

## “Our Northern Suburb of Temescal”

TEMESCAL WALKING TOUR AUG. 18  
led by Sharon Moore  
1:30, 50th and Telegraph  
see complete Calendar, page 14

It was described in the Oakland Transcript of Feb. 17, 1875: "Our northern suburb of Temescal, midway between the City Hall and the classic precinct of Berkeley..." Temescal extended along Telegraph Avenue beyond the northern city limits of Oakland from 36th Street. Listed in directories as Temescal Township, it had its own volunteer fire department, an imposing brass band, and a post office dubbed North Temescal. According to the 1903 city directory, the northern boundary was Temescal Creek at 51st Street; the township included all the area between Broadway and Adeline Street. Above 51st was North Temescal, also called Peralta (today commonly referred to

as Rockridge). Temescal was annexed to Oakland in 1897.

The 1870s brought the opening of the first horsecar railroad in the East Bay, the Oakland Railroad which ran from the landing at the foot of Broadway out Telegraph Avenue to Temescal Bridge over the creek of the same name. This was far out in the country at the time, on the one main road to Berkeley and the new university. Handsome residences soon sprang up along the way. The price of an acre of land rose in two years from \$200 to as high as \$1200.

Temescal meant Idora Park to many Bay Area pleasure-seekers in the early 20th century. 1907 view northeast toward Berkeley shows the rural character of the area. (Ted Wurm coll.)





Looking down Telegraph toward Oakland, from the bridge over Temescal Creek at 51st, 1889. Steam train waits for horsecar before chugging off to Berkeley. (Oakland History Room)

The Oakland Daily News of Dec. 17, 1873, had a vivid expose of the condition of Telegraph Avenue: "...mud sloughs and adobe chasms abound in that thoroughfare. [It] makes us gnash our teeth in rage when we hear of taxpayers' boots and shoes becoming hopelessly imbedded in the native soil of that long-neglected avenue--narrow escapes from drowning in the slush pools and ditches that abound...." Sometimes troublemakers (including "San Francisco roughs") started fights in the horsecars, but Oakland police could not intervene if the ruckus took place outside of town, that is, north of 36th Street.

In June 1871 the railroad franchise was granted an extension from Temescal Creek to the state university at Berkeley. Fare was set at 6-1/4 cents (four rides for two bits). Motive power continued to be horses or mules, and no car was to move faster than 10 miles per hour. Early in 1872 there was car service every 15 minutes from the Broadway depot to the creek, with 30-minute service beyond and to Berkeley.

At that time it was possible to make the journey from San Francisco to Berkeley without delay in an hour and a half at a cost of 50 cents round trip. The railroad boasted of such scenery as mountains, meandering streams, natural groves, and a spectacular view of San Francisco and the bay. Temescal Creek crossed Telegraph at 51st Street where passengers had to change cars, walking along a raised platform. Passengers could walk to nearby Humboldt Park House to see the salmon trout ascending the creek to spawn. A 7-1/2 pounder was reported caught in February 1875.

After Senator James Fair's South Pacific Coast Railroad bought the old Oakland

Railroad line in 1885, the junction was moved a little closer toward town and the horsecar tracks were changed to narrow gauge. Then a regular steam train covered the outer run from approximately 31st Street to Berkeley. The new management was denied permission to run steam trains all the way into downtown Oakland.

A branch of the narrow gauge ran a quarter mile up Claremont Avenue to serve Temescal's first big industry, the huge Lusk Cannery. The cannery extended 1000 feet along Claremont south from Clifton. On its north were the well-known Lusk Nurseries, established in 1863. Pure, clear water from a well alongside Temescal Creek was used in preparing the fruit which was packed in cans made right on the premises. When canning season was at its peak, 3000 cases were turned out each day and shipped down Telegraph Avenue by rail.

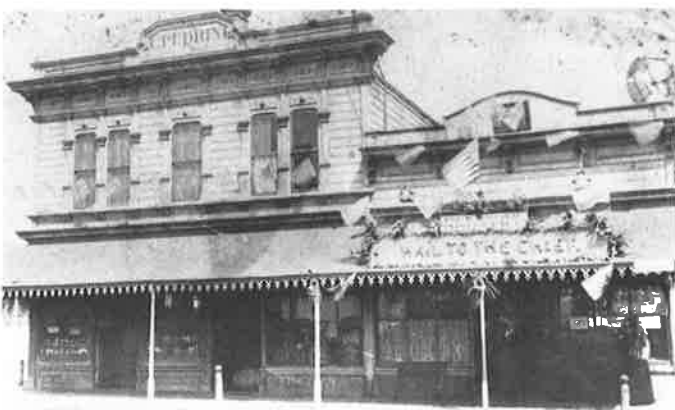
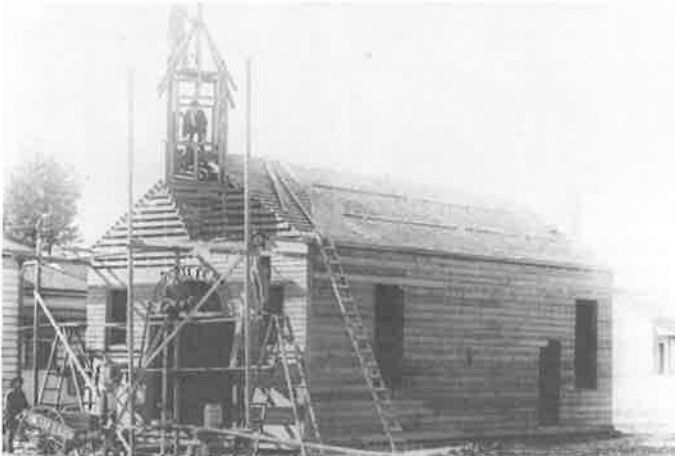
The Lusk cannery and nursery were founded by two brothers. A grandson, Albert Lusk, remembered well the country atmosphere when every family kept its own cow and chickens and raised pigs. Albert's father was Horace B. (Hod) Lusk, a favorite with everyone in the area around the turn of the century. He had been chief of the Temescal Volunteer Fire Department and did much of the work when they built their firehouse at 47th and Telegraph about 1890. Hod was also an organizer and member of the Temescal Social Club Brass Band in the 90s. He operated a small machine shop alongside the creek on Cavour Street and enjoyed turning out an occasional play wagon for the kids.

The center of early business life on Telegraph Avenue was Cipriano Pedrini's store (groceries, dry goods, and liquors) which for years housed the North Temescal post office at the corner of Birch Street. (Birch had its name changed to Columbus Avenue in 1888; it is now 49th Street.) The Pedrini family lived upstairs in the two-story building. Postmasters included C.R. Norris, Elias Gill and, longest of all, Elizabeth Beebe. The 1900 city directory shows the name changed to Alden Post Office (later Alden Station). The new name was for Solomon Alden, who settled west of Telegraph in 1852. The Oakland Times of February 24, 1880, called him the "heaviest taxpayer in Temescal," with property assessed at \$193,200.

With the coming of the electric streetcars in 1892, the major activities in Temescal centered at the car barn at 51st and Telegraph (later the location of Vern's



Top to bottom: 1883 view from Clifton across Claremont, Lusk Cannery at right, Ayala Park behind (5), Ayala, Galindo, and Peralta houses labeled 2,3,4 (Ted Wurm collection); Temescal Volunteer Fire Dept., c.1890, Telegraph near 47th (Albert Lusk); Temescal Social Club Brass Band at Ayala Park, c. 1890, Hod Lusk 2nd from right (Albert Lusk); Pedrini Grocery and North Temescal P.O., 49th & Telegraph, decorated for visit of Pres. Harrison, 1891 (L. Siegriest)



Shopping Center). Many who grew up in the neighborhood worked in the car barn or on the cars at one time or another.

Louis Siegriest drove horsecars on Telegraph Avenue while living in rented rooms above Pedrini's store. He later operated the first electric streetcars when they came to Telegraph about 1892. A family home was erected in 1900 at the corner of First Avenue and Summer Street. (First is now Miles and Summer is now Cavour.) Living at the family home until his death a few years ago was the artist, Louis Siegriest, Jr., whose reminiscences provided material for this article. During the 1906 earthquake, the Siegriest chimney collapsed, causing great alarm. Young Louis climbed to the top of the water tank in the backyard to watch the fires across the bay. He remembered that in a few days refugees were flocking to Oakland and Temescal, and the grounds around their home were covered with tents for a month or more.

The last years of the Lusk Cannery were remembered by long-time resident Eanie Romiti who operated an auto repair shop on Claremont until the freeway shoved him over a block to Miles Avenue. When Romiti was brought to Temescal from Italy as a small boy, the cannery's Chinese workers lived in quarters alongside the creek. Other workmen had a large dormitory with a dining hall downstairs. The superintendent and other officials lived in a string of bungalows on Miles Avenue just north of Cavour. These quaint dwellings were demolished just a few years ago to make room for a larger parking lot at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

About 1911, some time after the cannery closed, the Independent Brewery opened on the property at 487 Clifton. It made good use of the same big well used by the cannery. This later became the Keva Mattress Factory, torn down for a Safeway (until recently a medical supply outlet). Another old Temescal business was the Anchor Brewery, operated by the Kramm family at 49th and Shattuck, directly behind the car barn that faced Telegraph Avenue.

Facing the barn across Telegraph was the stately building known locally as the



Oakland Scavenger crews in front of the stables on Clarendon, 1911. Towers behind are Idora Park. (Ernie Repetto)

"Brick House" (the Cattaneo Block), still a landmark in the neighborhood. Before Prohibition the Brick House featured a beer garden in back and alongside the building, shaded by gum trees and a wooden fence. Here was the gathering place for "Dago picnics" on Sundays, according to Eanie Romiti and Louie Siegriest, who said these parties nearly always ended up in "big bang-up battles." Gangs from the Watts Tract and West Oakland would crash the parties and help themselves to free red wine.

Pat Casserly's blacksmith shop was next to the Brick House. Across 51st Street at the next corner was Babcock's Hall, the only place in the neighborhood for lodge meetings and dances. Nearby on Clarendon Avenue H.C. Babcock operated a blacksmith shop. One block south of the Brick House was the Pedrini store with the post office.

The Blake and Bilger quarry, at Broadway and Pleasant Valley, just outside the neighborhood, played a large part in Temescal life. Many of the quarry workers were immigrants from Italy who were drawn to the Italian neighborhood. They usually walked to and from their jobs. Big dray horses pulled heavy rock wagons down Clifton Street, crossing the creek on an old and shaky wooden bridge which residents said needed replacement. Neighborhood juveniles finally took care of the problem one dark night in 1905--with the help of some sticks of quarry dynamite.

Garbage collectors and their families always made up a large part of the Temescal population. On Clarendon between Cavour and

Clifton, near the Independent Brewery, was headquarters for Oakland Scavenger Company, established in 1907 when several independent operators consolidated. Before that each horse-drawn garbage wagon was a separate business, fighting others for customers all over town. Two Genoese immigrants would get together, buy a team and wagon, sign up customers, and business would start "picking up."

Consolidation brought many improvements and eliminated duplication of routes. It also brought the company's blue-painted wagons, called "Blue Taxis" by the younger generation. A man had to be a "Zenezzi" from Genoa to get a job with OSC in the early days. Its founders were Martino, Buzzalino, Casazza and Repetto. The Italian youths attending Tech High would tell teachers and friends they planned to go on to "OSC" after graduation. The initials did not mean Oregon State College: they were speaking of Oakland Scavenger Company. Only the youthful Italians who called themselves "Temescal Indians" knew this, they jokingly claimed.

In the middle of the block on Clarendon, across from today's Colombo Club, was the big rooming house and dining hall operated by Lagorio. Stables and bocci ball courts were in back. Here many of the single men from Italy lived who worked on the garbage wagons or at the quarry.

At one time Temescal had at least four dairies. O'Toole's dairy at 139 Clarendon



operated into the early 1900s. "Doc Yak" Hansen delivered milk from his barns at 90 Claremont. Hansen had a field for his cows and also raised his own corn and alfalfa. On Miles Avenue a small dairy was run by a man named Isherwood; he had but a few cows. Customers brought their own pails for milk. Anton "Tony" Campomenosi started his Fernwood Ranch Dairy in a shed at 5168 Miles Avenue. There was a 10x10-foot dairy room at one end and a horse barn at the other. Around 1914, Tony moved his dairy to 452 Clifton near Shafter, and the milk was trucked in from Sonoma County before daylight. During Prohibition, Tony was accused of bringing in certain forbidden beverages along with the milk. No one ever found out what the agents discovered, but the dairy was still in business years later.

Oldtimers recall four motion picture theaters on Telegraph Avenue above 40th Street. The Strand was between 41st and 42nd; it was later called the Circle and still later the Crystal. Farther north on the west side above 49th was the Bijou. Where Temescal Pharmacy operated until just a few years ago, was once a small movie theater known as the Nickelodeon, though officially the Navajo. Just above 51st was the fancy Claremont with a high, arched entrance. This was rebuilt and reopened in November 1939 as the Tower, "with an exceptional staff culled from the Claremont and Temescal regions." There was also a Portola Theater at 4916 Telegraph around 1912.

The area along Telegraph Avenue from the creek at 51st Street was always an attrac-



Determined men of O.S.C. off to make monthly bill collections: note "timer" with clock and wine bottle. (E.Repetto)

tive place for parks and resorts, from the Indian bathing places up to the later Idora Park. There was Humboldt Park, "a pioneer and popular place of suburban resort" at 51st and Telegraph when an 1875 issue of the Oakland Transcript described its lovely gardens as "just the place for a picnic, innocent flirtation or midnight strolls." Oakland and San Francisco clubs and associations often held their annual picnics there. The "rifle shooting gallery" was a brand-new attraction sure to bring crowds.

The turn of the century brought Ayala Park at 55th and Telegraph, named after

Idora Park amusements: left, miniature railway, 1924, built by Fageol Truck Co. of Oakland; right, 1915 bathing beauty is Rimah Grover, mother of the author. (Ted Wurm coll.)



Captain Ayala, son-in-law of Vicente Peralta, upon whose rancho lands Oakland is built. The park became a picnic mecca on the sunny side of the bay. Famous Idora Park was born out of quiet little Ayala. Idora was a strange combination of Disney predecessor and home of opera--grand and comic--in California. Starting with a huge figure-eight roller coaster in 1903, in less than ten years Idora was notable for features not to be found in even the largest parks in the country.

Idora Park filled 17.5 acres along the west side of Telegraph Avenue between 56th and 58th streets to Shattuck Avenue. It was built by "Borax" Smith to attract patrons for his Key Route streetcar lines and the Claremont electric trains on 55th Street which brought Sunday crowds from across the bay. Idora had a well-equipped theater with nightly opera performances, the largest skating rink west of Chicago (Charlie Chaplin was once champ skater there), weekly balloon ascensions, the finest ballroom dance bands of the roaring twenties, and a roller coaster featuring motorcycle racing "through the clouds."

Entertainers appearing at the park included Fatty Arbuckle, Buster Keaton, and Julius Eltinge. A 1913 Grizzly Bear article described the open-air amphitheater as the only one of its kind in the States where a 20 week season of standard musical comedy "can be given in open air" by a company of stars. The management spent a small fortune to make Idora "crash proof," but they never succeeded in keeping neighborhood kids from getting in without paying.

Idora Park didn't open for the 1929 season. The park was razed in January to make room for "10 square blocks of residences." Five months later the Realty Syndicate placed the property on sale as apartment and business sites under the name of Central Square. However, in 1930 it was developed with small, attractive Mediterranean style homes.

In 1948 the last streetcar traversed Telegraph and ten years later the last electric train left the Claremont Hotel, rolling across Telegraph at 55th Street on its way to San Francisco and oblivion. No longer would residents along Claremont and 55th jump in their beds as the last train headed back to the shops at over 50 miles per hour! In 1958 also the last freight train of the Sacramento Northern Railway was carefully pulled along Shafter from 40th Street, its big black electric



Streetcar barn at Telegraph and 51st, across from the Brick House, 1941. Cars from Telegraph, Shattuck, College, and Grove lines were stored and maintained here. Later site of Vern's Shopping Center. (Ted Wurm photo)

locomotive sounding a farewell blast as the train crossed College Avenue into history. (The last passenger train to Sacramento and Chico had made this run in 1940.)

Temescal Creek can still be seen between Claremont and Miles Avenues, an attractive shallow segment gurgling through the DMV parking lot. The name Temescal appears on a few signs and business cards, and even Alden survives on a small hotel. A supervisor in 1865 called Temescal "the hub of the whole East Bay." But BART chose the name "MacArthur" instead of "Temescal" for their local station. It is still a major transit hub: but what a change from the days of the horsecar!  
--Ted Wurm

Note: Three Oakland streetcars, and three Key System trains that ran on Claremont and across the bay, are preserved at the Western Railway Museum, Rio Vista Junction, east of Fairfield on Hwy. 12. Some operate for visitors on weekends.

The early history of Temescal is also described in an article by Diane Reinbolt Judd in the Spring 1984 OHA News.



Claremont Avenue tracks being ripped out in 1960, two years after the last electric passenger trains ran. (Clara Lindsay)



## OHA Update

### ■ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Oakland Heritage Alliance** continues to work closely with the Western Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In addition to our joint efforts to save the historic St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, the Trust awarded **OHA** a special grant to engage the services of a consultant to help design long-range plans for the Alfred H. Cohen House. (**OHA** maintains a facade easement on this historic East Oakland landmark.) We are grateful to the staff of the Trust's San Francisco office, Lisbeth Henning especially, for their commitment to preservation in Oakland.

**OHA** will also be a key participant in the Trust's national conference in October in San Francisco. Gary Knecht and Larry Mortimer will conduct a special field seminar, "Two Years After," walking through downtown Oakland to discuss the impact of the 1989 earthquake and **OHA's** efforts to protect threatened landmarks such as City Hall and the Broadway Building. We will also co-sponsor a bus tour, "Victorian Oakland," in which participants will tour the Cohen House, the Pardee House, Preservation Park, and the Camron-Stanford House.

**OHA's** summer Neighborhood Walking Tours are already in full swing, with several new tours and an expanded seven-week schedule. I hope you've taken the opportunity to go on several of these outstanding tours. The walks are a great way to introduce your friends to historic Oakland--and to encourage them to join you in **OHA**. The series continues through August 25.

Again, I'd like to personally thank all members who are volunteering their time for **OHA**. The recent **OHA-RCPC** house tour was an outstanding volunteer achievement. Give us a call at the office (763-9218) if you'd like to become more involved with **OHA's** work--helping to plan programs, reporting for the newsletter, participating in preservation action, researching with the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, developing a tour, getting out mailings, or helping with any other task at hand.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting in the fall.

--Lynn Fonfa, president

### ■ ANOTHER GREAT OHA HOUSE TOUR!

The spring house tour in Rockridge was a great success for co-sponsoring organizations Rockridge Community Planning Council and **Oakland Heritage Alliance**. Led by chairs Marlene Wilson and Kathy Walsh, volunteers from both groups worked long and hard to produce a wonderful tour of the Chabot Road area. Proceeds will help fund the activities of RCPC and **OHA**. More than 500 people toured the houses and gardens on May 19th.

The tour booklet describing the houses and neighborhood development was truly a keepsake, thanks to Don Kinkead's outstanding design and layout, illustrations by Donald Wardlaw, and text researched and written by Betty Marvin, Jennifer Katz, and Ed Phillips. Printing was underwritten by Grubb & Ellis, Pacific Union, and Lawton Associates.

A historic photo exhibit, arranged by Kathy Walsh, was an added dimension this year. Thanks to Jack Bariteau of Keenan Land Company for storefront display space, and to the Oakland Association of Realtors, California College of Arts and Crafts, Bancroft Library, and private collectors for photos.

The reception was expertly coordinated by Claudia Ellinghouse, with generous contributions from Yasai Market, Leaven and Earth, Grace Bakery, Lakeside Delicatessen, Safeway, Big Four Rentals, and San Francisco International Cheese Co. Each house had a unique floral arrangement, thanks to Bloomies, Cosmos, East Bay Flower Market, Harriet Gulassa Designs, Laura Secchi, McDonnell Bros., The Meadows, and Postag's Florist.

The houses selected by Kathy Walsh, Marlene Wilson, Annette Floystrup, and Bill and Nancy Dutcher reflected the fascinating diversity of the neighborhood. Special thanks to those who opened their homes and gardens, and to the 70-plus docents who staffed the houses. --Annalee Allen

### ■ OAKLAND MUSEUM DOCENT TRAINING

The Oakland Museum announces training in art, history, and natural sciences this fall. Docents give tours to school and adult groups, as well as to individual visitors. Training consists of lectures, gallery walks with curators, and gallery tour techniques. Enthusiasm and interest are the essential qualifications. After training the commitment is 20 half-day shifts a year. Contact Docent Center at 273-3514 or Oakland Museum Docent Council, 1000 Oak St., Oakland 94607.



### ■ SEMINARY DISTRICT REVITALIZATION

Since March of this year, many of the merchants and building owners in the vicinity of Seminary Avenue and Foothill Boulevard in East Oakland have been meeting along with neighborhood residents and city staff to form a merchants association. Their primary goal is to revitalize the commercial potential of this historic area. As part of this campaign, a committee has been formed to research the district's history and architecture.

The Seminary district, historically referred to as the "Hub of East Oakland," has served the residential communities surrounding Mills College since the early 1920s, and includes approximately four blocks along Foothill and two blocks along Seminary. The area consists primarily of brick and terra cotta faced storefronts which once housed such establishments as Oakland's first donut shop and the New England Pie Company, serving "pies like mom tried to bake." Among them stand the district's own flatiron building and the Capitol Theatre which began showing silent films back in 1924.

One property owner has volunteered a storefront on Foothill near Seminary for use as a museum to display photographs of the area, both past and present, and other historical material. A storefront museum in the area will provide a focus for the revitalization effort by building pride in the district and reawakening merchants, residents, and the city at large to the potential of the area based on its rich past. To make this museum a success, historic photographs and memorabilia of the area are needed, as well as volunteers to aid in research. If you can help, please call Andy Carpentier at 534-4345.

Summer walking tour previews OHA's National Trust "walking workshop" on earthquake effects on the Broadway Corridor: July 21, 1:30-3:30, meet at City Hall. (Survey photo)

### ■ NATIONAL TRUST CONFERENCE IN S.F.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, in partnership with the National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, will sponsor the 45th National Preservation Conference in San Francisco October 16-20, 1991. The conference coincides with the 25th anniversary of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, and has as its theme "When Past Meets Future." Highlights include keynote speakers, educational sessions, local and regional tours (including two in Oakland sponsored by OHA), and the trade show "Rehabitat." Registration is open to Trust members and general public; a one-day registration is available on Friday, Oct. 19, when most of the educational sessions are scheduled.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation was chartered by Congress in 1949 to encourage public participation in the preservation of buildings, objects, sites, and districts significant in the history and culture of the nation. A nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., it operates 7 regional offices and 17 historic house museums. It has nearly a quarter million members, and works with local preservation groups in all 50 states. For conference information call 1-800-YES-NTHP.

### ■ PARDEE HOME MUSEUM SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

The Pardee Home at 672 11th Street, an Oakland City Landmark and National Registered property, will be opening in the fall of this year. The house was built by the Pardee family in 1868 and served as their home until 1981 when a private nonprofit organization was established to open the house and grounds to the public.

In the years since its formation the Pardee Home Foundation has undertaken a variety of projects to prepare the home for its new use as a museum, ranging from documentation of the buildings and grounds and the over 50,000 artifacts left by the family, to the seismic reinforcement of the 3 buildings.

Docents and assistants are needed to present tours and to assist visitors. Training will begin in early September. Anyone interested in learning more about this opportunity is invited to call Heidi Casebolt or Dave Casebolt at 444-2187.





## ■ FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH RENOVATION

Standing as a beacon at the corner of 14th and Castro Streets in downtown Oakland, the First Unitarian Church of Oakland has served as a meeting place for the community for 100 years. It is a City of Oakland landmark, a California State Landmark, and on the National Register of Historic Places. Designed by Walter J. Mathews, it represented an abrupt stylistic turn from Gothic to Romanesque Revival. The general contractor, Peter Remillard, was a neighbor, church member, and Bay Area businessman. The cornerstone was laid on August 16, 1890, and the complete church complex was dedicated on September 6, 1891.

Over the past few years the growing congregation has been developing plans for renovation and restoration of this elegant yet aging building. The \$4 million dollar project will bring some of the interior spaces into the 21st century with wheelchair accessibility, an industrial kitchen, modern plumbing and toilets and more than 6000 additional square feet of programmable and office space.

During the work week the church's meeting rooms, social hall, and kitchen currently serve a number of programs aimed at empowering homeless and low income families. A winter shelter program has provided 35 beds and breakfast since 1987.

First Unitarian has been involved in a capital campaign since March 1990. From within the congregation they have raised pledges of over \$340,000 and a pledge of \$250,000 from Clara-Belle Hamilton, granddaughter of the church's first minister, Laurentine Hamilton, and are now poised to approach foundations and the business community.



First Unitarian plans renovations to continue its century-long tradition of community service. (Survey photo)

The Center for Urban Family Life, a nonprofit corporation, has been created as a church and community partnership. The Center's mission is to develop and implement services to families, to enhance the quality of life and the integrity of this urban community. For more information, contact Kerry Parker, 465-2200.

## ■ "TREASURES" - G.G.I.E. ART BOOK

Anne Schnoebelen's new publication "Treasures: Splendid Survivors of the Golden Gate International Exposition" tells the story of the 1939-40 Treasure Island World's Fair and its unique artistic legacy: the Pacific Unity sculptures and the magnificent Pacific Basin fountain.

In sixteen richly illustrated pages featuring vintage black and white photographs, "Treasures" recaptures the tremendous vitality of the Bay Area art community in the late 1930s as it came together on Treasure Island to create one of the world's most imaginative and evocative fairs. "Treasures" also tells the still-unfolding saga of efforts to restore the sculptures and fountain and make them the centerpiece of a public garden on Treasure Island--a monument to the fair's optimistic outlook for peace and unity in the Pacific.

Proceeds from sale of the booklet benefit the Treasure Island Art Treasures Restoration Fund. Price is \$7 a copy, postage and handling included, from GGIE Research Associates, P.O. Box 7314, Landscape Station, Berkeley CA 94707-9991.

## ■ JOHN SANDOVAL, COUNTY HISTORIAN

John Sandoval, the official historian for Alameda County, died in April at the age of 85. Sandoval, a member of the Alameda County Parks, Recreation and Historical Commission and a resident of Hayward, had an encyclopedic knowledge of the history of southern Alameda County. In addition to teaching local history classes at Chabot College, he also wrote numerous articles and eight books on local history, including The History of Washington Township, Mt. Eden: Cradle of the Salt Industry in California, and Sheriff Harry Morse and Murray Township Desparados. Shortly before his death he approved the final proofs for his ninth book, a history of the Hayward area. --Carolyn Douthat

## 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.

### ■ NATIONAL TRUST TEAM STUDIES CATHEDRAL

About 40 people interested in the fate of the earthquake damaged St. Francis de Sales Cathedral attended a public meeting convened by the National Trust for Historic Preservation on May 21. Regional Assistant Director Lisbeth Henning put together a team of nationally recognized consultants to examine the Roman Catholic cathedral, which remains closed since the October 1989 quake. The study was funded by an emergency grant from the Trust, administered by OHA.

The meeting was held to acquaint public and media with the purpose of the three-day team visit. Although Bishop John Cummins announced last fall that the Diocese could not meet the estimated \$4.8 million repair cost and demolition appeared to be the only feasible alternative, he nonetheless agreed to cooperate with the assessment project. It may be some time before the Diocese gets the go ahead to demolish St. Francis. The City of Oakland has determined that a full EIR must be completed first. The EIR process could take up to six months.

National Trust team members were introduced at the May 21 meeting held in the historic Thomas Starr King room of the First Unitarian Church. Robert Jaeger, co-director of Partners for Sacred Places, headquartered in Philadelphia, is well known for his work in the stewardship of religious properties. Partners is the national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting awareness and collaboration among religious, preservation, and community leaders who share an interest in the continued use and vitality of the nation's historic religious properties.

Neal Vogel, whose specialty is technical services, is coordinator of Inspired Partnership of Chicago, another organization dedicated to religious property preservation. Page Ayres Cowley, architect, is associate director of historic preservation with the New York firm of Beyer Blinder Belle. Michael Krakower, structural engineer with Kariotis and Associates of South Pasadena, has advised the Los Angeles Archdiocese on their inventory of masonry



St. Francis de Sales (and rectory behind on 21st Street) in 1963, when brick was red. (Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey)

churches. Michael DeNunzio, San Francisco fundraising consultant, headed the \$50 million campaign to save the cable cars.

Team members were scheduled to meet with more than 35 individuals over the three day period. Interviewees ranged from civic, business, and cultural leaders to members of the Oakland Diocese hierarchy including Bishop Cummins. A team report will be compiled and made available to the public and the Diocese by late July. Regardless of what ultimately happens to St. Francis de Sales, the fact that it became the focus of the National Trust and Partners for Sacred Places insures that awareness of Bay Area preservation concerns, such as seismic repairs, is growing. --Annalee Allen

### ■ MERRITT COLLEGE

The history and significance of Merritt College/old University High has been under consideration on two fronts in the past months. On May 15th the City Planning Commission considered a recommendation from the Landmarks Advisory Board to designate the complex a city landmark. On the advice

of staff, and by unanimous vote, the Commission put over consideration of the designation pending preparation of the Section 106 documentation for the site.

In mid June, consultants for the City of Oakland completed initial documentation on the complex for use in negotiations with the State Office of Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in the Section 106 review process.

According to Planning Director Alvin James, the city intends to present the documentation to the State Office of Historic Preservation and begin discussions on the impacts which the proposed shopping center development would have on the complex. After beginning the Section 106 process, the city will also be proceeding with environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). That review will analyze a range of alternative plans for the site, and will also include the documentation on the significance of the existing buildings.

The report on the complex includes a history of University High/Merritt College, the surrounding neighborhood and the development of the Oakland school system in the first half of the 20th century. In evaluating the significance of the complex, the report discusses both its architectural significance and integrity, and its place in the progressive educational movement of the period, concluding that the main building and auditorium are eligible individually for the National Register, and that the facility as a whole, including the manual arts wing and the gymnasium, also meets National Register criteria. As an interesting historical footnote, research on the earlier history of the site indicates that it was once the California State Baseball League Ball Park, home field of the Oakland Oaks.

At the present time, the city has no contractual agreement with the developer, North Oakland Redevelopment Associates, and the Office of Economic Development and Employment is acting as the project sponsor for environmental review purposes. The proposed project, which includes a 48,000 square foot supermarket, 48,000 feet of retail space, a senior center and a child care center, was adopted as the preferred alternative by the City Council last December. The design would involve demolition of all of the complex except the auditorium and bell tower.

According to previous staff reports, both the Planning Commission and the State Office of Historic Preservation were to consider the documentation of significance upon its completion; however, as of this writing, the Planning Department has yet to initiate either review.

In a related development, the City has agreed to increase its efforts to prevent deterioration of the buildings. Building security and maintenance have been of serious concern to NOVA, the neighborhood group which has taken the leadership in fighting to save the complex, and under pressure from the Department of Housing and Urban Development the city has agreed to keep the building secure and provide temporary repairs to the roof to prevent additional water damage to the interior of the complex.

--Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ CYPRESS REPLACEMENT

In May, representatives of OHA's Preservation Action Committee met with CalTrans, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and staff of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey to discuss the impacts of the I-880/Cypress replacement on historic resources. CalTrans and FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) have identified the railroad corridor route as the preferred alternative, and discussions centered on the effects on historic resources which would result from construction along that route, and possible mitigations.

Federal law requires that CalTrans and FHWA complete Section 106 review, including negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Office of Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, prior to certification of the final EIR/EIS. The terms of that agreement, which will cover effects on National Register eligible properties affected by the railroad corridor route (the 16th Street SP Station, Oakland Point Historic District, and West Oakland Shops Historic District) were the main subject of the meeting.

In addition, both the National Trust and OHA pointed out inadequacies in the draft EIR/EIS, particularly as related to impacts on locally significant buildings. The draft EIR fails to address effects on resources which were not determined eligible for the National Register but which are locally significant, notably the South Prescott Historic District. Although CEQA does not limit consideration of effects on historic



resources to National Register eligible properties or districts, the draft EIR itself limits the definition in that way. South Prescott was not considered eligible primarily because of alterations to buildings, yet it remains one of Oakland's oldest and most significant neighborhoods.

The district is of particular concern because it is fragile and could easily be impacted by a new freeway running along its western edge. The railroad corridor route would require removal of a group of houses on 3rd Street and could well, by reason of noise, vibration and pollution, cause long term detrimental effects on the adjacent buildings in the district.

The documentation of the district which was prepared by the OCHS staff is the basis for a new tour in the OHA Walking Tours series this summer. Betty Marvin, OHA board member, News editor, and member of the survey staff, will be leading the August 24th tour. Meet at 5th and Center in the BART parking lot to get a look at one of Oakland's most historic neighborhoods and see why there is real concern about its future.

--Carolyn Douthat

## 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.

There have been two vacancies on the board for over a year. Since our last report, there have been two new appointments and two resignations, still leaving two vacancies. Bert Bertolero has resigned, and Anthony Pegram has moved on to the City Planning Commission. New members are:

Annalee Allen is no stranger to readers this report, being the immediate past president of OHA. She was born in San Francisco, attended and graduated from Berkeley schools, and graduated from UCLA where she majored in art history and took courses in architectural history. She has been active in preservation for about 12 years, serving on the Camron-Stanford House board and as chair of the Preservation Fair. She has been active in OHA since its beginning and still serves on the board.

Dianna Becton-Brown is a lawyer practicing in Richmond. She was born in Oakland and attended local schools. She is a graduate of San Francisco State University and has a law degree from Golden Gate University. She became interested in preserving older housing while working in real estate and housing for the City of Richmond and the City of San Francisco.

### APRIL

The April meeting was canceled because of the fire at 1330 Broadway where the City Planning Department is located.

### MAY

Board voted to adopt a resolution recommending landmark designation for the Posey Tube portal building at 4th and Harrison (1925-28, Henry H. Meyers, architect). CalTrans reserved complete control over the roadway inside the tube. Board Secretary Helaine Prentice had contacted the Alameda landmarks board to find out the status of the Alameda portal: it was not currently designated, but they expressed interest.



Close-set raised basement cottages in South Prescott date from early years of the transcontinental railroad. (Survey)

Board voted to accept the owner's landmark application for the Lake Merritt Hotel (1800 Madison Street, 1927/1934, William H. Weeks) and directed preparation of a resolution designating it a landmark. This completes a long saga: see Fall and Winter 1986 **News** for previous designation attempt.

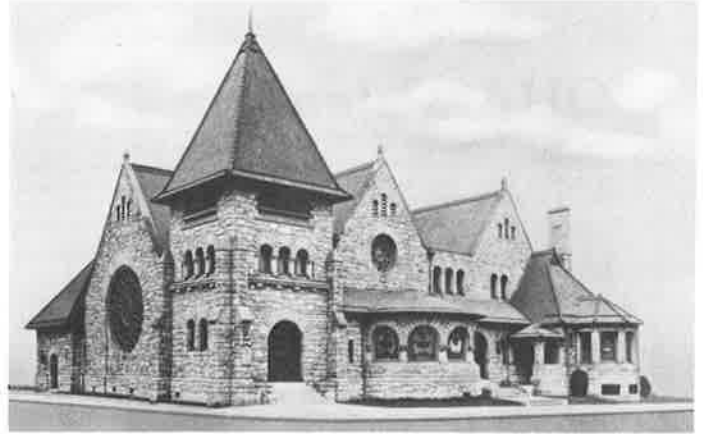
Landmark application by the owners for the Ellen Kenna House, 1218 East 21st St. (1888, Augustus Laver or William Clark) was tabled until the Board toured the house on June 3. (This is the house where OHA candidates' night was held last fall.) Questions of eligibility related to level of historic significance (persons or events) and alterations to the front of the building, which occurred long before the Center for Third World Organizing owned it.

Design review: Board rejected application by Joyce Lee, owner of a lot at 2050 10th Avenue in the 10th Avenue S-7 preservation district, to erect two-unit manufactured houses; district residents opposed the plan. Board tabled Pacific Bell's application, under Earthquake Repair Ordinance, to demolish 1519 Franklin (see last February).

The board of the First Church of Christ, Scientist (1701 Franklin, 1902, Henry Schulze) had requested that their building be dropped from consideration for landmark status; Annalee Allen volunteered to speak with them to explain the landmarks program. The Scottish Rite Temple's board (1543-47 Lakeside Drive, 1926, Carl Werner/1938, William Corlett) had also voted against accepting landmark designation; Board voted to retain it on the Study List and reconsider designation in about a year.

Board revised the text of the letter to owners whose property is under consideration for landmark status, replacing warning about "economic impact" (see last March) with "The Board urges that you investigate possible impacts of landmark designation and become involved in the process."

The executive director of the Chinatown Community Council addressed the Board requesting protection for the Pekin Low building (700-10 Franklin, 1924, W.K.Owen), which now houses 18 tenants. Secretary Prentice updated the Board on continuing issues: National Trust's preservation study team was looking at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral; demolition permit for Sacred Heart Church was awaiting City Council determination on appeal of the environmental review decision; City Manager's office was mediating an agreement between Taldan In-



First Church of Christ, Scientist, at 17th and Franklin: members have misgivings about landmark status for this Romanesque revival stone church. (undated early postcard)

vestment and the preservation community to hire an engineer and cost estimator to determine actual cost for repairing the Broadway Building; the Planning Commission had reopened the public hearing on landmark designation of University High School but held it over until after Sec. 106 review.

Boardmembers were urged to attend June 14 California Preservation Foundation workshop on preservation and low income housing.

#### JUNE

After touring the Kenna House (1218 East 21st), Board voted to modify the evaluation criteria and recommend it for landmark status, since the owners hope eventually to remove the alteration, and it was important that they be able to use the State Historical Building Code and design review provisions. Frederick Hertz and Carolyn Douthat spoke in favor of designation.

Board voted to approve resolution designating the Lake Merritt Hotel a city landmark. Language of the resolution for the Posey Tube Portal was revised to read "Posey tube, excluding roadway," in order to include lighting and other features.

Design review: Pacific Bell's application to demolish the 11-story office building at 1519 Franklin (1918-27, E.V. Cobby) was approved (Allen opposed). Proposals to convert the building to housing had been too costly. Board approved application by Paul Cobb, owner, and Howard Johnson, agent, to construct a rear addition at 974 16th Street, the Reed-Henshaw House, a city landmark, with the understanding that the rear door be wood rather than aluminum.

Board decided to participate in a National Trust panel on the impact of the 1989 earthquake on preservation. --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. (261-7236)

## Upcoming Activities

through Aug. 4 Sun., "Contemporary African Artists: Changing Tradition", Oliver Art Center, College of Arts & Crafts, 5212 Broadway, 763-0104.

July 11-October 13 ( M-F. 7-7; Sat. 8-4; Sun. 10-4), "William Wareham", Oakland Museum Sculpture Court at City Center, 1111 Broadway.

July 13 Sat. 1:30-4:00, OHA Walk "Renovating Victorians - A Walk Through Preservation Park", M. L. King Jr. Way @ 13th St., \$5/\$3.

July 14 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Old Emeryville", Anna Yates Elementary School, 1070 41st St. near Adeline, Emeryville, \$5/\$3.

July 18 Th., 7:00 PM (6:30 receipt.), "Historic Uses of Asbestos in Buildings", AIA/SF & Association for Preservation Technology, AIA/SF, 130 Sutter St. Ste. 600, RSVP 362-7397.

July 20 Sat. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Rose Garden Neighborhood", Monte Vista Ave. @ Vernon St., \$5/\$3.

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

July 21 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Broadway Corridor", City Hall, Washington St. @ 14th St., \$5/\$3.

July 27 Sat. 1:30-4:00, OHA Walk "Mountain View Cemetery", Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., \$5/\$3.

July 27-Aug. 13, "Athletes: Photographs 1860-1986", Smithsonian Exhibit, Alameda Historical Museum reopening, 2324 Alameda Ave., 521-1233.

July 28 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Uptown Art Deco", Mary Bowles Bldg., 1718 Telegraph Ave., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 3 Sat. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Old Oakland Ethnic History", 9th St. @ Broadway, \$5/\$3.

Aug. 4 Sun. 1:30-3:00, OHA Walk "F.M. 'Borax' Smith Estate", 8th Ave. @ E. 24th St., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 5-Oct. 19 (M-F. 11-4; Sat. 12-5), "Cherry Blossoms in Eden", Japanese Americans in Eden township 1850's-present, Hayward Area Historical Museum, 22701 Main St., \$1/\$0.50, 581-0223.

Aug. 10 Sat. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Brooklyn Neighborhood", 2112 10th Ave., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 11 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Historic Jewish Cemetery", Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 17 Sat. 1:30-4:00, OHA Walk "Mountain View Cemetery", Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 18 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Temescal Neighborhood", Genova Delicatessen, 50th St. @ Telegraph Ave., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 24 Sat. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "South Prescott", W. Oakland BART pkg. lot, 5th @ Center St., \$5/\$3.

Aug. 25 Sun. 1:30-3:30, OHA Walk "Downtown Art Deco", @ Camera Corner, 13th St. near Broadway, \$5/\$3.

Sept. 1 Sun. 12-5, "California: a Collectibles Fair", Oakland Museum gardens, \$3/\$2 members, early sale & continental breakfast 10-12 \$15, benefit History Dept., 273-3842.

Sept. 11 - Oct. 31, "Women's Work: Architecture + Design", AIA/SF, 130 Sutter Street, Ste. 600, receipt. Sept. 11, 6-8PM, 362-7397.

Mid-Sept., Landmarks Commission Workshop (Northern California), design review process & other issues of interest for C.L.G. Certification, California Preservation Foundation, 763-0972.

Oct. 16-20, S. F., National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference, details T.B.A.

## Regularly Scheduled Tours

Alameda Historical Museum, walking tours of historic Alameda, 1st & 3rd Sat., 1PM, 2324 Alameda Ave., \$5/\$3.50 members, 521-1233.

Ardenwood Historic Farm, April-Nov., Th-Sun. 10-4; house tours hourly Sat. & Sun./variable Th-F., \$4/\$1.50, tour extra; Ardenwood Blvd. or Lake Blvd., Newark; 796-0663.

Camron-Stanford House, 1876 Italianate house museum at Lake Merritt, W. 11-4 & Sun. 1-5, \$2/\$1, free first Sun., 1418 Lakeside Dr., 836-1976.

Dunsmuir House, Colonial Revival mansion, Sun. & W. 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, spring through fall; 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, \$3, 562-0328.

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

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

Oakland Museum, Oakland Historic Neighborhoods Bicycle Tours, docent guided, July 21, Aug. 18, Sept. 15 & Oct. 20, 10am; 2+hrs., reservations, 273-3514.

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

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

San Francisco Heritage, Victorian & Edwardian Pacific Heights, Sun. 12:30-2, Haas-Lilienthal House, 2007 Franklin, \$3/\$1\*; Haas Lilienthal House Tours, Sun. 11-4, W. 12-3:15, \$4/\$2\*; Chinatown, Sat. 10:00, 950 Clay, through Sept. 29, \$3; Presidio, every other Sat., 10:00, @ flag pole main parade ground, through Sept. 29, \$3; \*Srs/Jrs., 441-3004.



### 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 Mon., 4 pm.  
**City Planning Commission,** alternate Weds., 1:30 pm.  
**City Council,** every Tuesday evening, 7:30pm.  
All city meetings at Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue. Contact City Planning Dept., 273-3941, for Landmarks Board and Planning Commission agendas.

### 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 (March 22-June 30) are:

Bill Beatty, Patte Bishop, Kim Bruseth, Andrew Carpentier, Josette Case, Gloria Christensen, Gail Cooper, Caryn Dombroski, Laine Farley/David Cheves, Anna Maria Galdieri, The Gardening Co., Bill Glick, Glenda Goldwater, Reeve Gould, Lisa Haage, Sharon Hayden, Jerome Herst, Robert Hofmann, Inge Horton, Mona Jane, Marilyn/Michael Jensen-Akula, Marius Johnston, Carole Jones, Mary-Ellen Jones, Elizabeth Judd, Michael Kemp, Bonnie Killip, John/Mary Kimball, Loa Lovely, Craig Lyall/Dom DiMento, Eunice Malley, Michael Martinez, Winnie McDonald, Sandy McEachern, Betsy Mueller, Elizabeth Musbach, Shirley Nachman, Randall Newsome, Carol Olmert, Ann Olund, Elizabeth Pateke, Jeanne Pollak, John Pryor, Barbara Robben, Betsy Schooley, Berenice Stoner, Nina Trevino, Danielle Ullendorff, Steve Weinberg/Georganne Ferrier, Kristin Wilson, G.M. Yovino-Young.

### Donors

Special thanks to those joining/renewing as:  
SPONSOR (\$100): Steve/Terry Beck, Robin/Gilman Johnson, Richard Nagler, Mabel McCammon Winkelman  
ORGANIZATION (\$50): Alfa Parts/Jon Norman, Bancroft Library, CALTRANS/E. Kruse, Foxfire Properties Management/J. Stoner Lichty Jr., Paramount Theatre, The Pardee Home Foundation  
OHA appreciates donations from the following (April 1-June 30): Steve/Terry Beck, J. Timothy Galenek, Elwood Gerrits, Leon/Elinor Mandelson, Donna Mehrten, Tony Moniz, Alison Siegel-Sanchez in memory of Russell Moulthrop.

### Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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Annalee Allen, Carolyn Douthat & Dean Yabuki.

#### EDITOR/PRODUCTION

Betty Marvin

OHA NEWS welcomes contributions--research projects large or small, historic photos, reports on preservation issues or events. Contact Betty Marvin, 849-1959, Dean Yabuki, 832-5355, or OHA, 763-9218. Back issues \$2. © 1991 Oakland Heritage Alliance.

### Oakland Heritage Alliance

PO.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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**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.

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## Oakland History Notes: The Novelty Theatre

Oakland's first motion picture theater was the short-lived and now highly obscure Peck's Broadway Theater, which opened in 1901 on the northeast corner of 13th and Broadway. The Novelty Theatre, opening in 1902 on the west side of Broadway between 11th and 12th streets, enjoyed the distinction of being the city's second purveyor of moving pictures. Advertising itself as "Oakland's Leading Vaudeville House," the Novelty featured a bewildering variety of entertainment.

For the week commencing January 11, 1904, the theater showed moving pictures, followed by the "Great 2 1/2" (?), succeeded

by Walter Wilson with his pictured melodies, chased after by the Pringles with a sketch entitled "Foxy Tramp," pursued by Kippy the Tramp Juggler, then Lane and Suzinetta "the Quo Vadis Gladiators," concluding with--and no doubt crowned by--the Lee Children with a sketch called "Dutch Uncle," all melodically festooned by the Novelty Orchestra conducted by Henry Graham. Tantalizing coming attractions included the Roman athletes Cole and Cole, "the greatest athletic act ever seen in Oakland."

Priding itself upon its propriety, the theater informed patrons that "Under the new law, ladies and gentlemen are politely requested to remove their hats on taking their seats. Gentlemen will please refrain from expectorating on the floor, as it is against the law."

Female patrons were advised that a "ladies maid is in attendance in the ladies parlor." Seating 1200 customers, the Novelty also featured a penny arcade. "The walls and ceiling are handsomely frescoed," boasted the proprietors, "and present the most attractive appearance imaginable. The place is well lighted, containing over 1500 electric lights."

In 1908 the Novelty changed its name to the Lyric, and, in 1913, closed its doors. The American President Lines building now sits upon the site of the Novelty, once home to Kippy the Tramp Juggler, Cole and Cole the Roman Athletes--and the moving picture. --William W. Sturm

(Vernon Sappers collection)



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