

# The Pfrang Brothers of Rockridge

## “Owner and Builder of Modern Homes”

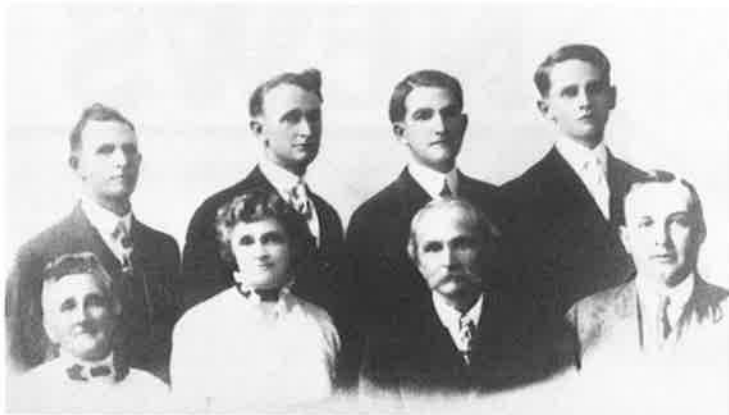


The Pfrang brothers, Herbert and Christopher, were two early builders of Rockridge and North Oakland. They built hundreds of houses between 1910 and the early 1950s. Although their work was concentrated in north Oakland, they constructed residences at Adams Point and along Park Blvd., as well as in Berkeley, Richmond, and elsewhere. Recent research (which still has gaps in the 1920s), identified 275 Pfrang-built houses. Sadly, the 1991 Oakland hills fire destroyed many of their finest works. Among the building permit records for the historic homes lost in the fire, Pfrang as the contractor name occurs more often than any other.

Unfortunately for those trying to rebuild

Perhaps the best work by Christopher Pfrang is this house which, until the 1991 fire, stood at Acacia and Golden Gate. It was built in 1930 at a cost of \$8,000 and first occupied by the George W. Arth family. The rolled roof shingling on the house and matching garage is believed to have been the work of James (Jim) Foley. (Jennifer Katz)

Pfrang houses, the family did not retain architectural drawings or plans. In parts of Oakland, rows of Pfrang houses define the style of the neighborhood: there are at least fifteen Pfrang houses on Locksley, eight on Belgrave, nine on Forest, and so on. Prior to the 1991 fire, at least 13 Spanish-style homes built by Herbert Pfrang could be found on Buena Vista. Rockridge Boulevard, just inside the gates at Broadway, is one of the better-known streets built up by the brothers. Only a handful of



Left to right, front row: Josephine Griese Pfrang (mother), Ida, Edward Pfrang Sr. (father), Christopher. Back row: Edward, Lewis (Leudi), Herbert, and Milton. All but Edward and Milton came to California between 1908 and 1910. (Collection Herbert C. Pfrang, Jr.)

1910-era homes existed on the street when, in the 1920s, the Pfrangs, with another brother Lewis, purchased more than a dozen lots, filling in the neighborhood with Spanish, Prairie, and Colonial style homes.

The brothers grew up in Plymouth, Wisconsin. Herbert (1887-1977) came to Oakland for a brief period in 1906 and worked as a tailor. He returned to Wisconsin, coming back to the Bay Area in 1910 with a new wife and other family members. Herbert learned the building trade working on the construction of Idora Park and with his older brother Christopher, who had come to Oakland around 1908. Herbert's first listing as a contractor in the Oakland directory was 1913; however, he shows up in building permit records as a contractor as early as 1911. Lewis, who usually worked as

A Craftsman bungalow with Oriental detailing built in 1911 by Christopher Pfrang at 320 Forest (near Shafter) at a cost of \$2,500. Herbert Pfrang lived there in 1916. (Collection Herbert C. Pfrang, Jr.)



a carpenter, was the builder of about four Oakland houses between 1916 and 1923.

Despite their separate businesses it appears that Christopher and Herbert maintained ties throughout the 1920s. In the Oakland city directory, both brothers used the slogan "owner and builder of modern homes." By 1913, Christopher seems to have adopted the role of financial backer as well, offering "real estate insurance loans and investments on easy payments." Until the late 1920s, Herbert and Christopher built houses based on similar or identical plans. The source for their designs is not known.

Much is known about Herbert's work from immediate family still living in Rockridge. He launched his business with a financing arrangement with the Hogan Lumber Company in Oakland. Lumber was bought on credit and when the house sold, the bill was paid. Later projects were self financed. Herbert always had at least three homes in various stages of construction. This allowed him to do inside work while it rained. His early bungalows went up quickly: a foundation was poured on a Friday, and on Monday week (ten days later), the house was ready for exterior stucco.

Almost all these and later residences were built on speculation. The Pfrangs were small-scale developers who bought the lots and designed, built and sold the houses. During the post-earthquake boom of the 1910s they put up rows of similar-looking cottages, making minor variations in style. The first Pfrang houses were one-story, five-room bungalows in North Oakland east of Martin Luther King Jr. Way and in Rockridge below College. These houses were either Craftsman-style brown shingles or stucco California bungalows: whatever was most popular at the time.

In 1911, Christopher built an interesting set of Craftsman-style homes on the 300 block of Forest (north side) behind today's Rockridge Market Hall. Typical examples of their version of the California bungalows are the mirror-image houses at 5248 and 5252 James. Construction costs for these bungalows ranged from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Herbert was known for his honesty and thoroughness. His family recalls that he maintained high standards of workmanship and quality of materials. If there was a problem with a Pfrang-built home, Herbert rectified it. The family has a favorite story about a house with a stairway that needed repair five years after it was built. The owner expected to pay Herbert for the job and waited for the bill, but it never came.

Herbert stood behind his work. During the Depression, a time when many builders went bankrupt, Herbert had jobs for his men at a rate of \$5 a day. Carpenters Andy Anderson, Oscar Strom, and his brother Lewis Pfrang worked with him for many years. Hardwood floors were done by a man named Broderick. Painters Ed Furtado and Hans Hansen were also with him for a long time.

Around 1918 the signature Pfrang home footprint appeared. The plan has an L-shaped footprint with a stairway that angles to the corner of the lot rather than the front or side. Dozens of variations of the design are scattered around Rockridge. Some of these stucco L-plan houses can be seen on corner lots along Broadway above College, on Rockridge Boulevard, and on Mystic (at the Berkeley-Oakland border). This plan worked especially well on corners but was also used elsewhere. Although these houses were often two-story or set on raised basements, they retained a broad look because of the low gables, the wide and blunted roof eaves, and broad windows on the street facade. The shape of the house and stairway, rather than ornamentation, defined the type. Architect Irwin Johnson

This 1918 home at Keith and MacMillan, built by Herbert for the Simon family, has been converted to a triplex. Its design blends Craftsman and Prairie styles. Herbert Pfrang Jr. likes the fact that you can stand on the eaves to wash the second-story windows. (Collection of H.C. Pfrang, Jr.)



The trademark Pfrang L-shaped Prairie-style house at 6045 Rockridge, built in 1923 for \$6,000. Christopher and Herbert built many of these houses in one- and two-story versions. (Collection Herbert C. Pfrang, Jr.)

believes that Christopher originated this L-plan design with its prominent stairway. Herbert's family remembers that he too drew his own plans "on a sugar pine board with a T-square," and then took them to an architect to be checked and finalized.

In the 1930s, Herbert began building larger houses in upper Rockridge. In the same period, he also began working with Irwin Johnson, a native Oaklander who received his architect's license in 1935, but had begun drawing house plans around 1928 while working for architects William





Herbert Pfrang offered this house at 6000 Rockridge Blvd. for \$20,500. It was described in the April 22, 1928, Oakland Tribune: "The living room, 17x28 feet, is finished with walls of plaster of brocaded texture, faint tints of gold and blue and green hinting of the more vivid greens and blues and golds of Spanish skies, while hand-hewn beams of antique mahogany complete the illusion of historic age and elegance." The publicity and building permit do not specify an architect, but Irwin Johnson claims the design as one he did during his architectural apprenticeship. (H.C.Pfrang Jr)

A Spanish-style home on Buena Vista, destroyed by the 1991 fire. Built in 1932 by Herbert Pfrang, who used horses to excavate the lot, the house was probably the design of Irwin Johnson. Note the trademark round window. Behind is Hiller Highlands which also burned. (Jennifer Katz)



Schirmer and Frederick Reimers. Johnson designed many of the one-of-a-kind homes built by Herbert. About half of their collaborations were done for clients; the others were built on speculation. They used a variety of styles, including the Tudor revival and Spanish styles that were popular in the '30s and early '40s. Many of the later designs were California Colonial and Cape Cod. Johnson liked many windows, his trademark being a round window fitted into a small wall space. Two people who lost Pfrang-Johnson homes in the recent fire said they had wonderful interior light.

The construction of State Highway 24 eliminated several Pfrang homes. These were recorded by Herbert in photos before they were torn down in 1965. The 1991 fire destroyed many others. Yet, many Pfrang houses still survive. An Oakland Tribune writer said of Herbert in 1928: "There are no models 'built to show' by Pfrang, who has been one of the pioneers in the upbuilding of the Rock Ridge and Claremont sections of Oakland. Each house is built to stand on its own merits, and the fact that buyers of H.C. Pfrang houses of a decade and more ago come again for new models when their original purchases no longer meet their needs, is indisputable evidence of the worth of an H.C. Pfrang built home."

--Jennifer Katz



# The Black Press in Early Oakland

The origin of the black press in Oakland dates back to the 19th century. Two black newspapers, the Oakland Illustrated Guide (1892-96) and the Oakland Sunshine (1897-1923), were published in Oakland during the 1890s. The Guide and the Sunshine contributed not only to the development of the Bay Area black press, but also to the development of the East Bay black community. The pioneers of journalism who established these newspapers deserve a prominent place in the annals of Oakland.

Oakland's first black newspaper, the Oakland Illustrated Guide, was published by George Watkins. Born in Shreveport, Louisiana about 1870, Watkins moved to California as a young man, and in 1891 he established the G.E. Watkins Souvenir and Directory Publishing Co. in San Francisco. This business published a very significant pamphlet entitled Souvenir Directory of Prominent Afro-Americans, Pacific Coast, the first black directory published in California.

In 1892 George Watkins moved to Oakland and established the Oakland Illustrated Guide, the first black paper published in Oakland. This four page weekly was printed in an office at 777 Seventh Street at the Market Street railroad station. The Guide reported local, state, national, and foreign news. Several California counties were represented in the local news columns. There was also a Pacific Coast news section, with items from British Columbia, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, and Montana.

The Illustrated Guide advertised itself as the "official organ of the Afro-American League of Alameda County." George Watkins



George Watkins, publisher of the Oakland Illustrated Guide. (Northern California Center for Afro-American History & Life)

became a strong supporter of this militant civil rights organization. The Afro-American League was founded in 1887 by T. Thomas Fortune (1856-1928), an East Coast journalist and political activist. The purpose of the League, according to Fortune, was to protest the segregation and discrimination that permeated American society. Conceived as a national movement, the League consisted of local chapters that in theory were supported by affiliated churches and lodges.

The Oakland Illustrated Guide ceased publication in 1896 for reasons that are open to speculation. Since there were fewer than 700 African-Americans living in Oakland at

The single surviving issue of the Illustrated Guide, 1894. (Oakland Public Library Newspaper Room)

<p>THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE Afro-American League OF ALAMEDA CO.</p>		<h1>ILLUSTRATED GUIDE.</h1> <p>THE RECOGNIZED ORGAN OF THE COLORED PEOPLE.</p>		<p>ENERGY, PUSH AND PERSEVERANCE WILL ACCOMPLISH ALL THINGS.</p>	
<p>VOL. III.</p>		<p>OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1894.</p>		<p>NO. 87.</p>	
<p><b>JOHN EK,</b> Fashionable Tailor. 1704 7th St., W. Oakland, California</p> <p><b>"LA OAOITA"</b> FINEST WINES, LIQUORS AND CIGARS. South-east Corner 7th and Pacific Sts. OAKLAND</p> <p><b>H. R. MORGAN,</b> DICK NURSE. Home Cleaning and Whitening Carpets Cleaned and Laid on Short Notice.</p>	<p><b>General News.</b> UNITED STATES</p> <p>Four hundred women took part in the procession of the striking weavers at Fall River, Mass.</p> <p>The battleship Maine in a speed trial averaged seventeen knots an hour.</p> <p>In the recent storm in Florida fifteen fishermen, all white, were lost on Sand Island, ten miles from Apalachicola.</p> <p>The next Legislature of Pennsylvania will have before it a bill to regulate the manufacture and sale of bread.</p> <p>The Senatorial committee to in-</p>	<p><b>Const. News.</b> CALIFORNIA.</p> <p>The Southern California Fruit Exchange favors the auctioning of fruit.</p> <p>CALAVERAS COUNTY.</p> <p>Two young men named James and George Lipp, aged nineteen and seventeen years respectively, were horribly mutilated by the explosion of a box of giant powder caps near Mokelumne Hill Oct. 13. The left hand of James was torn to shreds, necessitating amputation at the wrist, his eyesight was destroyed, his head, face and upper part of his body filled with fragments of metal from cap shells and the tin box in</p>	<p>preme Court, the jury bringing in a unanimous verdict in favor of the plaintiff after being out only eight minutes. The trial lasted twenty-one days and was a hard fought one.</p> <p>SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY.</p> <p>The Solano Agricultural Fair has money enough wherewith to pay off the premiums and other claims resulting from the recent Fair.</p> <p>Frank Lavergne, convicted of manslaughter, as accessory to the murder of "Texas" Daywell at North Yakima, has been sentenced to twenty years in prison.</p> <p>The gaulein schooner Electra, laden with lumber left March 17, 1894, at Camtra, was wrecked between</p>	<p><b>Current News.</b> A Report on the strike.</p> <p>The annual report of Brigadier General Huger, commanding the Department of California, is devoted largely to the recitals of the stirring events of the great strike. After describing the condition of affairs at Los Angeles and the dispatch of Colonel Shafter's troops to that place the report goes on: "The result of the presence of troops was that the mail-train service was soon resumed to the East and later to San Francisco. The trains were guarded by troops from the 7th until the 15th of</p>	<p>Daily Larkie's Post-ponery. SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.</p> <p>There is a play "Church and State," which has been played by a company in San Francisco that will do more to lower the morals of the stage than anything in the theatrical line that has been given in some time. Said one of the actors in this "Church and State," "I will admit there are some very broad lines in it that would be better left out, but what is that to me, its the money that I am after and I cannot afford to eyes injaious anything of that kind." Still no girl can afford</p>



George Watkins family photos, recently donated to the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, portray the early Bay Area black community that his Guide, Appeal, and other papers served. (N. Calif. Center)



tion in 1925. George Watkins died July 3, 1933. During his 40 year career in journalism, he was associated with at least five black papers. His publication of the Oakland Illustrated Guide 100 years ago, the East Bay's first black newspaper, was a major event in Oakland history.

The Oakland Sunshine, the second black newspaper published in Oakland in the 1890s, was the creation of John A. Wilds. Born in North Carolina in 1845, John Wilds entered the world a slave. After obtaining freedom he moved to Tennessee, married and raised a family. During the Civil War, "he answered the call of his Country and fought for the preservation of the Union." Wilds was 29 years old when he came to California, arriving in Oakland in October 1874. During his 40 years of work in Oakland, he was a carpenter, truckman, furniture dealer, newspaper agent, businessman, hostler, publisher, real estate agent, janitor, and night watchman. In 1881 Wilds was hired by the City of Oakland as watchman and janitor

December 27, 1913, issue of the Sunshine highlights national civil rights issues, local lodges and churches. (O.P.L.)

the time, it may not have had enough circulation to meet expenses. There is strong possibility that it could not compete with the popular black San Francisco newspapers, including the Elevator, Western Outlook, and the Vindicator. Only one copy of the Guide is known to have survived. The October 27, 1894, issue of the paper is preserved by the California State Library in Sacramento. The Newspaper Room of the Oakland Public Library has a photocopy.

Following the demise of the Guide, Watkins remained a prominent figure in local black journalism. In 1898 he founded the Pacific Coast Publishing Company of San Francisco and Oakland, which published the Pacific Coast Appeal. The newspaper was printed in San Francisco, while an office in Oakland, at 1696 7th Street (now site of the new Slim Jenkins Court), functioned as an East Bay news gathering and distribution agency.

The Pacific Coast Appeal ceased publica-

PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE  
A RESIDUE COMPANION  
It is true if you see it in the  
**Oakland Sunshine**

# Oakland Sunshine

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The Sunshine  
is a Great Article  
**TRY IT!**  
Do you want business ads? Do you  
want a business to advertise?  
Send an advertisement to  
**THE SUNSHINE**

VOL.—XVI OAKLAND CALIFORNIA Dec. 27th 1913 NO 19

**SPINGARN READY FOR LONG TOUR**  
Will Make Strong Campaign Against Race Segregation.  
**NEW ABOLITION MOVEMENT.**  
Former Columbia University Professor and Head of New York Branch National Advancement Association to Wage Battle For Rights of Colored Americans—Bears Own Expenses.  
By N. BARNETT DOBSON  
New York—Professor J. E. Spingarn President of the American Historical Association

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Hand Work  
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3615 San Pablo Avenue  
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Cor. Stanford  
New and complete line of Drugs, Medicines, Rubber Goods, etc., at strictly down town prices.  
Your Patronage Solicited  
**Orphean Orchestra**  
Music furnished for all occasions.  
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Phone. Piedmont 3526

**RAMPANT RACE PREJUDICE.**  
Northern Paper Exposes Injustices of Federal Government Service.  
The spirit of America and its institutions which declare that neither creed nor color shall be the measure of man and his opportunity in Washington today, in its place is prejudice, narrow and sectional, and this prejudice runs in offices in which every employee has obtained his place through competitive examination and has won by merit since the right to work in the service of his government, says the Philadelphia Press.  
For the first time in the history of the justice law of the south has invaded the department work at Washington. This is the law which says that the one distinction to be made, the one line to be drawn, is that of color. It prescribes the place and the limits which each race shall occupy. It forbids them to occupy the same quarters.

**Lodges**

**KNAKESBOROUGH COURT.**  
Court, Knatesborough, Its. #200 meets first and third Tuesdays in each month at Foresters' Hall, Clay Street, between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets.  
**Officers of Court.**  
Chief Rangers: E. A. DeLongue; sub-Chief, T. Lester; Financial Secretary, F. W. Moore, Sr.; Recording Secretary, L. M. Marsh, Secretary.  
**Members:** E. Baker; Sr. Woodard; S. Bowser; J. Woodward; W. Williams; Dr. Herdie; Albin Hunt; Jr. Herdie; Nathan Hardy; Ilyrovan, Dr. Perrell; Trustees—H. Hurst; Sr. Clair Moore; A. B. Martin; Auditing Committee—G. Ferguson, W. H. Sanders.  
Hon. Cal. Williams, Auditor.  
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MADE IN PITTSBURGH, PA. COPY.

**TOPMOST ROUND IN BUSINESS**  
National Benefit Association  
Ends Year Triumphantly.  
**HOW IT SERVES THE MASSSES**  
From Tenant to Landlord and Small Earning Power to Thousands by the Record of Mammoth Censuses With Headquarters in Washington—E. W. Rutherford's Fine Leadership.  
Washington.—That the National Benefit Association of this city, with branches

**CREDIT FOR XMAS**  
Here is a solution of the Xmas problem with so many demands for money needed for other things. You will be pleased to know that our store is at your service for your wants in  
**LADIES' SUITS—COATS—FURS—WAISTS—MILLINERY ETC.**

**Churches**

**STAR KING A. M. E. Zion CHURCH** (formerly of Shookers street), now holding religious services at Hamilton Hall, corner Gray and Division streets, San Francisco—Sunday services: First and third Sundays preaching at 11 a. m.; second and fourth Sundays preaching at 8 p. m. Rev. W. W. Matthews, pastor; telephone, 2343 24th avenue, East Oakland; telephone, Merritt 5055. Spiritual songs and good music will be featured at each of our services. A cordial welcome to all. Visitation: "Let us rejoice, Lord! Oakland people, take Eddy street cars, get off at Center, one block to Gray."

Sunday Services at the North Oak Land Baptist Church, 25th street and San Pablo avenues.  
Preaching at 11 A. M. by Rev. Dr. G. C. Colman, pastor  
P. M. Holmer, Superintendent. St. 1 P. N. at 7:30 p. m. led by Mr. Drake

at City Hall. He held this position for 30 years, during which time he was also involved in the publishing business.

In 1897 John Wilds founded the Oakland Sunshine. A weekly paper, the Sunshine reported local, state, and national news, as well as items of special interest to the local black community. Where the paper was first published is not known, but by 1901 it had an office at 465 6th Street.

Local businesses both black and white advertised in the Oakland Sunshine. A society section informed readers of club and lodge activities. The Sunshine responded to incidents of racial persecution and injustice, and periodically denounced lynchings in the South. Unlike the Guide, the Sunshine maintained a nonpartisan position with respect to politics. However, Wilds himself became active in local politics and in 1905 ran for councilman at large, the first African-American to run for this office.

In 1909 Wilds sold the Oakland Sunshine to James Monroe Bridges. James Bridges owned a furniture store, the Bridges Furniture Co., at 571 7th Street. Following his purchase of the newspaper, Bridges moved the Sunshine office into his store. The Sunshine continued publication until 1923, when it was absorbed by the California Voice, another East Bay black newspaper. The Sunshine was one of the longer lived Bay Area black newspapers. The California Voice proved to be a worthy successor to the Sunshine; it is still published, now Oakland's oldest black paper.



John Wilds, from one of the scattered surviving copies of his Oakland Sunshine. (Oakland Public Library)

**J.C. Cahwell Co.**  
 12th and Washington  
 OAKLAND  
 The Big Assortment of a Noted Mill  
**Sample**  
**Curtain Ends**  
 1/4 to 2 yards long ..... **25c**  
 Special  
 We will not attempt to say what these millions of Curtains are worth—see them. They comprise scores of good patterns in Nottingham, corded effects and other novelties; in white and Arabe. Splendid for short curtains in bungalows and cottages.  
**All at One Price: 25c**  
 Sheer Wash Novelties 15c a Yard  
 Values up to 35c  
 In this lot are several broken lines and small lots of this season's most desirable wash materials; real Irish dimity, Toulon silk, wash foulards, cross bar any colored white goods and several other sheer novelties that we have hunched together for a final clean-up.  
 Choice at 15c  
 Another lot consists of printed batiste Swiss and lawns. A good range of patterns and a few solid colors, worth 10c, 12 c, 15c and 20c. Sale Price 8c yard  
**Greatest Savings in Millinery**  
 There are about sixty stunning Dress in this department and you can select from them  
 At Half Price  
 They were what most stores would sell  
 Judge how much you can now save.  
**A NEW ENTERPRISE**  
 Mr. B. Wilds has opened a first-class restaurant and delicatessen at 2619 San Pablo Avenue, where the best of service and the best of meals will be served at all hours.

**STAR CONCERT**  
 Rev. T. M. DAVIS Presents  
**Mr. Maxmillien Navarro**  
 In SONG RECITAL  
 Friday Ev'ng. September 17, 09  
 Assisted by  
**MME. L. JETER DAVIS, Impersonator**  
**MR. HENRI D. GREER, Pianist**  
**MME. PAULINE POWELL BURNS, Accompanist**  
**Hamilton Auditorium 13th and Jefferson Sts**  
**Cards of Admission 50c Reserved Seats 75c**  
 Proceeds for Benefit of North Oakland Baptist Church, situated on 29th St. between San Pablo Avenue and West streets  
 See another column for synopsis of Musical career of Mr. Navarro

**Come one, Come all and help a Good Cause**  
**A GRAND BOOK ENTERTAINMENT**  
 Under the Auspices of the  
**Fanny Coppin Club**  
 For the Establishment of a Reading Room for Young Men and Women  
**At Magnolia Hall, 1207 1-2 7th Street**  
**Friday Evening, October 1, '09**  
**ADMISSION 25 CENTS**  
 Including Refreshments  
 Committee of Arrangements:—Mesdames E. Chandler, H. Tilghman, A. Crouse, J. Cowen, H. De Hart, L. Gilbert, T. Gray, D. Lightfoot, L. Dillard, S. Jones, Mr. K. Cowen

Ads in this 1909 Oakland Sunshine represented both black and white businesses. The Fanny Coppin Club and North Oakland Baptist Church still exist. Familiar names in their announcements include Hettie Tilghman, a director of the Old People's Home; Lillian Jeter Davis, active in the Keeton Chorus; and Pauline Powell, famed as a painter as well as a pianist. (Oakland Public Library Newspaper Room)

The oldest known extant copy of the Oakland Sunshine, dated June 21, 1902, is on display at the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life at 5606 San Pablo Avenue. Microfilm copies of the Sunshine (1906-1922, broken file) are at the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley and at the Oakland Public Library.

The Oakland Illustrated Guide and the Oakland Sunshine contributed greatly to the development of Oakland's black community. By reporting news of special interest to African-Americans, by announcing meetings of lodges, churches, societies, and clubs, the black press of early Oakland fostered a sense of identity, community, tradition, and pride. The black press also encouraged entrepreneurship by printing ads and running timely articles in support of black business establishments.

The surviving copies of the Oakland Illustrated Guide and Oakland Sunshine have been indexed by the Oakland History Room of the Oakland Public Library. They are a valuable resource in the study of Oakland's history.

--Donald Hausler

## 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 Susan McCue, 763-1687 or Carolyn Douthat 763-5370.

### ■ CITY HALL EXPANSION

In December, the City Council heard the findings of several studies on the future office needs of the city and possible locations for an office building to consolidate departments now spread throughout downtown. The City of Oakland Facilities Master Plan, prepared by Steinmann Grayson Smylie/Morgan Associates, provides an overview of the city's office space needs and evaluates the feasibility of a number of sites near City Hall for development. A companion study by Recht Hausrath Associates examines the economic and urban design impacts of the various locations.

The facilities study reviewed seven possible development sites: City Hall West and adjacent parcels on the block; City Hall West in combination with the Federal Building site at 15th and Clay; the block between San Pablo and Clay across 15th Street from City Hall, the site of the earthquake damaged Dalziel Apartments; the Rotunda Building, which the city recently purchased; the Taldan property between the Rotunda and 14th Street, on which the Broadway Building is located; the Smith Building; the Wells Fargo Bank Building, and the two Bramalea Pacific Buildings on 14th Street. Of these, the Rotunda, Smith Building, Wells Fargo Building, and Bramalea Pacific buildings were determined to be unsuitable for municipal office space.

Even before the earthquake in 1989 closed City Hall and City Hall West, a number of city offices were located in leased space. In addition to these offices, space was leased immediately after the earthquake to accommodate workers displaced from City Hall and City Hall West. Currently the City leases over 367,000 square feet, an increase of 30% over pre-earthquake figures, at a cost of approximately \$6 million a year.

According to the study, by 1995 the city will require a total of 371,000 square feet of office space, 80,000 of which will be available in the renovated City Hall. An additional 13,000 square feet can be provided in a proposed three story building on the site of the City Hall parking garage. The remaining 277,000 square feet would be located in the new office structure.



Civic and retail center: 1963 City Planning Department central district visual survey includes this shot through Kahn's Alley - between the Rotunda and the Broadway Building block - toward City Hall Plaza and City Hall.

Because FEMA's commitment to reimburse the city's earthquake-related leasing costs ends in mid-1994, the outside date for occupancy of the new office building has been set for February of 1995. To meet this date, the study recommends that the city forego the traditional design-bid-construction process in favor of a design/build process which is projected to cut approximately 33 months off the design and construction period.

Citizen participation in the site and design selection is to be solicited through a citizen review committee which will assist in developing RFQ criteria and evaluating submittals from design/build teams. Members of the committee would represent the AIA, Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Design Advocates, Oakland Heritage Alliance, Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, City Council, City staff, the Mayor's office, and an at large citizen representative. The projected date for awarding the design/build contract is October of 1992.

The companion economic development study looked at the Dalziel block, City Hall West





and the Taldan property, evaluating each in terms of its impact on the revitalization of Broadway, development of office and retail space downtown, and strengthening of the City Plaza area as a focus for local government. Of the three sites, the Taldan location was found to be "clearly superior from the perspective of stimulating additional economic activity and achieving revitalization objectives."

Of particular interest to OHA readers, of course, is how these studies affect the Broadway Building. The Steinmann study indicates that "Responses from any design/build team would be encouraged for all sites including the Taldan Property site. On the Taldan Property site, any proposers ... would be encouraged to submit design/build submissions for either retaining the existing Flatiron (Broadway) Building or ... new construction on the site. Any proposal to demolish the Flatiron Building must consider the landmark status of the building and historical preservation concerns."

Even more positively, the Recht Hausrath study points out: "Selecting the Broadway/Taldan location also provides the opportunity for the City to retain and restore the historic Broadway Building on the site. Whether or not that would occur depends on City priorities for retaining buildings such as this one because of its merit and importance to downtown. The recently developed 'Vision for Downtown Oakland' identified the Broadway Building as a special place contributing to the character of downtown and recommended that it be retained if at all feasible (emphasis added) or replaced with another signature building that provides special treatment of this location... To achieve the local economic benefits available from City government use of this visible and prominent location, it will be important that renovated existing and/or new



Broadway Building in 1963, when it was occupied by Wells Fargo Bank. (Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey)

buildings on the site be of high quality and be designed so as to respect the importance and prominence of the location."

Retention of the Broadway Building with new office building construction on the adjacent parcels is not a new concept. In the competition for the CalTrans Building now under construction, Taldan presented a design by Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz which did just that. While Taldan has maintained that the earthquake damage to the building changed the feasibility of that plan, it seems clear that any design incorporating the Broadway Building into new construction would involve extensive interior reconfiguration which could incorporate the necessary repair and seismic strengthening.

The City Council accepted the results of the report on December 17 and authorized the City Manager to negotiate a contract with the consultant for developing the RFQ and beginning the selection process.

--Carolyn Douthat



City Hall: government re-seated by 1995? (Betty Marvin)



## ■ SAN ANTONIO PARK

In a surprising vote, the City Planning Commission sent a negative recommendation to the City Council on designation of San Antonio Park as a city landmark. The Commission considered the Landmarks Board recommendation for designation at three meetings in October and November. Testimony from members of the Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association, which initiated the nomination, Creighton Fong, OHA boardmember, and Annalee Allen, Landmarks Board member and OHA boardmember, focused on the unique history of the park and the need to recognize the importance of the oldest public open space in the city. Opposition to the designation, which first surfaced at the Planning Commission level, centered on the concern that designation would restrict future recreation programs in the park.

At the suggestion of Peter Smith, chair of the Commission, the concerned parties met between meetings with Landmarks Board secretary Helaine Kaplan Prentice, Board member Allen, and Planning Commissioner Dolores Jaquez to work on a compromise which would satisfy recreation concerns while still allowing the nomination to move forward. This group agreed on an amendment to the landmark resolution which specifically cited the need for recreation programs in the park and it was expected that the compromise would be accepted by the Planning Commission

with a favorable vote for designation. At the final Commission meeting, however, Commissioner Jaquez spoke at length against landmarking the park and a motion to recommend designation was defeated. Under the landmarks ordinance, the City Council will consider the nomination along with the recommendations of the Landmarks Board and the Planning Commission in making their decision. --Carolyn Douthat

## ■ SACRED HEART STATUS

When the City Council passed an Earthquake Repair Ordinance in May of 1991 it appeared that the provisions for evaluating architecturally or historically significant structures were more than adequate. Proposed changes to, or demolition of, damaged buildings such as the 16th Street Station, the Broadway Building, the Rotunda, St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, and City Hall are subject to extensive review and safeguards as a result of this ordinance. One of the stated goals of the ordinance is "the protection of the City's historic assets."

A loophole in the ordinance has created a situation where Sacred Heart Church in North Oakland is not considered to be a "qualified historic structure" for purposes of review of the Diocese's application for a demolition permit. By not meeting the definition in the Earthquake Repair Ordinance, Sacred Heart Church, which is acknowledged to be a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style and serves the second oldest parish in Oakland, has not received the same consideration for environmental review as St. Francis de Sales.

Why is an EIR required for St. Francis and not Sacred Heart? It comes down simply to geographic location. St. Francis is located within the downtown perimeter surveyed by the Cultural Heritage Survey in 1982-84. It received an A rating and was evaluated as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. At the time of the earthquake, it was one of many structures on the Landmarks Board Study List, a list of buildings awaiting consideration for landmark status. This Survey A rating and inclusion on the Study List insured that the 100 year old cathedral met the definition of "qualified historic structure." The EIR process for St. Francis is moving forward (as reported in the Fall '91 issue).

And what of Sacred Heart? A preliminary City Planning Department "windshield" survey in 1985-86 rated the structure an A. An intensive, conclusive Cultural Heritage Survey evaluation and inventory form, how-



Aerial view of San Antonio Park before the recent additions shows bandstand at the crest of the hill, top center, along East 19th St.; Foothill Blvd. runs along the bottom of the picture. (Pacific Aerial Surveys, collection Creighton Fong)



Sacred Heart Church, designed by Etienne Garin in 1901, is distinguished by Colusa sandstone walls, Romanesque-Arts and Crafts design, and monumental forms. (Phil Bellman)

ever, had not been prepared. Funding for the Survey occurs on a year to year basis (West Oakland has been the area of concentration for the past three years) and typically the survey is done on the basis of geographic areas of the city. The decision to survey a new area is subject to approval of the next round of funding. Currently there are no plans to survey the North Oakland area of District One where Sacred Heart is located.

Although there is no prohibition against preparing forms for individual buildings outside a current survey area, the decision to do so is up to the Director of City Planning, Alvin James. Concerned with what he sees as a "politicizing of the survey process," however, Mr. James has declined to survey buildings out of turn.

If Sacred Heart is outside the survey area, and the Director declines to prepare a form "out of turn," how can it ever meet the "qualified historic structure" test? Marge Gibson-Haskell offered a way out at a December City Council meeting. She put forward a motion requiring the Planning Director to prepare a Survey form and come back to the Council in early January with the findings. The motion passed 5 to 2 (with one absent). This was an alternate motion to the one before the Council which was to require environmental review for Sacred Heart regardless of whether it was considered a qualified historic structure or not. In discussing that motion, some councilmembers expressed concern that requiring an EIR, an

expense which would be borne by the Diocese, was onerous as well as precedent setting. Councilmember Spees, in particular, voiced objection to what he characterized as use of environmental review as a "delaying tactic" rather than as a legitimate planning tool.

While Council quibbles over definitions and intents, the church stands unrepaired, vulnerable to a third winter's weather. Parish members and neighbors stand at odds with an equally determined Diocese hierarchy. In January the struggle continues.

--Annalee Allen

#### ■ NOVA SOUNDS ALARM FOR MERRITT COLLEGE

North Oakland Voters' Alliance (NOVA), long concerned with the fate of the old Merritt College building, feels that the City of Oakland's neglect of the property has reached crisis proportions. Roof repairs, which the City agreed to after a conference with regional HUD officials, have not occurred except in the lunchroom. Meanwhile, daylight is visible through the auditorium and gym ceilings, and the south wing of the main building continues to leak.

Of even more urgent concern, the cold weather has driven individuals into the building to seek shelter. NOVA members on a recent tour with an inspector from the City's Fire Prevention Bureau found candles and accumulated flammable debris. In the inspector's opinion, a fire once started could travel rapidly through holes broken in the walls to the timber-supported ceilings and roof above.

Fearing the worst may happen, NOVA has retained attorney Susan Brandt-Hawley to explore ways to arrest the City's apparent policy of "anticipatory demolition"--illegal destruction of historic properties prior to completion of environmental review. Contributions to the NOVA legal fund and letters of support are welcome. NOVA can be reached at P.O. Box 20486, Oakland 94620, or by calling Bob Brokl or Al Crofts at 655-3841.

Meanwhile, the NOVA initiated landmark nomination of the old Merritt College complex has stalled on its way to City Council. The Council has also delayed initiation of the EIR/EIS/Section 106 environmental review, though funding has reportedly been identified for the estimated \$150,000 this process will cost. Under the environmental review as proposed, the City of Oakland will be the project sponsor, and North Oakland Redevelopment Associates' regional shopping center plan, with demolition of all the existing buildings but the auditorium, would be the "preferred alternative." --Bob Brokl

## ■ CYPRESS REPLACEMENT

Oakland Heritage Alliance reviewed the Final EIS/EIR on the I-880/Cypress Replacement project in October. During the National Trust conference in San Francisco, members of the OHA Preservation Action Committee met with Elizabeth Merritt, counsel for the National Trust in Washington, Bill Delvac, California Preservation Foundation board member, and Lisbeth Henning from the Western Regional Office of the National Trust, to discuss legal and political options for challenging CalTrans' approach to historic resources in this and other projects. Subsequent to this meeting, OHA and CPF consulted with the Sierra Club and other potential parties to litigation on the Cypress Replacement EIS/EIR. The outcome of these deliberations was to pursue broad-based political and policy-oriented remedies, rather than litigation, at this time.

With introductions and assistance from Bill Coburn, new OHA board member and active member of the Citizens Emergency Relief Team (CERT) Transportation Sub-Committee, the Preservation Action Committee has also begun to coordinate with other West Oakland planning efforts related to the Cypress Replacement project. Through attendance at a CERT Transportation Sub-Committee meeting in November, we learned of a Community Advisory Committee that has been formed to provide input to CalTrans and the State/Local Coalition for the Replacement of the Cypress Freeway. (The latter is a group of elected officials and government administrators chaired by Councilmember Aleta Cannon.)



Summer walking tour group in South Prescott learns about the history of one of the West Oakland neighborhoods affected by the new freeway route. (Phil Bellman)



S.P. station at 16th and Wood (1910-12, Jarvis Hunt, arch.) is affected by both Cypress freeway replacement and plans for new Amtrak station at Jack London Square. (Phil Bellman)

The purpose of the Community Advisory Committee is to provide a community perspective on the issues arising from the Cypress Reconstruction Project. The group met intensively in November (before OHA was aware of its existence) to develop consensus on key mitigation programs above and beyond the routine mitigation announced by CalTrans. OHA attended the meeting in December, and while we were not able to advocate specifically for preservation-oriented mitigation, we are now involved in the process and will continue to monitor program and planning responses to the mitigation recommendations and highlight opportunities for neighborhood and building-specific preservation when appropriate.

On a separate, but related track, the Preservation Action Committee continues to pursue solutions to the preservation and reuse of the train station at 16th and Wood Streets. We met with Port staff and consultants during preparation of the environmental documentation for the proposed Jack London Square Amtrak Station project, and we are considering convening a brainstorming session of all interested parties to begin to coordinate planning efforts for this monumental building. --Sally Nielsen

## ■ MADISON PARK APARTMENTS

The earthquake damaged Madison Park Apartments, a National Register listed building which has been vacant since October of 1989, may yet reopen to provide affordable housing in Oakland's Chinatown. Located across 9th Street from BART headquarters, the 99-unit Craftsman building was purchased by BART in March 1990 with a view toward office expansion. A coalition of preservation and housing organizations, including OHA, the California Preservation Foundation, Oakland

Housing Organizations, and the Legal Aid Society of Alameda County has been working over the past eighteen months to have the building returned to housing use.

In October, the BART Board of Directors voted to enter into negotiations with the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation for sale of the building. EBALDC is a non-profit development group which has undertaken new housing projects like the recently opened Frank Marr complex on 13th Street between Harrison and Webster, as well as renovation projects like the Madrone Hotel in the Old Oakland Historic District. EBALDC was chosen over several other parties who had submitted offers, including the City of Oakland and Talcott Properties.

Naomi Schiff, a member of the Chinatown/Central District Community Development Council and former OHA board member, was instrumental in forming the coalition of preservation and housing groups who have worked together on this issue. While the sale is not yet a certainty, BART's willingness to enter into negotiations is a welcome step forward. --Carolyn Douthat



Postcard c.1910 shows Madison Park Apartments when it faced Madison Park--now site of BART headquarters.



Earthquake damage to brick veneer at the Madison Park Apartments, 100 9th Street (C.M. MacGregor, 1908). EBALDC may return it to residential use. (Phil Bellman)

■ PRESERVATION ACTION NEEDS YOU!

OHA's Preservation Action Committee needs your help. Oakland is a city with outstanding architectural and historical resources, large and small, so the committee is never without an opportunity to promote historic preservation. All we need are the human resources to help keep track of the many issues which affect our built heritage. There is something for everyone who is interested; the committee's work has led us into such varied areas as redevelopment, transportation, housing, open space, engineering, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, planning, and, of course, history and architecture.

How do we do it all? We don't. But in the spirit of the New Year, the committee will be putting on a workshop to bring together people who want to participate in the ever fascinating world of Preservation Action in Oakland. The committee has a new chair, OHA board member Susan McCue, who will be organizing the program. We hope to be reviewing some of the major issues which the committee has been following, and find out what new volunteers are interested in.

The workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 27, 7:30 pm, at the Camron-Stanford House. For more information, or if you are interested but cannot attend, call the OHA office at 763-9218. We hope to see you there.

--Carolyn Douthat

## OHA Update

### ■ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We all watched with great sadness as the East Bay fire swept through the Oakland and Berkeley hills. The OHA board and staff especially wish to express our sorrow to the 22 OHA members who lost their homes.

As many of you may know, the fire consumed two of Oakland's architectural gems--"Red Gate," a 1911 Italian Renaissance style villa designed by Julia Morgan, and Morgan's "honeymoon cottage" nearby. Hundreds of OHA members and friends had the opportunity to view these homes in our 1989 house tour. The owners of "Red Gate," longtime OHA members, have expressed their hope to rebuild the house as near to the original as they can.

--Lynn Fonfa, President

### ■ DOCUMENTING THE FIRE AREA

Since October 20 the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey and Oakland History Room have heard from a number of owners of burned houses hoping to locate original plans or otherwise document their buildings. The basic, bad news is that until very recently the city never kept plans for houses (technically, for woodframe buildings under three stories unless elaborately engineered: but we have yet to see plans for a single family home, even if three stories or brick). The OCHS and OHR have attempted to direct people to other possible repositories of plans, or to suggest other types and sources of information in the absence of drawings.

The search usually begins at the Survey, with the original building permit. The city began issuing permits in 1905, so permits should exist for all the houses in the fire area (though sometimes difficult to find, if street names have changed, for example). From the permit one finds the original own-

er's name, the builder, the construction date and cost, and sometimes the architect. An architect's name can lead to a successor firm or to the Bancroft Library or Documents Collection at U.C. An owner's or builder's name can be pursued in the History Room's biographical indexes, directories, and clipping files (or even simply by looking in the phone book), leading to descendants who may have photos, plans, or anecdotes.

Photo spreads of fine homes were a staple of promotional publications like the Tribune Year Book in the 1920s, and may show the burned building or a similar one, perhaps by the same designer. The Dixon & Hillen pattern books published in Oakland in the '20s have been helpful to at least one owner. The Survey is often able to provide addresses of extant buildings by the same architect, which might serve as partial models for reconstruction. Owners were also advised to measure foundations and other remains, and save any samples of distinctive building materials or finishes.

At least two owners located grandchildren of the architects of their homes, and had the pleasure of making this personal contact with the history of their house--but they found no plans. Unfortunately, it has been surprising how little material families and professional heirs have kept. A number of owners had copies of their plans, but the plans perished with the house. The moral is, document your building now. Photograph it, videotape it, copy the plans if you have them or consider making drawings, and put second copies in another place.

Heartbreaking as it has been to study neighborhoods that are gone, in the past three months we have learned a lot about Oakland architecture, discovered new research sources, and made some new friends. The Survey dated every building in the fire area, in connection with Section 106 requirements for FEMA-funded work. Permit records confirmed what we knew first-hand when the neighborhoods were intact, that these were Oakland's premiere residential developments of the late 1920s and 1930s.

Survey staff--Kyle Cato, Gary Knecht, Gail Lombardi, Betty Marvin--have been joined in this effort by volunteers Lauren Bricker, Peter Eckstine, Barbara Goldenberg, Gary Goss, Jennifer Katz, Donnalynn Polito, Phil Sandri, Jack Thorpe, Patrick Walsh, and Dean Yabuki, as well as the homeowners who conducted further research and shared their discoveries with us. At the Oakland History Room, Bill Sturm and Lynne Cutler answered inquiries and provided guidance, as did Helen Lore at the OHA office and the Disaster Center. --Betty Marvin, OCHS



Red Gate a week after the fire. (Jennifer Katz)

## ■ OHA VOLUNTEERS 1990-91

The OHA board wishes to recognize and thank the following members and friends who volunteered their assistance to the organization in the last year. Without their participation **Oakland Heritage Alliance** could not have provided its educational programs and leadership in preservation advocacy. (If we missed anyone, we apologize. Watch for acknowledgment in future issues.)

**TOURS/EVENTS:** Yoshi & Gengo Akiba, Anna-lee Allen, Barbara Anderson, Carolyn & Tom Armour, Patricia Bachetti, Andrea Banduhn, Bruce Beasley, Phil Bellman, Katherine Bertolucci, Gloria Borchman, Rick Borges, Stephen Borstad, Nancy Brenn-Lovett, Robert Brokl, Mary Brown, Karen Carlson, Peter Carlson, Hal Castle, Alice Chambers, Bill Coburn, College Avenue Presbyterian Church, Rissa Coplan, Al Crofts, Michael Crowe, Lisa Curet, Joan Dark, Ann Del Simone, Steve Donaldson/Bay Graphics, Carolyn Douthat, Alan Dreyfuss, Mara Duffy, Susan & George Duncan, Bill & Nancy Dutcher, Karen Dutcher-Worm, Claudia Ellinghaus, Gary Encinas, Rachel Evnine, Laine Farley, Annette Floystrup, Lynn Fonfa, Creighton Fong, Diane & Bruce Friend, Eleanor Fulscher, Gary Goss, Harriet Gulassa, Shelby Hall, Emily Handelman, Julie Harris, Don Hausler, Helen Hill, David Hoard, Anthony Holdsworth, Lisa Hooper, Mona Jane, Glen Jarvis, Carol Jones, Jennifer Katz, Kim & Albert Katz, Randy Katz, Bill Keeler, Dorothy Kimmel, Don Kinkead, Gary Knecht, Mary Lamprech, Gaye Lenahan, Brooke Levin, Mark Lillios, Gail Lombardi, Nancy Lovejoy, Robert Macklin, Shirley Mannelle, Charles Marinovich, Andrea Martin, Debbie Martin, Betty Marvin, Mary Jane McConville, Susan McCue, Mary McDonald, Winnie McDonald, D'vora Metz, Bill Moore, Sharon Moore, Larry Mortimer, Therese Nelson, Sally Nielsen, Kerry & Nance O'Banion, Cindy O'Hara, Lois & Robert Over, Adrian Palomino, Amy Pearce, Patty & Larry Pearce, Ray Perman, Dick Peters, Aida Peterson, Kirk Peterson, Ed Phillips, Margaret Phillips, Ronnie Polonsky, Henrietta & Jim Ratcliff, Lydia Raymond, Millicent & Enrico Reguzzoni, Patricia Reiss, Don Rice, Earle Shenk, Judy Shimizu, Joan & Ron Sipherd, Barbara & Sam Skelly, Barbara Smith, Joanna Smith, Nancy Smith, Beverly Solo, Alexis Soule, Jane Spangler, Geoffrey Stanleigh, Christine Summers, Sister Ethel Mary Tinnemann, Don & Shirley Tyler, Jon & Sally Van Oosbree, Betty & Don Violich, Mary-Jo Wainwright, Kathy Walsh, Nance Webb, Nancy & Peter Welk, Trish West, Pat Whittingslow, Marlene Wilson, Dan Worm, Tom & Chris Wurst, Dean Yabuki, & Helen Lore.

**OHA NEWS:** Annalee Allen, Phil Bellman, Carolyn Douthat, Alan Dreyfuss, Lynn Fonfa, Creighton Fong, Don Hausler, Jennifer Katz, Robert Kidd, Helen Lore, Betty Marvin, Sally Nielsen, Kathy Olson, Dennis Owens, Donnalynn Polito, Nancy Smith, Bill Sturm, Kathy Walsh, Donald Wardlaw, Ted Wurm, Dean Yabuki.

**MAILINGS:** Jerry Bowling, Dorothy Kimmel, Nancy Lovejoy.

**PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE:** Annalee Allen, Andrew Carpentier, Carolyn Douthat, Fred Hertz, Carol Jones, Randolph Langenbach, Susan McCue, Sally Nielsen, Chris Pattillo, Naomi Schiff, Steven Schonborn.

**SURVEY:** Eric Avila, Ada Chan, Anna Maria Galdieri, Elizabeth Gessel, Jennifer Katz, Debbie Martin, Eugene Peck, Donnalynn Polito, Steven Schonborn, Sister Ethel Mary Tinnemann; see also fire article.



### PRESERVATION ACTION NEEDS YOU



An orientation for prospective members of the Preservation Action Committee is being offered on Thursday, February 27, 7:30 pm, at the Camron Stanford House.

See announcement on page 13.

## ■ HOLIDAY PARTY & SURVEY DONATIONS

The charming Dyke House, a 1914 Craftsman style home in the lower Rockridge area, was the setting of OHA's December holiday party. Hosts Henrietta and Jim Ratcliff graciously opened their home for this annual celebration of the holiday season. Nearly 100 people gathered and enjoyed the beautiful furnishings and decorations.

When it was announced that an anonymous donor was contributing \$200 to the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey if the gift was matched that evening, members and guests responded by donating \$223. Gary Knecht, coordinator of the survey, thanked the guests and gave them an update on the Survey's work in providing information to Oakland residents whose homes were destroyed by the October fire.

Many thanks to Marlene Wilson, party chair, and her committee for putting the event together. In addition to OHA board members and staff who contributed to the evening, volunteer helpers included Nancy Lovejoy and Judy Shimizu. --Helen Lore

## ■ PARDEE HOME READY FOR TOURS

At long last the Pardee Home is open for public tours. This 1868 Italianate villa house museum in downtown Oakland documents the Pardee family's residence in the landmark home from 1868 to 1981. The house's builder was Dr. E.H. Pardee, who served as state assemblyman, mayor of Oakland, and state senator in the 1870s and 1880s. His son, George C. Pardee, was also an Oakland mayor, and governor of California from 1903 to 1907. He was a founder and president of the East Bay Municipal Utility District from 1924 until his death in 1941. Pardee Dam and Reservoir are named for him.

The home is kept as the Pardees left it, and contains the family's personal things, as well as their collection of objects from around the world. The grounds reflect the three generations of Pardees that used them; there is the original carriage house and the tankhouse covering the well.

Tours are by appointment only and are limited to 10 people per tour. Tickets are \$4 general, \$3 seniors. According to curator Heidi Casebolt, the archives are also available by appointment. The Pardee Home Museum is located at 672 11th Street. Call 444-2187 for reservations. --Helen Lore



Progress in downtown Oakland: Pardee Home is now open for tours by appointment. (Phil Bellman)

## City Landmarks Board Actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month. Meetings are open to the public. Landmark designation 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 17 years since the Board was created. Meetings are at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue, second Mondays, 4 pm.

### OCTOBER

In Design Review, Board approved proposal by IDG Architects to replace some original brick on the YWCA (1515 Webster, Julia Morgan, 1914) with matching faux-finished terra cotta made by Gladding McBean. Staff is to approve the final palette after the facade has been cleaned.

Because of owner uncertainty about designation of the Dalziel Block (1917 San Pablo Avenue; 1878), Board voted to retain it on the Study List and reissue the Notice of Intent in six months.

Board decided to postpone consideration of 1494 Alice Street, the Joseph Myers House (1905, moved 1907; A.W. Smith, architect) until after Board members have met with the owner to discuss landmark status and possible advantages such as Mills Act provisions.

Notice of intent to nominate the I. Magnin building at 2001 Broadway (1930-31, Weeks & Day) was also continued to a later meeting to allow Macy's, which owns I. Magnin, time to deliberate. Notice of Intent to nominate the Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist, at 2333 Harrison Street (1915, William Arthur Newman) was also deferred for two or three months. The building is now occupied by MWM Architects. It was noted that under a proposed Central District plan, density for this site could be up to 290 units per acre, and even present zoning would permit about half that density.

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on events since the last meeting: The proposed ordinance governing mandatory repair of earthquake damaged buildings would initially affect 21 buildings defined as "historic" in the Central District. Although the 21 will be subject to design review with advice of the Board, demolition plans would first go to a newly created Earthquake Abatement Board, and it could be difficult for the Landmarks Board to deny a demolition already approved by this body. Les Hausrath, Andrew Carpentier, and Annalee Allen volunteered for a task force to review the proposal.



Prentice reported that the City Council had asked the Department of Public Works to review a report on possible alternatives to demolition of Sacred Heart Church (4001 Martin Luther King Jr. Way). Owners of the Pekin Low Cafe building had written repeating their position that the building should not be designated a landmark; while the Asian Law Caucus had written expressing appreciation for the Board's recommendation.

NOVEMBER

In Design Review, Board approved a new doorway at the Baldwin Hotel (529 8th Street in the S-7 Victorian Row Preservation District), after modifying the applicant's design in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards which reject adding false historic elements to buildings.

Board reviewed task force report on the draft earthquake repair ordinance, and recommended changes including: specifying whether damage was caused by earthquake; adding reference to the State Historic Building Code; a clear role for the Landmarks Board; more time for some processes; reference to Section 106 rules on demolition of historic resources; recognition of impact that work on non-landmark buildings might have on landmarks; and a process for handling conflicts between economic hardship and architectural integrity.

Gary Knecht, coordinator of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, reported on damage to historic and architectural resources by the Oakland Hills fire. Knowledge of the neighborhoods was primarily from the City-wide Preliminary Survey of 1985-86; the area had not yet been surveyed in detail because it was comparatively recent and not considered endangered. There were no National Register, landmark, or study list buildings designated in the area, but many were by well-known architects (Morgan, Maybeck, Coxhead, Wurster, etc.). Although no burned or damaged buildings fall within the Board's jurisdiction, the Board could advise and encourage on matters of neighborhood fabric. The Board decided to write to the Art Advisory Committee supporting a commemoration such as an outline marking the fire area.

In anticipation of the next meeting of the Preservation Task Force in January, Board discussed the idea of reporting directly to the City Council rather than having the Planning Commission as an intermediary (i.e. functioning as a commission rather than an advisory board). Four Board members agreed to meet with Planning Commission representatives to discuss the matter before the Task Force meeting.

Secretary Prentice reported: As a result

of comments at the Planning Commission hearing, language in the nominating resolution for San Antonio Park was changed to weigh historic significance with current park use. George Ong, owner of the Pekin Low building, had requested that Planning Commission consideration of the landmark nomination be held off until 1992. A meeting was scheduled with MWM Architects about their Seventh Church of Christ, Scientist building. Prentice had reviewed and approved proposed brick work for the Hotel Hamilton (former YMCA, 2102 Telegraph Avenue).

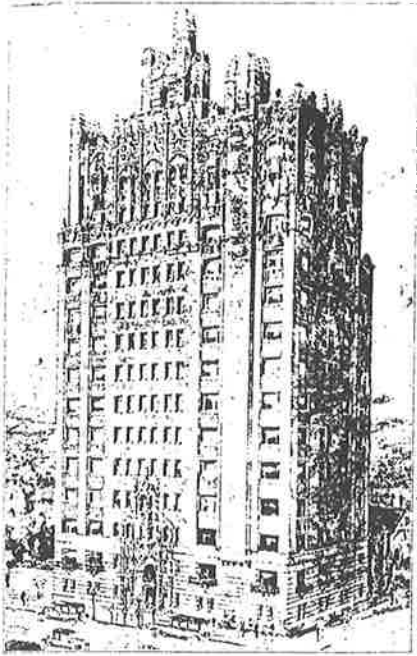
The State Historical Resources Commission had approved the owner's application to place the Bellevue-Statens Apartments (492-98 Staten Ave., H.C. Baumann, 1928-29) on the National Register, and the Board might consider landmark designation. Demolition was proposed for the Clark-Gross House (493 Bellevue Avenue), which is on the Study List and rated C by the Cultural Heritage Survey as part of the same Adams Point district that includes the Bellevue-Statens.

DECEMBER

There was no December meeting.

--Kathy Olson

*The*  
**BELLEVUE-STATEN**  
*At STATEN and BELLEVUE Avenues, OAKLAND*



*H. C. BAUMANN, Architect*  
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1929 Tribune Year Book ad for a potential landmark.

# OHA Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to OHA members. Practical deadline for entries occurs at each solstice and equinox. To submit items for listings, contact Oakland Heritage Alliance or Donald Wardlaw, 2214 Thirteenth Ave., Oakland, 94606. (261-7236)

## Upcoming Activities

through February 22, (M-F 11-4; Sat. 12-4), "Toyland Treasures", children's toys of years past, Hayward Area Historical Society Museum, 22701 Main St., \$1/\$0.50, 581-0223.

through March 1, (W-Sat. 10-5; Sun.12-7) "Peacetime to Wartime: The Photographs of Peter Stackpole" The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, free.

through April 19, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun.12-7), "Bountiful Harvest: 19th-Century California Still Life Painting", The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, free.

January 22-February 26, W. 2-5, "Berkeley History", Dr. Charles Wollenberg, Vista Community College, 2020 Milvia Street, \$6, 841-8431.

January 25, Sun. 1-3, Presidio-National Park Service architectural walk, reservations 415 556-0865.

January 30-April 26, (M-F. 7-7, Sat 8-4, Sun 10-4,) "John de Marchi", Bay Area Sculptor, Oakland Museum Sculpture Court at City Center, 1111 Broadway.

February 8, Sat. 10am, S.F. Heritage welcomes the Year of the Monkey, acquaint yourself with the history of the Chinese in S.F., New Year traditions & the Tray of Togetherness; includes architectural walk through Chinatown, \$12/\$10(members), lunch \$10(optional), Commodore Stockton School, 950 Clay, RSVP 441-3004.

February 16, Sun. 1-3, Presidio-National Park Service architectural walk, reservations 415 556-0865.

February 16, Sun. 10am, Open House at Haas-Lilienthal House, discussion & viewing of fire suppression system installation in historical structure, 2007 Franklin, SF, \$5/\$0(members), RSVP 441-3004.

February 22,29 & March 7, Sat., Why & How to Plan Your Interviews, "Oral History", 10am-noon & 1-5pm, Vista Community College, 2020 Milvia, \$18, 841-8431.

February 27, Thurs. 7:30,



**Oakland Heritage Alliance  
Preservation Action Volunteer Night,**  
see "Oakland Briefing...",  
Camron-Stanford House, 763-9218.

February 28, Fri. (Berkeley) & 29, Sat.(San Jose) 8:15-4, "Demystifying Development: Real Estate Basics for Planners & Preservationists, California Preservation Foundation, BAHF, et.al., \$110/\$75(CPF members), \$10 discount before February 10, 763-0972.

February 29-March 24, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun.12-7), "Objects of Myth and Memory: American Indian Art at the Brooklyn Museum", The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets.

March 4-May 6, Wed. 6-8pm, "Oakland History", Lakeview Library in conjunction with Laney College, recommended for aspiring Oakland Tours Program docents and everyone else, Tom Wolf instructor, 238-3234 (Arnita Fermin).

March 28, April 4 & 11, Sat., Oral History Interviewing: How it Differs from Other Types of Interviewing, "Oral History", see February 22.

March 14-May 24, "Images Transformed", five contemporary artists: Pegan Brooke, Mary Campbell, Tina Hulett, Sabina Ott & Lucy Puls, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun.12-7), The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets.

April 22-May 27, W. 2-5, "Berkeley History", Dr. Charles Wollenberg, Vista Community College, 2020 Milvia Street, \$6, 841-8431.

April 23-26 W-Sun., California Preservation Conference, Eureka, details-California Preservation Foundation, 1615 Broadway #705, 763-0972.

April 26, Sun., **Oakland Heritage Alliance House Tour**, Trestle Glen, 763-9218.



May 2, 9 & 16. Sat., Editing and Processing of Oral History: Occupational Opportunities, "Oral History", see February 22.

## 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 Regional Preserve, April-Nov., Th-Sun.10-4; tour Patterson House hourly Sat. & Sun./variable Th-F.; \$5/\$3 (Sr.)/\$2.50 (Jr.); Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont, 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, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, 562-0328.

McConaghy House, 104 year old farmhouse at 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, Th-Sun., 1-4; \$3/\$2 (Sr.)/\$0.50 (children).

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

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

Pardee Home Museum, 1868 Italianate Villa, Pardee family residence 1868-1981, tours by reservation,10/tour maximum, \$4/\$3 (Sr.), 672 11th St., 444-2187.

Presidio, National Park Service architectural walks with Ranger Lynn Fonfa (except Jan.), Sun. 1-3; Jan. 25, & Feb. 16; reservations 415 556-0865.

San Francisco Heritage, Victorian & Edwardian Pacific Heights, Sun. 12:30-2, free January & February during renovations; Haas-Lilienthal House Tours, Sun. 11-4, W. 12-3:15 (No tours January & February), 2007 Franklin, \$4/\$2\*; \*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., 238-3941, 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 (October-December) are:

Suzanne Baker, Katy Foulkes, Preston & Anya Grant, David Holzman, Phyllis Kincaid, Frederic Knapp, Gordon Osmundson, Jerry Reilly, Robert Reese, Penelope Rink/Frederick Toth, John Schaufele, Joyce Schwartz, Georganne Thurston, Jon Von Oosbree, Thyra Wallace, & Charles Wardlaw.

## Donors

Special thanks to those joining/renewing as:  
**PATRON (\$250):** Phil Bellman/Betsy Yost.  
**SPONSOR (\$100):** Les & Linda Hausrath, Home Savings of America, Allen Michaan, Craig & Dusty Miller, Helen Rogers.  
**ORGANIZATION (\$50):** Andrew & Teresa Gunther, Gary & Christine Pound.

OHA appreciates donations from the following (October-December): David Berry/Jack Redford, Edmund Clausen, Les & Linda Hausrath, Susan Hyde, Cyanne McElhinney, Dario Meniketti, Marie Prichett, Virginia Robles, & Elizabeth Way.

**COHEN HOUSE FUND:** Thomas Edwards

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR**

Helen Lore 763-9218

## Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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Annalee Allen, Phil Bellman, Carolyn Douthat, Lynn Fonfa, Don Hausler, Jennifer Katz, Helen Lore, Betty Marvin, Sally Nielsen, Kathy Olson, William Sturm, & Donald Wardlaw

### EDITORIAL BOARD

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. © 1992 Oakland Heritage Alliance.

## 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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**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 make OHA a more effective organization.

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

## Oakland History Notes: Upper Rockridge

"You who love the open, why not live where you can have all of these, yet be just as near to your work as you are now."

With these words of enticement, the Laymance Real Estate Co. began selling lots in the area now known as Upper Rockridge in November 1910. The subdivision and sale of lots culminated five years of planning by Fred E. Reed. A man of vision and knowledge on the subjects of city planning and real estate, Mr. Reed began dreaming of a major residential development in the Rockridge area shortly after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The exodus from San Francisco in 1906, combined with the founding of the Key Route inter-urban electric system in 1903, created new opportunities for housing in the Oakland hills. The enterprising Mr. Reed took his ideas to Laymance Real Estate Co., which forthwith made him its subdivision manager.

The land, dotted with a few fruit and vegetable farms, had once been settled by Col. John Hays, one-time sheriff of San Francisco, and Horatio Livermore, who dubbed it Rock Ridge after a ridge (now leveled) at the intersection of present Glenbrook and Bowling Drive. Mr. Livermore grew plants and shrubs from all over the world at his home on the present Claremont Country Club site.

Also a lover of trees and plants, Fred Reed traveled to Southern California and Canada in search of ideas for his garden neighborhood. Influenced by communities like Huntington Palisades, he envisioned houses in large garden lots like Italian villas, facing upon gracefully curving roads which would follow the natural contours of the hills. (His visions were earlier adumbrated by noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted's 1866 plan for residential development in the Berkeley hills.)

Upper Rockridge, c. 1910, looking toward Broadway and Rockridge Blvd. (Oakland History Room)



The properties, designed for the plump pocketbook, were touted for their sublime views and settings. "Direct transportation to San Francisco, marine views, parklike drives, and magnificent hill and canyon scenery abound at Rock Ridge." Special touring cars took prospective clients to the tract, marked by twin pillars at Broadway and Rockridge Boulevard designed by Reed's brother Walter. Lots sold for the princely sum of \$26 to \$33 a front foot. At the end of 1910, the Laymance Co. could boast, "We planned great things for Rock Ridge, things which would mean much for Oakland, things that have come to pass within the year. And we feel what we trust is a pardonable pride in stating that the City of Oakland is today a more beautiful city because of our work."

While the neighborhood was heavily devastated by the October fire, the faith, resilience, and strong efforts of its residents promise a great rebirth for Upper Rockridge. --William W. Sturm

Oakland Heritage Alliance  
P.O. Box 12425  
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Address Correction Requested

PRESERVATION ACTION  
VOLUNTEER NIGHT FEB. 27  
see page 13

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