for the fate of two earthquake damaged Catholic churches grows, as the demolition delay period runs down. Sacred Heart Church (located at 40th and MLK Way) has already run out of time. Only an administrative appeal stands in the way. An ad hoc group, Friends of Landmark Churches, has become active since the Diocese made clear its intentions to demolish these structures. Members of the two parishes, neighbors, concerned Catholics, and preservation activists have been meeting to develop a strategy to persuade church officials to reconsider. Petitions are circulating and people have been encouraged to write letters to Bishop John Cummins, as well as the mayor and city council members. Recent news articles have helped get the word out. The offer by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to bring in historic church experts has been accepted by the Diocese; however only the cathedral will be allowed to be studied. Although repair estimates for Sacred Heart run considerably lower than for the cathedral, the Diocese appears adamant that Sacred Heart should come down. One quote from the many letters shared with OHA sums up the feelings for these churches:

"The Oakland diocese is being very shortsighted in this matter, and there will be no way to undo what is done in haste... I have never in my life felt so moved to fight to save anything as I do in this situation. I know there are others who care and will come forward if the opportunity is given."
Philip W. Laing

Preservation attorney Frederick Hertz and concerned Sacred Heart neighbor Lynne Horiuchi have filed an administrative appeal with City Council against the Planning Director's decision to exempt the Sacred Heart demolition permit from environmental review. Since the Landmarks Board declined to initiate designation (see December) and the Planning Commission concurred with the Director's decision, City Council is the only avenue remaining. If Council decides to consider the appeal, Sacred Heart may remain standing long enough for a constructive solution to emerge.

Anyone interested in helping the Friends of Landmark Churches, or signing a petition, should contact Kirk Peterson (547-0275), Annalee Allen (654-6791) or MaryAnn Francis (655-4971).
--Annalee Allen

■ CALIFORNIA HOTEL REOPENING

The long awaited reopening celebration of the California Hotel took place Saturday, March 2. The hotel is beautifully restored to its former glory, and the grand lobby with its rustic fireplace and wood beam ceilings once more a gracious living area.

Closed in 1972, the hotel at 35th Street and San Pablo Avenue had been an important Oakland social center since 1929. Five years ago Oakland Community Housing, Inc., a non-profit housing agency, bought the building and has remodeled it into 149 low-income housing units, a \$9 million project.

The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic preservation tax credits as well as low income housing tax credits enabled OCHI to carry out the ambitious restoration project. Funding came from the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Oakland Office of Community Development, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Savings Associates Mortgage Corp., Wells Fargo Bank, and CASH, a consortium of local corporations.

To coincide with the opening, a California Hotel History Project is underway. Well known jazz and blues entertainers performed in the hotel in the 40s and 50s. The Oakland Oaks baseball team played nearby, and the hotel attracted players and spectators. The purpose of the History Project is to document this important part of Oakland's social history. The project is partially funded by the California Council for the Humanities. Project director Paris Williams is tracking down individuals with stories to tell about the hotel's history. Anyone with memories to share should contact her at OCHI, 891-9025.

OHA commends OCHI for showing how a historic building can be restored and adapted to the needs of today.

--Helen Lore and Annalee Allen

■ LANDMARKS BOARD: COULD THIS BE YOU?

There are currently two long-standing vacancies on the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. By city ordinance, the Board includes both professionals in designated areas (architecture, planning, history, real estate, etc.) and public members. Any citizen interested in serving should send a letter of application and a resume to the Mayor's office.

OHA Speaks Out for the Broadway Building

In November we called on you, OHA members, to write in support of landmark designation for the Broadway Building. Over 300 of you responded. The Preservation Action Committee sent the letters on to Mayor Harris and City Council members. When we met with city leaders or testified before council and planning commission, we produced the packet of letters and referred to the strong show of support.

As we go to press the landmark question for the Broadway Building is still not settled, but we thought you'd like to read what members wrote. We regret space does not permit the inclusion of every response, but each and every one of the letters is appreciated. There is no question that public awareness of this building is at an all time high. OHA will continue to lead the fight for the Broadway Building. It means a great deal to know members are behind the fight. --Lynn Fonfa, President

"The demolition of the Broadway Building and the construction of something ordinary in its place will mark a demoralizing and irremediable step backward for Oakland and its citizens. Please don't allow this to happen." Arthur D. Levy, Esq.

"...our downtown can ill-afford to lose a building of its prominence and historic character. The Broadway Building provides downtown with an essential and gracious link to our past history." Roger W. Klemm, AIA

"...save the Broadway Building and help keep Oakland looking like itself, rather than like Anycity, U.S.A." Anne B. Bloomfield, architectural historian

"I support the work of Oakland Heritage Alliance to keep Oakland the special place it is, by working to retain as much as possible of its architectural heritage." Joy Soulier

"I envision a day when City Hall is repaired and reoccupied as the ceremonial center of the city, when City Hall Plaza is expanded to include the foot of San Pablo Ave., when cafe tables spill out of the base of the Broadway Building into the plaza, when Nordstroms opens in the Rotunda Building, and when all of Oakland wants to see and be seen at 14th and Broadway. That's a future worth working toward. And that future includes the Broadway Building."



"All of Oakland wants to see and be seen at 14th and Broadway": A lively 1910s street scene centered on the Broadway Building. Wall signs behind identify Kahn's Department Store (the Rotunda) (photo postcard contributed by Dean Yabuki)

John Woodbury, Director at Large, AC Transit

"We at the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) are in support of the designation of the Broadway Building as a City landmark. As the owner of another City landmark, the Asian Resource Center, and the restorer of the Madrone Hotel, one of the buildings in the historic district of Old Oakland, we believe that it is important for Oakland to preserve the beauty and elegance of such buildings, which not only maintain a sense of history for Oakland's streetscape but can also well serve the commercial and residential needs of Oakland." Lynette Lee, Executive Director

"...It matters enormously that the downtown does not become one steady horizon of modern office buildings, the wrecking ball swinging with the forces of economic gain. The architectural character of City Hall should not be left to stand as the lone beacon of historical reference in the heart of our official downtown. The Broadway Building not only complements City Hall architecturally but stands as a physical link for City Hall to Broadway, the street." Susanne Hirshen, Preservation Park Project Manager

"Over the years, I have known hundreds of people who have come to Oakland for the sole purpose of seeing the architecture we have here. These people have come from around the Bay Area, from other states and other countries. When they came into Oakland to visit--or to live--they brought with them their business for our downtown shops and restaurants, their interest and vitality. More of this unique architecture means more business for Oakland; less means less." Dr. Lissa Tyler Renaud

"To my mind, the Broadway Building is probably the most beautiful of our downtown buildings - it's a building with intelligence, grace, proportion and a not-overly-fussy sense of itself. It forms an important piece of Oakland's true inner center, along with City Hall, the park and the Cathedral Building looming up behind." Kathryn A. Hughes

"Buildings like this give a feeling of stability and permanence to a city quite in contrast to the bland newness of the suburbs." Mr. and Mrs. James Morrison

"The Broadway Building is a distinctive architectural feature of our downtown that has intrigued me from the moment I laid eyes on it (some twenty years ago). I feel that Oakland's greatest asset is its architecture (from the 19th century to Art Deco); and it must be preserved." Catherine Burns

"It would be impossible for me to think of downtown Oakland without the Broadway Building. I've lived in the Bay Area for 62 years and too much has been lost already." G. Elizabeth Kennedy

"This landmark building located at the crossroads of downtown Oakland, helps symbolize Oakland's past and is crucial to the streetscape of downtown Oakland. It, more than the new sculpture in City Center, is a real part of the 'there' in Oakland." Peter S. Tannen

"I strongly believe the Broadway Building

should be designated, repaired and restored. Oakland stands a brighter future if it can maintain its appealing blend of old and new." Donald Ross Wardlaw, AIA

"I am quite familiar with this stately, beautiful old landmark. My father August Gerard was employed by the Lionel Wachs Co., who managed the building in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus, his job as maintenance engineer kept our family eating in the worst part of the Depression. I often helped my father (for free) when he would be called in for off-hour repairs. I can vouch for the basically sound design by the original architects. The Italian marble throughout the building can never again be duplicated at any cost." Robert P. Gerard

"...successful revitalization of Oakland's downtown requires recognition, preservation and restoration of its unique architectural heritage. Otherwise people will choose to shop and run businesses in the suburbs. We need beauty, character, and charm to compete with the convenience of suburban shopping malls and business parks." Diana Young

"Since childhood, the Broadway building has meant 'downtown Oakland' to me. My father's family settled here at the turn of the century and his father kept the stable and blacksmith shop for the city's fire wagon horses. Uncle Harry Pulcifer was a municipal judge in Oakland for many years. Oakland needs to preserve its history and heritage. Please encourage the restoration and safeguarding of this important part of her identity and history." Zelma Pulcifer

"In post war WWII, the communities in Europe with bomb damaged buildings elected to rebuild the structures to pre war likeness. The consensus overruled modern whims. Continuity in a community doesn't end with a disaster--it prompts more continuity." John Brennan

"I cannot imagine downtown Oakland without the Broadway Building. I am a volunteer tour guide with the city of Oakland and this building is an essential, irreplaceable part of Oakland that I always point out on my tours. We need to do everything we possibly can to save this and other buildings of an era when design and style, as well as first class materials were foremost in the minds of their builders." Jorgen H. Christiansen

"In November, my sister visited us from NYC. As we drove down Broadway, on our way to the farmer's market and dim sum at the Jade Villa, she was stunned by the many beautiful buildings we passed: I. Magnin's,

the Paramount, and the Broadway Building. I'm proud to be able to show off our beautiful city--let's not lose a part of it --Save the Broadway Building!" Carol Bier

"The richly ornamented clock at the corner and the pristine-white stone exterior particularly recommend this flatiron building for landmark status." Arthur K. Dunlop

"I love the Broadway Building--it gives downtown a special charm. Its historical significance should not be overlooked. It's perfectly suited to its location and should not be demolished to replace it with a nondescript building." Bonnie Burt

"I feel that the Broadway Building is an important piece in our downtown and explorations at preserving this building should be undertaken." Allen Michaan

"After losing so much in the past 20-30 years, Oakland is fortunate to still have enough older buildings to give its downtown character. The Broadway Building is certainly one of the most significant, both in its design and key location." Anthony Bruce

"I can't imagine what would be put in its place. If that were to happen (demolition), probably a nondescript, unattractive, high tech glass and steel square box will rise--ugh! We have enough of those uninteresting, empty boxes. The Broadway Building is representative of a past and part of our society's fabric. It is imperative that we think ahead of our noses, proud of who we are, how we got there and connect with what came before." Donnalyann Polito

"One of Oakland's most appealing assets is its historic presence, a quality that has been lost in many cities during the past several decades as a consequence of uncritical redevelopment and modernization. Fortunately, many parts of Oakland still exude a 'sense of place' with features that blend past and present." Kathleen Walsh, Ph.D.

■ BROADWAY BUILDING: THE SAGA CONTINUES

On March 5 the City Council Public Works Committee took testimony on the landmark nomination for the Broadway Building. This was the most recent in a series of public hearings held since the Planning Commission initiated the designation process in December of 1989. **Oakland Heritage Alliance**, along with Oakland Design Advocates, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and other community representatives and individuals urged the Council to designate

the building a landmark on the basis of its unquestionable significance, both individually and to the heart of downtown Oakland.

City Council consideration of the nomination follows a unanimous recommendation by the Landmarks Board to designate the building, and a 4-3 vote by the Planning Commission against a motion to recommend landmark status. The hearing was referred by City Council to its Public Works Committee on February 19, under new procedures instituted by Mayor Elihu Harris whereby matters are routinely referred to committee prior to a full council hearing.

Throughout the nomination process there has been little question that the Broadway Building meets the criteria for designation as a landmark. In fact, Taldan Investment Co. of San Francisco, the owners of the building, have repeatedly testified that they recognize the importance of the building and had, until the earthquake, intended to keep the building as part of a larger development with the three parcels adjacent to it, which they also own. They are, however, opposing landmark designation, claiming that they need a demolition permit in order to attract development.

The Broadway Building is not only an issue of importance to preservationists. Its location at the gore of San Pablo and Broadway, opposite City Hall, makes it a crucial element of both the Broadway Corridor and City Hall Plaza. Support has come not only from OHA members who have written and called the City (see preceding), but also from participants in the Broadway Corridor Workshop, community groups like OCCUR, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, former tenants of the building and downtown business people including the project manager of Preservation Park. In testimony before the council committee Bruce Black, a former planning commissioner who has advocated a comprehensive policy on historic preservation in Oakland, echoed the sentiments of many in urging landmark status in order to give time for the city and the owner to study the feasibility of repair, and all possible alternatives for the building.

Much of the discussion has focused on the economics of rehabilitation and seismic strengthening. However, Taldan does not have a specific proposal, so the figures which have been presented by the developer and the preservation community are, at this point, somewhat speculative. OHA has urged that consideration of landmark designation be

OHA Update

■ VOLUNTEER NIGHT

A group of enthusiastic OHA members gathered at the Camron-Stanford House in February on Volunteer Night to find out how they could become more active in the organization. Out of this group emerged a photographer, an architect-graphic artist, and researchers to work on the Spring House Tour, a new producer of the OHA Calendar, and people to help with preservation action, mailings, tours, survey, and membership. If you missed this meeting and would like to get actively involved in OHA, please call the office at 763-9218. --Helen Lore



Group at Volunteer Night contemplates division of labor, as committee heads explain the workings of preservation action, News, programs, etc. Facing Creighton Fong's camera are Betty Marvin, Lynn Fonfa, Chris Winans, and Annalee Allen.

■ ROCKRIDGE HOUSE TOUR NEEDS YOU

The house tour on May 19 is the year's major fundraising event for both sponsoring organizations, OHA and Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC). A joint committee has been selecting the houses, researching neighborhood history, preparing graphics and publicity, etc. You can still join this effort, or you can help substantially on the day of the tour in two ways: attend the tour (and bring family and friends: \$18 OHA/\$22 general); or help at the reception or as a docent. Close to 100 docents will be needed to watch over the houses in two shifts. Docents spend two hours in one of the houses, and have the other two hours to go on the tour, with free admission. Please call Helen Lore at 763-9218 to volunteer.

limited to evaluating the building on its merits, and that the economics be deferred until there has been a full study of the situation and there is a concrete proposal before the city.

The historical and architectural significance of the Broadway Building and the pivotal nature of its site justify a commitment from both the public and the private sector to finding a way to save the building. As stated in the March 11, 1991, editorial in the Oakland Tribune, "Before the city council makes a final decision on the fate of the Broadway Building, its members should think long and hard about the expediency of the economics compared with the intangible value of an architectural environment that cannot be quantified but that can nonetheless be felt in a city's soul." Designating the Broadway Building a city landmark would signify a public commitment to the character and quality of downtown Oakland, and a recognition of the stake which the city has in preserving such a crucial building.

At the suggestion of Public Works Committee chair Mary Moore, discussion on the nomination was continued until early April, pending staff review of the various economic arguments and clarification of the criteria to be used for landmark designation. **Oakland Heritage Alliance** members are urged to continue voicing their support for designation. Call the OHA office at 763-9218 for current information. --Carolyn Douthat

■ TEMESCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Temescal shopping district along Telegraph Avenue between 51st and 49th Streets has been identified by the Citywide Preliminary Survey as an area of historic and architectural significance. In addition, two individual buildings are recognized as city landmarks, the Temescal Public Library and the Cattaneo Block which houses G&G Hardware.

Temescal Neighbors Together is exploring the possibility of local preservation action, such as rezoning, to maintain the integrity and historic settings of these important neighborhood assets. The Landmarks Board supports such neighborhood action, but does not have the budget or staff for the background research required. Volunteers are needed for some historical and architectural investigation, so please call Joanna Smith at 652-8837 if you are interested in Temescal's past (and future).



■ TENTH ANNIVERSARY FUND

The OHA Tenth Anniversary Preservation Fund Appeal neared its goal of \$4,000 by the end of March with contributions from members totaling \$3,890. The OHA Board thanks the following members who donated to this fund:

Annalee Allen, Eunice Andersen, Jeffrey Angell, Stephen Beck, Beulah Belling, Robert Bernhardt, Earl Bowling Jr., Ben Bradley, Barbara Bream, Carroll Brentano, Judith Broude, Anthony Bruce, John Canham, Timothy Canty, Ruth Carlisle, Christianne Cheney, Jorgen Christiansen, Caryn Combis, Mary Ruth Connelly, Deborah Cooper, Dee Coppola, Alfred Damianakes, Mary O. Davis, Arthur Dunlop, Toni Ellis, Helen Fleck, Creighton Fong, Stanley Fong, Lynn Fonfa, Thomas Frye, Timothy Galanek, Dennis Galloway, Alan Garretson, Marie Guelld, J. Fred Haley, Les/Linda Hausrath, Winchell Hayward, Deborah Hill/Forest Weld, David Hoard, Emily Hook, Mary Elizabeth Hoole, Richard Hunter, Elinor Hurley, Susan Hyde, Betty Johnson, Elizabeth Johnson, Doug Jones/Pacific Bell, Bruce Judd, Lawrence Kennon, Harlan/Esther Kessel, Dorothy King, Gary Knecht, Lorraine Knight, Craig Lazarus, Gordon Laverty, Virginia Leach, Gaye Lenahan, Arthur Levy, Diana Loggins, Helen Lore, Annette Maddox, Paul/Claire Maxwell, Susan McCue, Craig/Dusty Miller, Tony Moniz, Katherine Morrison, Richard Nagler, Elizabeth Neild, Brad/Laura Niebling, Sally Nielsen, Judith Offer, Roberta O'Grady, Lois Over, Dennis Owens, Eugene Peck, Linda Perry, Aida Peterson, Ed/Mary Phillips, Ray Poulton, Anthony Ramos, Catherine Ray, C.J. Roberts, Christopher Roberts, Virginia Robles, Helen Rogers, Lisa Kay Ruhland, Deborah Shefler, Alison Siegel-Sanchez, Norma Smith, Willard Spences, Zelda Staples, Bernice Stark, Virginia Steel, Howard Stein, Elizabeth Strauss, Mary Strohmaier, Ray Suderman, Laura Thomas, Helen Tryon, Michael UdKow, Carol Van Steenberg/Art Kuhn, Lucile Way, Nancy Welk, Norma Wells, Fay White, Gloria Will, Mabel McCamman Winkelman, Dean Yabuki, June Yost.

■ COHEN HOUSE FUND

Public support for the Alfred Cohen House has resulted in recent gifts of nearly \$3400 for the preservation of this 1884 Eastlake-Stick home in the Fruitvale area. Contributions are received through Oakland Heritage Alliance, which holds a facade easement on the house. The Cohen family members wish to thank the following people who responded to their fund appeal:

Annalee Allen, David/Lisa Baker, Mrs. Thomas Barber, Dorothy Biddick, Mary Dutton Boehm, Esthger Bristol, Emma Callaghan, Mrs. Edgar Chappell, Chevron matching gift, Jorgen Christiansen, Elizabeth Cookson, Mildred Day, Shirley Dietderich, Nancy Dolphin, Gina Dominick, Donna Donald, Barbara/Patrick Doyle, Mary Dresel, E.R. Dunlop, Hank Dunlop, Thomas Edwards, Mr./Mrs. Carl Eiser Jr., Elizabeth Evans, Morley Farquar, Mrs. Henry Feusner, Lloyd Gerboth, Eric Gilliland, Kay Gilliland, Barbara Goff, Anselm Gouig, Shirley Hagens, Jacqueline Hardester, Tamra Hege, Nancy Helms, Winifred Hurlbert, R. Junge, Mildred Kleinpell, Gaye Lenahan, Barbara Ann Levin, Helen Lore, Shirley Lyhne-Eichorn, Richard Lyman, Gene McGraw, Donna Mehrten, Dick/Veronica Mello, Margaret Molarsky, Tony Moniz, Carroll Neff, Gloria Newhouse, Bradford Niebling, Dr. H.W. O'Grady, Roberta O'Grady, Hilary Pattee, Catherine Pigford, M.R. Rogers, Ezma Rucker, Gen Sapirstein, William Scheuber, Lucy Smallreed, Ernestine Smith, Mrs. Jack Smithers, Sara Stanton, Carmel Triska, Helen Tryon, Don Tyler, C. Weaver, Sandra/Paul Weaver, Mrs. Charles Weeks, Chester Weseman, Clyde Wilson, Mabel McCammon Winkelman.

■ EMERYVILLE IN THE TWENTIES EXHIBIT

In the era of flappers, trollies, and bathtub gin, Emeryville was a booming industrial town offering an abundance of diversions, from baseball to gambling, from boxing to drinking. "Emeryville in the Twenties," an exhibit cosponsored by the Oakland Public Library and the Emeryville Historical Society, celebrates those colorful years. Featuring rare photographs, newspaper articles, and artifacts, the display covers the full panorama of the city's life, including views of factories, streetcars, personalities, baseball parks, restaurants, and much more.

The exhibit can be seen at the Oakland Main Library's Oakland History Room, 125 14th Street, second floor, through April 19.

■ NEW EARTHQUAKE BOOK FROM CPF

The California Preservation Foundation announces the publication of History at Risk, a reconsideration of how historic buildings responded to last year's Loma Prieta earthquake. The Foundation, with grant support from the State Department of Commerce Main Street Program and from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, sent teams of structural engineers, architects and contractors to inspect buildings "at risk" in five communities-- Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Los Gatos, Salinas and Hollister. At the same time local, state and federal policies and procedures were studied to see how governmental actions might have affected decision-making. The combined research and field experience provides the basis for specific recommended changes in public policy that would improve the future likelihood of buildings being preserved rather than destroyed.

The study reveals that far too often the fear of lawsuits, lack of technical expertise, and, most important, dearth of financial assistance combine to encourage a rush to judgment and a local decision to demolish buildings without studying reasonable and feasible alternatives.

History at Risk sells for \$14 (includes handling and postage) and is available from the California Preservation Foundation at 1615 Broadway, Suite 705, Oakland 94612 (763-0972). The foundation is a private, not for profit statewide organization dedicated to promotion of historic preservation.

City Landmarks Board Actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month. Meetings are open to the public. Designation of landmarks is recommended by the Board to the Planning Commission and City Council. Landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in issuance of demolition permits. Exterior alterations require approval by City Planning staff, at the recommendation of the Board. 108 landmarks have been designated in the 15 years since the Board was created. Meetings are at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue, second Mondays, 4 pm.

DECEMBER

Board approved designs by The Ratcliff Architects to repair and retrofit exterior brick walls and architectural details at the Hotel Oakland, a city landmark also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Board voted to recommend landmark designation of the Broadway Building.

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on Sacred Heart Church: the City Planning Department had received an appeal of the environmental review; about 25 preservation advocates and diocese representatives had met to discuss possibilities for Sacred Heart and St. Francis de Sales.

During Open Forum, OHA's Annalee Allen and architect Randolph Langenbach reported further on the churches. After meetings with parish members and diocese representatives, they felt there was some willingness to consider alternatives. Allen mentioned the National Trust's offer to coordinate a study

by a preservation assistance team. Noting that Sacred Heart has no legal protection, Langenbach asked the Board to recommend landmark designation. It is in jeopardy not because of lesser historical or architectural value but simply because it happens to be an area not yet studied by the Cultural Heritage Survey. Bert Bertolero moved to recommend landmark status, but there was no second and the motion died.

JANUARY

Board reviewed and approved Bramalea Pacific's design for four gateway arches at Preservation Park, plus name plates and other signs including a map and house histories. Applicant was to work with city staff on design for overhead attachments.

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on the January 9 meeting of the City Planning Commission, which voted 4-3 against the Board's recommendation of landmark designation for the Broadway Building (see December). In response to Taldan's plea of economic hardship, Lisbeth Henning of the National Trust had described economic incentive programs offered by other cities to encourage preservation, but the Commission believed those cities were wealthier than Oakland. The designation was scheduled to be considered by the City Council in February.

The Planning Commission had also tabled the question of landmark designation for

Oakland skyline: Broadway Building, Sacred Heart, St. Francis de Sales still face uncertain futures. (Phil Bellman)



University High School (old Merritt/Grove Street College) until May, after the City Council deals with the impending expiration and decision whether to renew the contract granting the present developer (NORA) the exclusive right to build a shopping center and mixed use complex on the site.

Prentice reported on other developments since the last meeting. Kaiser Foundation had withdrawn its application to demolish 1900 Broadway (on the Board's Study List) and 1924 Broadway for a parking lot. Proposed demolition of St. Francis de Sales and Sacred Heart could not occur until the environmental review process was completed. OHA's Carolyn Douthat had requested that the Board review the definition of historic buildings in the Earthquake Repair Ordinance and that consideration be given to preparing Cultural Heritage Survey forms for quake-damaged buildings in unsurveyed areas and adding certain damaged buildings to the Study List. The National Trust Preservation Services Fund grant program was suggested as a possibility for funding placement of plaques on city landmarks.

A design review application was submitted by the City Architect to reconstruct the loading dock and some exterior stairs at the Henry J. Kaiser Auditorium, a city landmark; it will be handled by staff. The owner of 489 8th Street, in the Old Oakland preservation district, was planning to resubmit a design review application to demolish the building, because of high rehabilitation costs; chair Estelle Mannis asked if the owner would consider selling instead.



Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association has applied for landmark status for San Antonio Park, to recognize its historical importance and insure that changes like the new building at far left undergo design review. (Creighton Fong)

Pacific Bell has applied to demolish 1519 Franklin (center), built in 1918/27 (E.V. Cobby, architect) and on the Study List; Board suggests trying to sell it. (Oakland History Room)



FEBRUARY

Pacific Bell submitted a design review application to demolish its 11-story office building at 1519 Franklin Street, listed on the Study List and rated B by the Cultural Heritage Survey. Board voted to encourage the applicant to list the building for sale with a commercial real estate firm; the matter was continued until March.

Board approved a preliminary evaluation of the Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association's request for landmark designation of San Antonio Park (Foothill Blvd. between 16th and 18th Avenues). Its use as a park dates back to the Mexican era. Board directed the applicant to proceed and prepare a formal landmark application.

Initiation of landmark nomination of the St. Germain Building (301-05 Broadway, 1857-59), First Church of Christ, Scientist (1701 Franklin, 1902, architect Henry Schulze), Posey Tube (4th and Harrison, 1925-28, Henry H. Meyers, architect), Scottish Rite Temple (1543-47 Lakeside Drive, 1926/38, Carl Werner and William Corlett), and Dalziel Block (1917-21 San Pablo, 1878) was begun by filing a Notice of Intent and notifying the owner of each property. This process began with a preliminary hearing in May 1990.

Gary Knecht, coordinator of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, showed the Board the alternative routes being studied by Caltrans for the I-880 replacement; on a map of West Oakland he identified the Oakland Point District and other resources likely to be affected (see Oakland Briefing).

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on recent events. The Dunsmuir Heights residential development was expected to have some impact on Dunsmuir House, a city landmark also listed on the National Register; a proposed new vehicular entrance to Dunsmuir House will come before the Board. City Council consideration of the Broadway Building had been postponed and referred to committee. In response to a newspaper article on relocation of Amtrak operations from the landmark 16th Street Station, city staff had contacted Southern Pacific suggesting they seek alternative uses for the building.

In response to OHA's letter, the Director of City Planning was disinclined to prepare Cultural Heritage Survey forms for eight isolated quake-damaged buildings; a possible approach might be to target quake-damaged and unreinforced masonry buildings rather than a geographical area for the next round of Survey research.

MARCH

Pacific Bell, scheduled to appear with an application to demolish 1519 Franklin Street (see February), had agreed to wait until the April meeting, and had listed the building for sale. An engineer's report, as requested by the Board, had not yet been received.

Five Notices of Intent to Submit Landmark Nominations were sent to owners in February. All five properties were evaluated as eligible for landmark status. Owners of the St. Germain Building and the Dalziel Block had not responded, and second letters would be sent. The First Church of Christ, Scientist had already requested removal from consideration last year; Board decided to ask them for further comment. The Scottish Rite Temple requested a two-month postponement so the membership could consider the matter. Caltrans requested that designation of the Posey Tube apply to the tower only, not the tunnel interior. Board voted to direct staff to prepare a resolution nominating the Tube.

Barbara Armstrong asked that the Board's preliminary letter to owners be revised to say that landmark status may have "profound economic impact." Prentice and some Board members argued that there could be favorable economic effects. A motion to add the wording, amended to read "possible economic impact," passed 4-1 (Jean Spees opposed).

Prentice reported on the City Council Public Works Committee meeting on March 5, when landmark designation of the Broadway



Posesy Tube portal at 4th and Harrison--but not the interior-- may become the next city landmark. (Oakland History Room)

Building was discussed. Anthony Pegram represented the Board. Mary Moore asked to postpone the matter until additional information was available; Frank Ogawa said he opposed landmark designation but did not want the building demolished; Wilson Riles was undecided. Communications are to be directed to the Mayor and the three committee members, Moore, Ogawa, and Riles.

Creighton Fong, representing Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation and the residents of the S-7 historic district on 10th Avenue, addressed the Board in opposition to current proposals for building on two vacant lots in the district. Three two-family structures, of modular construction, are proposed for each lot. Fong showed photos of the Victorian homes (since destroyed by fire) that once occupied the lots. His organizations specifically opposed the division of each lot into two parcels, the density of the development, and designs not compatible with the historic architecture of the district.

Mayor Harris is seeking to fill two vacant seats on the Board, and nominations and applications are welcome. --Kathy Olson

OHA Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to OHA members. To submit items for listings, contact Oakland Heritage Alliance or Donald Wardlaw, 2214 Thirteenth Ave., Oakland, 94606.

Upcoming Activities

through April 19 Fri. "Emeryville In The 1920's", Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library, 125 14th. St.

through April 21 Sun. "New American Furniture: The Second Generation of Studio Furniture Makers," Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak St., W-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-7

through July 20 Sat. "Vintage Fashions," Hayward Area Historical Museum, 22701 Main St., Hayward, \$1/.50, M-F 11-4, Sat 12-4, 581-0223

April 6-7 Sat-Sun. 10 am, Tour the renovated Sheraton Palace Hotel, S.F. Heritage, 441-3000. Reservations, \$10/\$15.

April 11 Thurs. 7:30 pm, "Historic Buildings In The National Parks," Rick Borjes, Historical Architect, Ratto's, 9th. & Washington, \$6/\$4 members. Lecture-tour series 3 following Saturdays, "Historic Site Interpretation," focus on Presidio & interpretive techniques, co-sponsor SF Bay Area Chpt. National Assoc. For Interpretation, tour reservations required, OHA 763-9218.

April 19(Fri. 12-8)-20(Sat 9-4), 6th. Annual Family History Fair, Calif. Genealogical Society, St. Mary's Cathedral Conf. Center, Gough @ Geary, \$7/day, 777-9936.

April 26 (Fri.10-4)-27 (Sat.10-3), Kitchen Tour in Piedmont, Children's Support League of the East Bay. \$15 advance, \$25 w/ lunch, \$18 at door. 654-9809.

April 27, Sat., Rally, BBQ and March in South Prescott n'h, focusing on freeway issue. Details TBA. Clean Air Alternative Coalition: Anthony Holdsworth, 836-1681

May 3 Fri. 8-4:30 Gladding McBean & Muddox Brickworks Bus Tour, gourmet lunch, East Bay Chpt. American Instit. of Architects, Historic Preservation Committee, \$35, RSVP 464-3600.

May 9-12, State Historic Preservation Conference, Santa Barbara, California Preservation Foundn, 763-0972.

May 12-18, Preservation Week, support your local heritage groups, celebrate 25th anniversary of National Historic Preservation Act & 75th anniversary of National Park Service.

May 12 Sun. 1-5, "Southampton's Villas," annual house tour Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assoc., RSVP 841-2242, \$24/\$18 members.

May 19 Sun. 1-5, "Rockridge/Chabot Road Neighborhood", OHA/RCPC House Tour 763-9218, free tour for docents, \$22/\$18 members.

June 8(Sat. 10-6)-9(Sun. 11-5), Calif. Art Deco Society, 6th Annual Sale, SF Concourse, 8th & Brannan, \$5/\$4 members, walking tours, 982-DECO.

June 14 Fri., Housing & Preservation Workshop, Oakland, California Preservation Fdn., Elizabeth Morton 763-0972.

July 13 (Sat. 10-6)-14(Sun. 10-5), Semi-annual SF Post Card Sale, Sheraton Airport Hotel, 101 Broadway/Burlingame exit, \$3.50.

July 20-21 Sat-Sun., antique show fund raiser for Hayward Area Historical Museum at McConaghy House, 581-0223.



July-August, OHA Summer Walking Tours.

New tours include Emeryville, South Prescott, Jewish Cemetery, B'way Corridor. Details TBA; 763-9218

Oct. 16-20, 45th National Preservation Conference and Trade Show, National Trust for Historic Preservation, San Francisco. Details TBA; 1-800-YES-NTHP.

Regularly Scheduled Tours

Dunsmuir House. Tours of Colonial Revival mansion every Sunday, spring through fall; 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland; \$3; 562-0328.

Camron-Stanford House. 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt. Tours every Wed. 11-4 & Sun. 1-5, \$2/\$1, free first Sunday; 1418 Lakeside Dr., 836-1976.

Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life. Exhibits and archive open T-Fri. 12:30-5, Sat. 11-4; 5606 San Pablo (Golden Gate Library), 658-3158.

Paramount Theatre. Art Deco movie palace, 2025 Broadway, Tours 1st & 3rd Sat., 10am, \$1, 893-2300.

Oakland Tours Program. Old Oakland, City Center, Uptown, Chinatown, Preservation Park, Port; April-Oct., 273-3234.

Ardenwood Historic Farm. Park open April-Nov., Thurs-Sun. 10-4; house tours hourly Sat. & Sun./variable Thurs-Fri. \$4-\$1.50 dep. on age & day, tour extra; Ardenwood Blvd. or Lake Blvd., Newark; 796-0663.

McConaghy House, 104 year old farmhouse at 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward. Tours Thurs-Sun., 1-4, \$2/adult.

San Francisco Heritage weekly tours; \$3, info. 441-3004. Historic North Waterfront, Sundays 10:30-12, meet at kiosk near cable car turntable in Aquatic Park; Victorian & Edwardian Pacific Heights, Sundays 12:30-2, Haas-Lilienthal House, 2007 Franklin; Haas Lilienthal house tours, Sun. 11-4:30, Wed.12-4.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings



Oakland Heritage Alliance. OHA Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of the month, 7:30pm; for agenda and location, contact OHA 763-9218. Preservation Action Committee: contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370, for time, place and agenda.

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, 2nd Monday, 4 pm.

City Planning Commission, alternate Wednesdays, 1:30 pm.

City Council, every Tuesday Evening, 7:30pm, all at Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Contact City Planning Dept., 273-3941, for Landmarks Board and Planning Commission agendas.



Oakland Heritage Alliance

P.O.Box 12425, Oakland, CA 94604 763-9218

Oakland Heritage Alliance, a California nonprofit corporation since 1980, 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. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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OHA appreciates the many generous contributions to the Tenth Anniversary fund drive and the recent Cohen House campaign, which raised nearly \$4000 and \$3400 respectively. See "OHA Update" (p.14) for names of donors as of March 21.

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Oakland Heritage Alliance News

CONTRIBUTORS

Annalee Allen, Phil Bellman, Carolyn Douthat, Lynn Fonfa, Creighton Fong, Helen Lore, Betty Marvin, Sally Nielsen, Kathy Olson, William Sturm, Kathy Walsh, Donald Wardlaw

EDITOR/PRODUCTION

Betty Marvin

EDITORIAL BOARD

Annalee Allen, Carolyn Douthat, Dean Yabuki

OHA News welcomes contributions: contact Betty Marvin, 849-1959, Dean Yabuki, 832-5355, or Helen Lore, 763-9218.

Back issues are available for \$2 from OHA.

New OHA Members

The Officers and Directors of Oakland Heritage Alliance welcome and thank all those concerned citizens who have shown their interest in Oakland's history and preservation by joining OHA. OHA's new members (November 1-March 21) are:

David Allswang, Randall/Cheryl Berger, Andy Brubaker, Pat Christman/Amphion Environmental, Inc., Kay Davies, Tyko Enbom, Richard Foster, L.S. Frost/Cochrane, Suzanne Gold, Teresa Burns Gunther, Frederick Hertz, Steven Kenner, Constance Laughlin, Marilyn Michalak, Karen Miller, Katherine Miller, John/Barbara O'Hara, Don Schumacher, James Spalding/Pacific States Carpentry, Alva/Hugo Steccati, Flora/Robert Toney, Doris Vallerga, Maxine Viereck, Winans Construction Co.

Special thanks to members joining/renewing as:

SPONSOR (\$100): Gary Encinas, Ted Gallagher/Gallagher & Burk, Storek & Storek, Myron Zimmerman
ORGANIZATION (\$50): Frederick Hertz, Gary/Kiki Pound, Winans Construction Co.

Oakland Heritage Alliance, P.O.Box 12425, Oakland, CA 94604

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 _____
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Preservation Action . Summer Tours . Development, Fund Raising . other .

- New Renewal
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- \$10 Limited income (1 vote)
- \$20 Individual (1 vote)
- \$30 Family (2 votes)
- \$50 Organization (1 vote)
- \$100 Sponsor (1 vote)
- \$250 Patron (1 vote)
- \$ _____ Additional contribution



Oakland History Notes: Independent Planing Mills

Oakland's industrial life began with a steam sawmill in the redwoods of East Oakland. In the 1850s, the hills were filled with giant redwood trees, soon to become timber to build San Francisco. By the end of the decade the redwoods were gone, but the city's planing mills remained, now sawing trees from other locales, and providing materials for Oakland's houses and public buildings.

When the Independent Planing Mills opened in 1883 on the south side of 2nd Street between Brush and Castro, seven other planing mills were in operation in the city. The new enterprise consisted of a mill building with special machines for various types of work, a structure containing a boiler and a 25 horsepower engine, and several warehouses. Employing around twenty

workers, the mill used 50,000 to 75,000 board feet of redwood, sugar pine, cedar, Oregon pine, fir, and hardwoods a month. In 1886 the company stated:

"The decoration and ornamental work for the interiors of residences, stores, and public edifices are executed in the highest degree of art and excellence. The patterns are followed with the strictest exaction and great care is taken that no defective wood is used. One of our specialties is the building of water tanks which are tight, strong, and made entirely of clear lumber. Large contracts are filled with promptness and dispatch."

The work of the mill embraced "all descriptions of planing, scroll sawing, turning, and the manufacture of moldings, brackets [and] window frames." It was claimed that the firm "executed the interior work in many of the prominent residences in Oakland and its vicinity."

The Independent Planing Mills closed its doors in 1894, possibly a victim of the nation-wide depression in that year. Its site is now occupied by a four-story industrial building. Yet no doubt the work of the mill survives today in many a fine Oakland house.

--William Sturm

(Oakland History Room)



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