

# Colonel Jack Hays of Fernwood

Yankee landgrabbing squatters established the city of Oakland 141 years ago. This story has been repeated in many Oakland histories. New Yorker Alexander Moon, Connecticut born Edson Adams, and the most notorious squatter of all, wily New York lawyer Horace Carpentier, are characterized in Peter T. Conmy's The Beginnings of Oakland as "men of enterprise," "shrewd Yankee businessmen," and "rugged individualists," imbued with "New England spirit."

Nearly overlooked in virtually every account of Oakland's founding is another individual with a background as colorful and controversial as any pioneer in California. Colonel John Coffee "Jack" Hays had a great deal to do with East Bay development. One of the original Texas Rangers, Hays had a national reputation when he arrived in California in 1850 at the age of 33. He devoted much of the rest of his life to acquiring and developing property in Berkeley, Oakland, and Alameda.

The name Fernwood is a tangible link to the days when Jack Hays rode the East Bay hills. The site he chose for the home for his wife and family was in the wooded canyon behind what is now Piedmont. He called his spread "Fernwood." A stone foundation along Thornhill Drive and Mountain Boulevard is all that remains of this once extensive estate.

While Carpentier and his partners opted to circumvent the Peralta family, maintaining that the U.S. government would never uphold the Peralta land grant, Col. Hays negotiated in good faith with the lawful owners, acquiring thousands of acres during the 1850s and 60s. Ultimately the Peralta and Hays transactions were upheld in the U.S. courts. Perhaps because of his long years in Texas and Mexico and his knowledge of the Spanish language and culture, Hays was able to earn the respect and trust of the Peraltas. They may well have preferred to deal with the ex-Texas Ranger than with those "shrewd Yankees."



John C. Hays (1817-83), famed Texas Ranger and sheriff of San Francisco, bought land from the Peraltas and developed much of Oakland including Fernwood. (Oakland History Room)

Born in 1817, John Coffee Hays was a native of Tennessee. His father and grandfather fought with Andrew Jackson, and Jackson's wife Rachel was Hays's great aunt. The families owned adjoining properties in Little Cedar Lick, Tennessee and were considered quite prosperous. Second son of seven children, Hays was orphaned at 15. He struck out on his own, heading to Mississippi in 1832, determined to become a land surveyor. Hays was small in stature, with dark hair and eyes. From the very start he learned to hold his own. While on a survey assignment in Mississippi swamp country, he and a companion were ambushed by mounted Indians. It was the first of many such encounters. Hays developed a reputation as an Indian fighter. In 1836, after the Battle of San Jacinto, Hays and hundreds of others decided to head for Texas and volunteer. Sam Houston had been

## Fernwood House Tour May 16 - see p. 9



Horace Carpentier (left) and Vicente Peralta (right) were other leading players in the distribution of East Bay land in the 1850s. (Oakland History Room; Oakland Tribune Library)

a friend of Hays' father under Jackson, so Hays reported to Houston and offered to fight for Texas' independence from Mexico.

For the next several years Hays' life became synonymous with the evolution of Texas, first as republic and then as a state. Two full length biographies, Colonel Jack Hays, Texas Frontier Leader and California Builder by James Kimmins Greer, and The First Texas Ranger by Curtis Bishop, recount his career in detail. While still in his early twenties, he was foremost among the special force of border guards and law enforcement irregulars known as Texas Rangers. Walter Prescott Webb's exhaustive account of the Texas Rangers devotes a full chapter to Hays' role in the early days when thousands were settling in Texas.

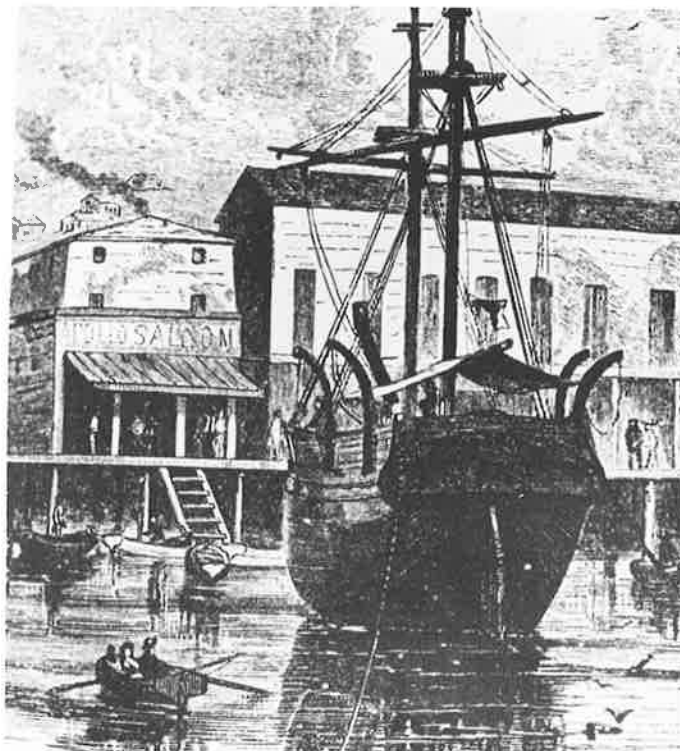
The three main groups struggling for a hold on the Texas frontier were the Native Americans who had ranged the plains for generations, the Mexicans who had won independence from Spain and claimed Texas as part of their territory, and the Anglo settlers from the United States pushing relentlessly westward. The Rangers of Jack Hays' day saw their mission as protecting the latter at the expense of the former. The epic myth of the Rangers as protectors of life and property in the days of lawlessness has been questioned in recent years. Gunpowder Justice, A Reassessment of the Texas Rangers traces the activities of the Rangers, including Hays, as they took part in skirmishes with Mexicans beyond the Texas border. Hays was known as "Devil Jack." He served in the army throughout the Mexican War, attached to the command of General Zachary Taylor. According to James L. Haley's Texas, an Album of History, it was Hays who saw the

importance of repeating pistols, or six-shooters. Colt sixshooters permanently changed the odds in favor of the mounted Rangers. The Comanches and other tribes became seriously outmatched.

By 1848 Hays had been involved in Ranger activities for 12 years. He had married Susan Calvert, daughter of a judge, in 1847 and was ready to forego the dangerous rangers life. In June 1849 he led an expedition along the Gila River trail to find a southern route to California.

He arrived in San Francisco in 1850, planning to head to the gold fields and send for his wife when he became settled. But Sam Brannan and other city leaders, concerned with rampant lawlessness and frequent arson fires which ravaged the city, prevailed upon the national war hero to remain and run for sheriff. As first elected sheriff of San Francisco County, Hays found himself embroiled in the chaotic vigilante episodes which so marked the city in 1850-51. Some of the very leaders who had encouraged Hays to run for sheriff became the vigilantes responsible for hanging captured suspects without formal trial.

An incident told many times demonstrates how Sheriff Hays, while perhaps sympathizing with the vigilantes' brand of justice, nevertheless complied with his duties. Governor McDougal and Mayor Brenham required him to take into custody two prisoners held by vigilantes. This he was able to do, but the vigilantes recaptured them and hanged



As sheriff of San Francisco, Hays had a temporary jail on the Euphemia, while raising funds for a new building. (OHR)



Hays's Fernwood "ranch de luxe" was one of Alameda County's showplaces in Thompson and West's 1878 atlas. The stone curb at left is its only visible trace today (OHR; Phil Bellman)

them the next day. Where was Hays during the hanging? "Away down the peninsula at a bull fight." Was he deliberately called away? To this day no one can be certain.

Lack of secure jail facilities worsened the problem of crime and disorder. Hays instituted a temporary floating jail on the brig "Euphemia," moored in the bay. He actively sought contributions from business leaders - many of whom also happened to be members of the Committee of Vigilance - and before he left office enough funds were raised to construct a new jail.

In addition to keeping the peace, Sheriff Hays as an officer of the court served writs and executed sales. It was during this time that he first met the Peralta brothers. William Davis, a San Francisco merchant who had been in California since 1831, had tried unsuccessfully for years to buy land from Vicente Peralta. On March 13, 1852, Hays and four associates contracted with Vicente for the Oakland portion of Vicente Peralta's share of the Rancho San Antonio. The agreed upon price was \$10,000.

The Hays consortium placed a notice on page one of the local paper: "Caution to the Public - The undersigned being the sole owners of the Encinal in Contra Costa County, opposite San Francisco by purchase from V. Peralta, hereby warn the public against purchasing from any other parties pretending to claim said land." As we know, this notice did not prevent speculators such as Carpentier from staking their own claims to what they considered to be vacant land. Charles Wollenberg's Golden Gate Metropolis provides a concise overview of how Bay Area land ownership issues dragged on in the courts for years, and how Californios like the Peraltas were forced to sell off their land to pay legal fees.

While the land claims were moving through the courts, Hays finished his first term as

sheriff and ran successfully for a second term. He did not complete his second term, however. In keeping with his Jacksonian Democrat roots, Hays had become active in Democratic party politics. When Franklin Pierce was elected president, Hays decided to petition the president for the newly created job of Surveyor General of California. His early surveyor training in Mississippi and Texas stood him in good stead and he received the appointment in December of 1853. Hays traveled to Washington to attend the inauguration. His presence at the reception threatened to upstage the other dignitaries. A local newspaper wrote:

"Amid the countless multitude attracted to Washington... during the last few weeks ... no man was the object of deeper interest than Col. Jack Hays, the world renowned Texas Ranger... It may be safely asserted that no man in America, since the great John Smith explored the primeval forests of Virginia... has run a career of such boldness, daring, and adventure. His frontier defense of the Texan Republic constitutes one of the most remarkable pages in the history of the American character."

In the 1860s Hays devoted his time to developing not only his personal estate (by now his family had grown in size), but his holdings throughout what had become Alameda County. He was among those interested in attracting state government to Oakland and making it the capital of the state. Two plazas he donated to the city, Franklin and Washington Squares between 4th and 5th Streets, became sites for the Hall of Records and the Hall of Justice. Several congregations received gifts of

land from Hays for church sites. According to an obituary in the papers of the Society of Oakland Pioneers, Hays gave the land where the University of California was eventually built. (Actually the transaction appears somewhat more complex.) Hays was a member of the U.C. Board of Regents and a director of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind Asylum (precursor to the California School for the Deaf and Blind).

As for his property in what is now Montclair, several contemporary accounts describe Fernwood as "large and elaborate for its day. The attractive garden was well kept, the stables large, and there were a number of fine horses."

Nephew John Hays Hammond's autobiography vividly describes his uncle's ranch: "... its alternating hills and wild ravines was an ideal place for a boy with an adventurous spirit ... Every country place was called a ranch, but my uncle's was really a ranch de luxe."

Wood's History of Alameda County called Fernwood "one of the most beautiful of the State... located at the base of verdure-clad hills of the Coast Range, in a quiet nook... lordly oaks... a handsome building and exquisite art. Indescribable views in every direction." Hundreds of trees and shrubs were planted, extensive lawns and graveled paths were put down. Sunday breakfasts were a regular occurrence, sometimes as many as 100 guests making their way out from town. Hays arranged for the grading and construction of a road to his property. For many years it was known as the Hays Canyon Road. It is now Moraga Road.

California chronicler and well known writer of the day, J. Ross Browne, became friendly with Hays during these years. Characterizing Hays as "the noblest Roman of them all," Browne wrote: "There is... about him such an unconscious power of winning your respect... such an entire absence of egotism, and so much that is true, generous, and reliable... that you

are completely charmed. It is refreshing to find a man in full enjoyment of a national reputation who can afford to be perfectly natural and unsophisticated; a genuine hero, modest to the verge of bashfulness, yet brave and steadfast as a true gentleman and a hero should be."

Hays' last years were marked with sadness as well as prosperity. Three of his five children died young. By the late 1870s his health had begun to decline. He died at his beloved Fernwood on April 21, 1883, the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto. His last words were "Do you know what day this is? It's San Jacinto Day." Newspapers were filled with accounts of his passing. The funeral procession wound its way out Broadway, crowds lining the streets. The cortege, escorted by Mexican War veterans and delegates from the Society of Pioneers, made its way to the gates of Mountain View Cemetery. "Only the throb of muffled drums and the ripple of flags at half-mast on public buildings and private residences were heard as the long column moved to the graveside." The obituary in the Tribune called him "the moving spirit and founder of Oakland."

After Hays' death the Fernwood estate passed into the hands of William Dingee, water magnate and competitor of Anthony Chabot (see OHA News, Spring 1986). Dingee enlarged and embellished the gardens, adding fountains, terraces and statues. The improvements were said to have cost a quarter million dollars. Fire destroyed the house in 1899. Although the Hays mansion is long gone, the park-like setting of today's Fernwood neighborhood still evokes the feeling of one of Oakland's finest early day estates, and is the gift of that forgotten Oaklander, Colonel Jack Hays.

--Annalee Allen

After Hays's death Fernwood belonged to William Dingee. An album "Views of Fernwood" was produced in the 1890s. The estate is gone, but the rustic beauty in these "Views" still distinguishes the neighborhood. OHA and Fernwood Community Club invite you to see for yourself May 16--see p.9. (O.H.R.)



## 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.

### ■ PEKIN LOW SAGA CONCLUDES

The landmark nomination for the Pekin Low Cafe at 706 Franklin Street, which first reached the City Council last fall, was rejected by the Council in a surprise vote on April 20. On March 23 the Council had voted to designate the 1920s Chinese revival building as a landmark, Council members Bayton, Miley, Moore, Woods-Jones and Mayor Harris voting in favor, De la Fuente, Ogawa, and Spees against, and Jordan abstaining. Because landmarking is done by ordinance, designation requires two readings. The second requires five votes rather than a simple majority, but it is typically a formality. But in this case, which has been making its way through the process for about two years, the second vote was delayed twice, once at the request of Frank Ogawa on behalf of the owner, and once at the request of Natalie Bayton; and when the vote was finally taken, De la Fuente, Ogawa, Spees, and Jordan voted against, Bayton, Miley, and Mayor Harris for, and Moore and Woods-Jones abstained. Jordan's vote changed from an abstention to a no, and Moore's and Woods-Jones's from yes to abstention.

In a meeting marked earlier by testimony on policies which limit public comment at Council meetings, six speakers addressed the Pekin Low nomination: OHA director and Landmarks Board member Creighton Fong, attorney Gen Fujioka from the Asian Law Caucus, and Lynette Lee for; Joyce Chang from the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, the president of the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and West Oakland activist Paul Cobb against.

Apparently a majority of the Council found the testimony against landmarking persuasive, including arguments that there was no reason to landmark the building since it could be demolished anyway, that the Council should afford "cultural respect" to those who argued that the building is not actually Chinese architecture, and that landmarking would send a bad message to overseas investors and impede development at 7th and Franklin, an intersection characterized as "too quiet."

Compared to past years, the lengthy hearings and discussions, the first vote, and the recommendation for landmarking from the Planning Commission may be seen as signs that the unwritten policy requiring owner consent has been eroded.

But the defeat has its disturbing side. Judging from the comments of Council members, it appears that there is a serious misunderstanding about the function of landmarking as public recognition of structures which are important to the city as a whole. Testimony against designation repeatedly focused on the difference of opinion within the Chinatown community, and one speaker urged the Council not to landmark and to "let us decide on our own." The Council hearings raise an additional concern about the issue of owner objection. Where, as in this case, the objection was not supported by any evidence that harm would result from landmarking, there appears to be no real basis for the Council overriding the recommendations of both the Planning Commission and Landmarks Advisory Board for designation. --Carolyn Douthat

### ■ CITY HALL EXPANSION

The City is moving ahead with plans for a new administration facility at a site near City Hall. In December 1991, the City Council reviewed a study of office space needs which identified a number of possible sites for a new building to replace quake-damaged City Hall West (1401 Clay) and provide additional administrative offices. According to the report, by 1995 the City will require a total of 371,000 square feet of space, a 30% increase over that occupied just prior to the 1989 earthquake. Of that, 80,000 square feet will be available in the renovated City Hall.

On staff recommendation, the Council authorized a contract to prepare a Request for Qualifications from design teams, conduct a selection process, and hold workshops with an advisory committee on site and design selection. The committee, which included OHA board member Alan Dreyfuss, representatives from the AIA, the Chamber of Commerce, Oakland Design Advocates, city staff, and City Council, completed their meetings in December although a report has yet to be made to the Council on the final results of their work.

Meanwhile, the city has been negotiating for acquisition of the proposed sites. The city already owns several of the parcels, including the Rotunda, City Hall West, the former George P. Miller Federal Building, and the Plaza Building at 15th and San Pablo which it acquired in November through a deed in lieu of foreclosure. The Council has met in executive session to discuss acquisition of the Taldan property, on which the Broadway Building and three others are located, as well as the remainder of the buildings on the block bounded by San Pablo, 15th Street, Clay, and 16th Street, which include the Dalziel



This mid-1950s view shows almost all the buildings on the administration expansion site: City Hall West (before remodeling) behind and left of City Hall, the George P. Miller building far behind to the right, and the Dalziel, Pardee, Plaza, and Broadway Buildings. (Oakland History Room)

Apartments, the Ed Jones Stamp Company and the Pardee Building (see related article). Reportedly the city is negotiating with all the building owners, and has reached preliminary agreement with the University of California on a purchase price of about \$2 million for the Pardee Building.

In addition to property acquisition, the city has begun the Section 106 process. Most of the sites under consideration are part of a downtown historic district which was identified by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey and determined eligible for the National Register. In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has allocated funds for replacement of earthquake damaged City Hall West to make up the difference between the city's \$10 million insurance proceeds and the estimated \$15 million replacement cost. Because of these two factors, a full Section 106 review process will be needed, involving FEMA, the city, the State Office of Historic Preservation, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and interested organizations such as OHA.

A Request for Proposals was issued in March for evaluation of the buildings on the Taldan and Dalziel sites. It calls for a historic survey of all eight buildings, six of which are "proposed for demolition" and two which are "proposed to remain." A survey of the interiors of the latter two is called for to identify character defining elements, including materials, finishes, and construction techniques. The RFP does not identify the buildings by name; the Plaza Building and the Broadway Building are the two which are primary contributors to the historic district. In addition to preparation of these historic building reports, the project goals include obtaining approval of the reports by federal and state agencies with historic oversight responsibilities.

The city has also begun preparation of an Initial Study, the first step in the California environmental review process. Because of a variety of possible impacts, including effects on historic resources, an EIR is likely to be required.

Since last fall when the City Council heard a report on the progress of the advisory committee, there has been no public hearing on the advisory committee conclusions or selection of a preferred

site, although rumors abound. According to the City Planning Department, a report on the environmental review process will be presented to the Council sometime soon and the four new Council members will have an opportunity to comment publicly on the process. Stay tuned! --Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ DOWNTOWN RETAIL CENTER THREATENED!

Downtown Oakland - a lively mix of specialty bookstores, artists' studios, and the best shoeshine stand around - all in a historic building next to City Center. Sounds like a preservation success story.

The Pardee Building, fronting on San Pablo Avenue and 15th Street across from City Hall, may be most familiar as the long time home of New York Fabrics. Until recently most people weren't aware that it is also a well known center for the used and antiquarian book trade, and studios for distinguished artists, past and present.

Built in 1923 for the Midgley Company, the Pardee is a handsome loft building with retail on the ground floor and window walled spaces upstairs which originally housed offices. According to tradition, it was purchased by George Pardee, former Oakland mayor and Governor of California during the 1906 earthquake, who gave it to the University of California on condition that the rents be paid to his surviving children. Helen Penniman Pardee, who occupied the Pardee House at 10th and Castro until her death in the early 1980s, was the last of four daughters. Since her death U.C. has maintained the building as affordable retail and studio space, until a recent decision to offer it for sale.

Attention to the Pardee Building has been brought about largely by the tenants themselves who have come together under the slogan "We Be Pardee" to fight to stay in business at this location. For months there have been rumors that the building was being eyed by the City of Oakland as part of the administration building site (see related article). In March, representatives of the city and the building's owner, the University of California, confirmed that a sale to the city was close. The City Council met in closed session to discuss the purchase, and was scheduled to vote at a regular meeting in March, but the item was removed from the agenda.

The tenants have been meeting with assistant city manager Craig Kocian to discuss the city's plans for the building, and for their businesses and studios if the city buys it. They have gained the support of the city's Standing Committee for Artists' Work/Live Space and the Cultural Affairs Commission. In April, the Landmarks Board placed the building on the Study

List, indicating serious consideration for designation as a landmark.

Among those familiar with the arts, the Pardee Building has an impressive set of former tenants, including the late Richard Diebenkorn, and photorealists Dick McLean and Robert Bechtle. Crown Point Press, the well known artists' press, operated here for many years. Current tenants include Mary Lovelace O'Neal whose work is shown in the Alice Arts Center and the Federal Building. In the retail space along San Pablo, antiquarian bookshops specializing in subjects ranging from Afro-Americana to military history draw collectors from all over the Bay Area. The shoeshine stand is located in Shear Melody, a barbershop which has been called a cultural institution in its own right. In addition the Pardee Building is a contributor to a downtown district which has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. --Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT ALLOWS DEMOLITION OF SACRED HEART

In a painfully short order issued on April 2, the California Supreme Court turned down the application by Friends of Sacred Heart Church for a stay of demolition of this well-loved historic Oakland church. Two weeks earlier the Court of Appeals had denied a similar request. Four votes on the Supreme Court were needed to keep the building standing while the appeal was being considered, but only

Another tragic loss during Easter week was the Mission style St. John's Missionary Baptist Church which burned on Good Friday. Ironically, it was another remarkable building by Etienne Garin, the architect of Sacred Heart. (Phil Bellman)



three justices voted to support the preservation effort.

Wasting no time, the Diocese immediately began removing the pews, stained glass and sculpture. A Good Friday remembrance and mass were conducted by Bishop Cummins and the cornerstone was removed. Demolition of the building began April 12.

While the loss of Sacred Heart Church is a terrible blow to parishioners, neighbors and the city as a whole, there are lessons to be learned from the effort to save it. After the Loma Prieta earthquake damaged Sacred Heart Church and Saint Francis de Sales Cathedral, **OHA**, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, members of the Oakland Preservation Assistance Team, parishioners, and neighbors, came together as Friends of Landmark Churches to work with the Diocese to save these two churches. With a grant from the National Trust, a team was put together to study Saint Francis de Sales. Engineers, architects, and fund raisers explored options for the church, and prepared a report for the Diocese on the effort.

At Sacred Heart, Annalee Allen helped organize the effort of parishioners and neighbors. Lynne Horiuchi, a neighbor, and Mary Ann Francis, a parishioner, devoted limitless time and determination as leaders of Friends of Sacred Heart. Frederick Hertz and Randolph Langenbach developed technical analyses of alternatives to demolition. Earlier this month **OHA** cohosted a fundraiser to help defray legal costs.

In all, a dedicated group worked together for nearly three years on the cause. Public hearings and media coverage offered strong testimony of the importance of Sacred Heart Church as a spiritual, social, and physical anchor in North Oakland. Going beyond mere opposition to demolition, the group looked for real solutions which could save the building and keep it as the center of the parish and the neighborhood.

The demolition of this building raised important legal issues, including the interpretation of the city's demolition ordinance and the interpretation of the emergency exemption to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The emergency exemption has been interpreted very broadly by the Diocese, at least in the case of Sacred Heart, and by some cities in California. If this broad interpretation continues, every building damaged where a state of emergency has at any time been declared by the governor could be exempt from CEQA forevermore.

The experience of Sacred Heart shows the power one building has to bring people together. It also highlights the serious challenges still facing preservation in Oakland and the need to bring preservation considerations into the mainstream of decision making. If local officials and city staff are not convinced that historic resources are important to the community, the courts cannot necessarily be counted on to rescue these resources. The attorneys who worked on Sacred Heart, including Frederick Hertz who handled city administrative hearings, Susan Brandt-Hawley who handled court pleadings and arguments, and Antonio Rossman on behalf of the National Trust and California Preservation Foundation, made strong arguments. But as was evident in the comments of Superior Court Judge Lambden, judges hesitate to question the policy decisions of local governments. So preservation begins at home. City staff, Planning Commissioners, and City Council need to be educated about the value of historic buildings in our troubled city. It may be too late for Sacred Heart, but much is to be done to preserve what remains of Oakland's historic fabric.

--Frederick Hertz

Demolition of Sacred Heart was fast and thorough. The long battle shows that much needs to be done in Oakland to bring preservation into planning and politics. (Phil Bellman)







The Carr Jones castle (left), and one of Fernwood's Tudor Revival homes. House tour on May 16 features nine homes and five gardens in this remarkable neighborhood. (Phil Bellman)

## OHA Update

### ■ FERNWOOD HOUSE TOUR MAY 16

The secluded Fernwood neighborhood in Montclair is the setting for OHA's 1993 Spring House Tour, Sunday, May 16, noon to 5 pm. Jointly sponsored with the Fernwood Community Club, the tour of this fairy-tale area features nine homes in the Tudor, Norman, and Spanish Revival styles popular in the 1920s and 30s, as well as four private gardens. Interiors display craftsmanship from a bygone era, including fine woods, wrought iron, and multi-hued tile work.

A feature attraction of the tour is a sprawling "castle" designed by Carr Jones, known for his fantasies in brick, slate, tile, and heavy timber. Another stand-out is the Spanish-Moorish home of architect Roger Blaine, who personally carved and painted the wood beams and trusses of the living room ceiling. Both these home were featured in *Sunset* more than 50 years ago.

Fernwood enjoys a unique valley setting in the otherwise hilly Montclair District. The tour site lies astride the meandering headwaters of Temescal Creek. Settlement and cultivation of the area date at least from the 1850s, when Colonel Jack Hays, sheriff of San Francisco, purchased land from the Peralta family for a country home. Hays named the place "Fernwood."

Each of the gardens has its distinct character, but all share a romantic setting along Temescal Creek, where they are linked to one another by foot bridges. Lush, mature vegetation is the signature of the Fernwood neighborhood.

A continuous reception on a redwood-shaded lawn will offer refreshments. Tickets at \$20 general and \$18 for OHA and FCC members are available by calling 763-9218 or at the event May 16. All of

the tour homes and gardens are located along an easy, level walking circuit of about a mile. The neighborhood is located near the Warren Freeway (Route 13), accessible from the Moraga Avenue or Broadway Terrace exits. AC Transit buses stop within a half block of the tour at Mountain Boulevard and Thornhill.

--Ed Phillips & Helen Lore

### ■ SALLY WOODBRIDGE LECTURE RESCHEDULED

Sally Woodbridge's slide lecture on Bernard Maybeck, which was canceled in March, has been rescheduled for Wednesday, June 9, 7:30 p.m. in the Bender Room of the Carnegie Building at Mills College. Based on her new book, *Bernard Maybeck Visionary Architect*, the lecture and book signing is a benefit for the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey in memory of Aaron Gallup, architectural historian and friend of OHA. Tickets are \$10. For reservations and more information call the OHA office at 763-9218. --Helen Lore

### ■ NEW BOARD MEMBERS

OHA welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors in October. OHA is fortunate to have such talented people serving on its board. They are:

MICHAEL F. CROWE, architectural historian for the National Park Service, Western Region, who specializes in project review for the income tax rehabilitation credit program, Historic Preservation Fund grants administration, and Federal Historic Surplus Property Transfers. Former member and chair of the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, former president of the Association for Preservation Technology, Western Chapter, founder

and former president of the Art Deco Society of California, and instructor at UC Berkeley Extension, Michael has regularly led walking tours for OHA of Mountain View Cemetery and Downtown Oakland Art Deco. He has undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Cincinnati and is a graduate of the Victorian Society Summer School at the University of London, England.

PARIS WILLIAMS is an Oakland native whose family settled here at the turn of the century. Her interest in anthropology and history has taken her to 15 countries to do field work. She has applied her skills locally by creating public exhibitions on Oakland history: Celebration of Diversity - Oakland's Multi-Cultural History; Binding Ties, the 16th Street Train Station; and Rhythm and Style, the California Hotel History Project, which was the basis for the feature article in last summer's OHA News. --Helen Lore

#### ■ WALKING TOURS

OHA launches its 1993 Summer Walking Tours with a new walk through Oakland Point, the Prescott neighborhood of West Oakland, on Saturday, July 11, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Led by Bill Coburn, Betty Marvin, and Alissa Gardenhire, the tour looks at Oakland's oldest residential neighborhood, which flourished after the transcontinental railroad based its western terminal in Oakland. The walk includes the role of ethnic groups in early West Oakland with emphasis upon Afro-American contributions. Other new walking tours are:

Sun., Aug. 8, ST. MARY'S CEMETERY. Led by Beverly Madera of the Peralta family and Dean Yabuki, this walk through Oakland's Catholic cemetery includes the gravesites of the four Peralta brothers who shared the original land grant for Oakland, and includes tales of early Spanish and Portuguese families.

Sat., Aug. 24, YOUNG JACK LONDON. Dean Yabuki's walk in the San Antonio neighborhood includes four houses where Jack London lived in his early years.

The walks schedule also includes:

July 11, Sun. MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY, Barbara Smith and Michael Crowe

July 17, Sat. UPTOWN ART DECO led by Dean Yabuki and Sharon Moore

July 18, DOWNTOWN ART DECO, Michael Crowe

July 24, Sat. TEMESCAL, Sharon Moore

July 25, Sun. HOUSES OF FAITH, Don Tyler

July 31, OLD OAKLAND ETHNIC, Dean Yabuki

Aug. 1, Sun. JINGLETOWN/KENNEDY TRACT, Susana Villarreal and Fran Matarrese

Aug. 7, Sat. HADDON HILL with Lynn Fonfa

Aug. 14, Sat. OAK CENTER led by Sister Ethel Mary Tinnemann



Oakland Point tour will cross West Oakland from the Cypress to the proposed new freeway, and from John Ziegenbein's stately Italianates to Mayme Netherland's tiny saltbox. (Phil Bellman)

Aug. 15, Sun. GLENVIEW led by Gloria Will and Betty Marvin

Aug. 22, Sun. FOLLOW AN OAKLAND CREEK with Marlene Wilson

Aug. 28, Sat. MILLS COLLEGE led by Dean Yabuki and Helen Lore

Aug. 29, Sun. BORAX SMITH ESTATE led by Phil Bellman

Walks are 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. No reservations are required. \$6 general public, \$4 OHA members. Complete schedules will be available around June 1, and will be mailed to members; others call 763-9218 for the complete listing. --Helen Lore

#### ■ MILLS HALL

Reconstruction and demolition has begun on historic Mills Hall at Mills College. The 1871 Second Empire landmark building, which was closed after the Loma Prieta earthquake, was the original college structure which housed students, faculty, offices, and classrooms. The college plans to restore the building's exterior as

closely as possible to the original, while adapting the interior for conference and meeting rooms, faculty and administrative offices, and seminar rooms, thus restoring the original multi-use flexibility.

The campaign to raise the needed \$8.5 million to restore Mills Hall has almost reached its goal. All but \$800,000 had been donated or pledged as of April 15. This includes \$1.3 million from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The balance has come from other government grants, alumnae, the Board of Directors, and friends of the college.

Mills Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a California State Historic Landmark. Architects for the project are Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis. --Helen Lore

■ IN MEMORIAM, SACRED HEART CHURCH, 1901-1993

Despite heroic efforts and three years of hard work by Friends of Sacred Heart, the Diocese chose to demolish Sacred Heart the week of April 12, just after Easter. Claiming the earthquake had irreparably damaged the church, the owners secured a demolition permit from the City of Oakland. Friends of Sacred Heart won a determination of eligibility for the National Register, and delayed demolition through the courts until the case was turned down by the California Supreme Court, by one vote. The Diocese has promised that a new church will be built, but a drive past the site is a sobering reminder of what has been lost.

OHA commends the valiant work by Friends of Sacred Heart to save this building for the parish and all residents of Oakland. The Friends still have legal costs, and OHA members are encouraged to send donations to Friends of Sacred Heart, 468 42nd Street, Oakland CA 94609. --Susan McCue



Friends of Sacred Heart fought for three years, but it took just a week to clear the site of the 92-year-old church. Friends still need help with legal expenses. (Susan McCue)

## 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. 113 landmarks and five districts have been designated since the Board was created in 1974. Meetings are at the Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue, second Mondays, 4 pm.

Board members are: Annalee Allen, Diana Becton-Brown, Andrew Carpentier, Creighton Fong, Les Hausrath, Estelle Mannis, & Jean Spees. Staff: Helaine Kaplan Prentice, Secretary; Kathy Olson, Recording Secretary.

### FEBRUARY

Board approved design review application by Kate Johnson, Architectural Resources Group, to demolish a brick accessory structure, extend an existing parking lot, and construct a trash enclosure behind 459-73 9th Street (Gladstone Building), an Oakland landmark located in the Victorian Row Preservation District. Landscaping and concealing the dumpster were discussed.

Board heard a request from John Toothman to revise its earlier recommendation under the Earthquake Repair Ordinance (June 1991) to approve demolition of 1519 Franklin Street (Pacific Bell Building), listed on the Study List and rated B by the Survey. Board declined to amend their decision, but agreed to write to the Director of City Planning recommending that the benefits of preserving the building be considered.

Secretary Helaine Prentice suggested that Board amend the landmark designations of five city owned libraries to include the interiors: 659 14th Street (Charles Greene Library); 5606 San Pablo Avenue (Golden Gate Branch); 4605 Foothill Boulevard (Melrose Branch); 5205 Telegraph (Temescal Branch); and 1441 Miller Avenue (23rd Avenue Branch, now used as a school). Plans are underway for seismic upgrade of the buildings, which currently have intact period interiors. Board directed staff to proceed.

Board member Andrew Carpentier reported on January 22 meeting of the coalition on the draft URM (unreinforced masonry) ordinance. Topics included the definition of "historic property" and lack of funding for structural upgrade work.

Board member Annalee Allen reported that the Floral Depot (1900-12 Telegraph Avenue/468-98 19th Street, on the Study List and rated A by the Survey) was vacant and the curved glass storefront was damaged. A landmark nomination had been tabled years ago; Board decided to ask the City Council to reactivate the nomination.

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on



efforts to pursue federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) funds for the landmark Southern Pacific Station at 16th and Wood Streets.

Chair Les Hausrath reported on Planning Commission certification of the Final EIR for demolition of St. Francis de Sales Cathedral. Hausrath said he was the only speaker opposed to certifying the EIR. He noted that the EIR did not address cumulative effects of demolishing earthquake-damaged buildings downtown. Board voted to restate its opposition to the demolition.

Secretary Prentice reported on a letter from FEMA regarding the Caldecott Tunnel, an Oakland landmark. She had drafted a reply questioning Caltrans' finding that the Tunnel was ineligible for the National Register and therefore not subject to Section 106 review. Board agreed to write.

Prentice reported on her participation in the California Preservation Foundation jury for preservation awards. She was impressed by the number of preservation projects now taking place.

Carpentier agreed to attend the City Council hearing on the landmark nominations of the Mutual Stores-Safeway building at 5701-69 East 14th Street and the interior of the Paramount Theater.

#### MARCH

Board presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Kathy Olson, retiring as Landmarks Board volunteer. In addition to regular minutes, Olson wrote landmark and National Register nominations for many of the most important Oakland buildings including City Hall, the Greene Library, and the Southern Pacific Station.

Board reviewed an application by William Turnbull Associates, architects, to demolish and reconstruct an expanded rear east wing, excavate a basement, construct a front lobby addition, and modify the courtyard at 685 14th Street, the First Unitarian Church, a city landmark in the S-7 Preservation Park District (also a California Historic Landmark and on the National Register). Two lobby designs were presented, one glass and one masonry. Alice Carey, preservation architect, described the project's compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards: church use and character defining spaces (Wendte Hall, Starr King Room, sanctuary) are unchanged, false historic treatment is avoided, and the lobby is reversible; the addition would help with earthquake strengthening. Project was approved with either lobby design.

Board reviewed an application by Kirk Peterson, architect, and developer Richard Rowlett to construct two two-unit houses

plus garages at 2042-50 10th Avenue in the Tenth Avenue District, a site where several projects have been proposed over the years. The developer is utilizing an Office of Community Development program for first-time buyers. Peterson described the houses as one Stick and one Italianate, with garages meant to resemble those added to Victorian houses over the years. Board discussed the possibility of using real redwood instead of Forestex siding, saving palm trees on the site, and whether the houses created a false historic appearance. They recommended approval subject to continued communication with the neighborhood and redesign of the garage doors to a barn-like style. The project also required a minor variance to increase the building height to match the historic district.

Prentice reported on federal Section 106 review on proposed demolition of 1 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, the Grove Street Pier (Howard Terminal Transit Shed), on the Study List and rated A by the Survey. This is the last site for Port expansion that would not require bay fill. The Port may be able to preserve the "head house," the Beaux Arts office structure at the end of the transit shed which housed the original Port of Oakland offices. Visually this is the important part of the building, though some, including state and federal preservation officials, believe that a head house by definition needs a transit shed behind it. The Port estimated \$1.3 million to being the head house up to code, and in addition they would lose an acre of working terminal; an acre is worth \$120,000 to \$180,000 a year. Board voted to support retention of the entire Howard Terminal, or, if that is infeasible, accept preservation and rehabilitation of the head house.

Board approved the application to amend the landmark designations of the Charles Greene Library and Golden Gate, Melrose, Temescal, and 23rd Avenue branches to include the interiors. Prentice noted that in 1918 Andrew Carnegie donated money to build four libraries. Architects Dickey & Donovan designed all except Melrose, which is by William Weeks; they are similar in plan, but executed in different styles; all have distinctive interiors that are intact. The Greene Library, built in 1902, is also a Carnegie library. Dr. Lawrence Crouchett of the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life noted that if the Center occupies the Greene Library, handicapped access will be needed to the second floor. Kirk Peterson alerted the Board to the historic steel and glass stacks at the Greene Library. Both speakers supported the designation.



## APRIL

Board gave design review approval for Mi Rancho to erect a corn storage tank and boiler in the Victorian Row district. Mi Rancho is in the landmark Central Pacific Depot, 464 7th Street; the tank will adjoin the Peniel Mission, 720-26 Washington, also a landmark. Board requested a structure to screen the tank, and possibly plants.

Legal complications had stopped the proposal to move the McElroy house (401 Lee Street; Julia Morgan, 1907) to Preservation Park. The landmark application had been on hold pending a move. Board agreed the effort must continue.

Board voted to amend the landmark designation of Lakeside Park to include the Lawn Bowling Clubhouse and an area around the 12th Street Dam. Designation of the dam was in response to E Clampus Vitus' proposal to place a plaque where Joaquin Murrieta defied Carpentier's toll collector in 1852.

Board accepted a request from Roxanne Hills to place the Pardee Building, 1525-33 16th Street/San Pablo/15th Street, on the Study List. She also submitted a Notice of Intent to nominate it for landmark status for its importance in contemporary art history, as the birthplace of West Coast Photorealism and the onetime studio of Richard Diebenkorn. The building is on the site being considered for a new city administration building.

Les Hausrath reported on a meeting with the owners of the Tribune Tower about future use of the building. Annalee Allen reported on a potential "Lake Merritt Gateway" district designation. Notable buildings include Lake Merritt Lodge (2332 Harrison, McCall & Davis, 1925), Seventh Church of Christ Scientist (2333 Harrison, W.A. Newman, 1915), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (110 Montecito, B.G. McDougall, 1912), First Congregational Church, the Veterans' Building, and others.

Annalee Allen reported on the draft Preservation Element. Board saw potential problems with Class A landmark status (demolition prohibited) and the proposed redesignation of all existing landmarks. She also reported on a meeting with City Councilor Natalie Bayton about ISTEAF funding for adaptive reuse of the Wood Street S.P. Station. A report on the draft URM ordinance noted that it would probably not require major repairs, and wholesale demolitions were not expected; all URM buildings are being given a Survey rating. Concern was expressed over a City Council review of the functions of boards and commissions. --Kathy Olson

Original interiors of Oakland's landmark Carnegie libraries: Greene, Temescal, and 23rd Avenue (Oakland History Room)

# 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. (268-9524)

## Upcoming Activities

ongoing, Sun.-Th., 10-4, Jewish ceremonial and fine arts, historical artifacts, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, 849-2710.

ongoing, "Threads of Strength: People, Groups and Organizations of the Afro-American Community," Center for Afro-American History & Life, 5606 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, 658-3158.

through June 13, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-7), "Gifted Women," photographic portraits of 52 influential Bay Area women, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, free.

May 13, Thurs., "Fernwood", talk by Ed Phillips, **OHA House Tour Lecture**, Montclair Fire House, 6226 Moraga Ave., 763-9218.



May 16, Sun., 12-5,

### "Historic Fernwood" OHA Annual House Tour

co-sponsored by Fernwood Community Club, \$20/\$18 (OHA & FCC members), 763-9218.



May 22-23, (Sat. & Sun. 11-4), "Springtime at Home," self-guided tour of rebuilt homes in the East Bay Hills, sponsored by The Phoenix Journal, portion of proceeds benefit OHA, volunteers needed, \$10 good both days, 653-1131/339-6632.

May 23, Sun., An Afternoon at Hume Cloister, with Divertissements, "Musicales In Cherished Homes," BAHA benefit, 2900 Buena Vista Way, (John Hudson Thomas), Berkeley, limited seating, \$25, 841-2242.

June 3-6, (Th. 10-8, F. 8-5, Sat. 8-5+), "Celebrate Diversity: Communities United for the Future," 18th Annual California Preservation Conference, California Preservation Fdn., National Trust for Historic Preservation, et. al., \$75/125, special events additional fee, 763-0972.

June 9, Wed., 7:30pm, "Bernard Maybeck-Visionary Architect," Sally Woodbridge, slide lecture & book signing, **OHA Lecture**, benefit for the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey in memory of Aaron Gallup, architectural historian, Carnegie Hall, Mills College, rescheduled from March 11, reservations \$10, 763-9218.



July 10, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "West Oakland," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 11, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Mountain View Cemetery," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 17, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Uptown Art Deco," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 18, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Downtown Art Deco," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 24, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Temescal," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 25, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Houses of Faith," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

July 31, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Old Oakland Ethnic," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 1, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Jingletown/Kennedy Tract," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 7, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Haddon Hill," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 8, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "St. Mary's Cemetery," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 14, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Oak Center," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 15, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Glenview," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 21, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Young Jack London," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 22, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Follow an Oakland Creek," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 28, Sat., 1:30-3:30, "Mills College," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

August 29, Sun., 1:30-3:30, "Borax Smith," **OHA Walking Tour**, 763-9218.

## 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.

Hayward Area Historical Society Museum, 22701 Main Street, Hayward, M-F. 11-4, Sat. 12-4; \$1/\$0.50 (children), 581-0223.

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

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, Th.-Sat. 11, 1 & 2:30, \$4/\$3 (Sr.), accompanied children free, 672 11th St., 444-2187.

Presidio, National Park Service walks, every Sat. 11am, meet at main parade grounds, \$3, (415) 556-0865.

San Francisco Heritage, Victorian & Edwardian Pacific Heights, Sun. 12:30-2, Haas-Lilienthal House Tours, Sun. 11-4, W. 12-3:15, Chinese New Year Architectural Walking Tour (Jan.)-call for date & time, 2007 Franklin, \$4/\$2\*; \*Srs./Jrs., (415) 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 Susan McCue, 763-1687, 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 (January-March) are:

Margaret Bahan, Richard Bradshaw, Jamie Sue Brooks, Richard Canciamilla, Lene Cortsen-Diaz, Rita Marie Dykes, Raleigh Hughes, Elaine King, John Langham, Sherry Madison, Dianne Nicolini, James & Louise Ostrom, Anita Pender, Kristina Raupach, & Hilary Winslow.

## Donors

Special thanks to those joining/renewing as:

**SPONSOR (\$100):** Bruce Ballentine, G.Pete Encinas, Myron Zimmerman.

**ORGANIZATION (\$50):** Alfa Parts/Jon Norman, Bancroft Library, Berkeley Builders, Inc., Winans Construction Inc.

**DONATIONS:** Corpus Christi Seniors League, Arthur Levy, Beverly Solo, Howard & Dorothy Stein.

## Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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### 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. © 1993 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 History Notes: The Saddle Rock Cafe

Prince among the aristocrats of Oakland's fine restaurants from the past was the Saddle Rock Cafe, situated on the north side of 13th Street between Broadway and Franklin, among the hubbub of the city's business and theatrical life. "One of the oldest cafes in the city is the Saddle Rock," the Oakland Enquirer informed its readers in 1909, "and it is



(Oakland History Room)

safe to say that none are more popular than is this elegant restaurant... In the main dining room one hundred and seventy-five guests may be seated while the private dining rooms and the banquet room provide for many more, and each guest is carefully served, an endeavor being made to anticipate each patron's wishes and serve them as well as though in their own homes... The Saddle Rock is the Mecca of the smart set as well as strangers and citizens who appreciate a perfect cuisine and an unexcelled service."

The boutonniere on the frock coat of all this gastronomical finery was proprietor Pasqual Kisich who, at the age of 19, emigrated from his native Austria to New York, thence west where, briefly, he engaged in the restaurant business in San Francisco. Arriving in Oakland in 1889, Mr. Kisich dabbled for a short spell in the wine trade, then opened his restaurant dubbed the Saddle Rock in 1891.

First located on 12th Street near Broadway, the cafe soon prospered and by the century's turn Mr. Kisich had found new quarters for his enterprise on Broadway near 13th Street. By 1905, the Saddle Rock was ready for business in its elegant structure on 13th Street. Mr. Kisich spared no expense embellishing his restaurant.

"The interior of the Saddle Rock has been most handsomely decorated," observed one reporter. "The general design of the ceiling, with its heavy beams, tends toward the Oriental idea, there being lavish use of gold in the decorative scheme. The walls are paneled with that semi-tropical foliage which we enjoy in this part of California." Patrons were soothed by the Orphean strains of a "high-class orchestra." "Every delicacy of the season is served in first-class style. Oysters and game are specialties."

After 1918, the cafe was succeeded by Richard's Restaurant. Today the site of the Saddle Rock Cafe is occupied by a multi-level parking lot of decidedly banal appearance. Mr. Kisich would not have approved. --William W. Sturm

Oakland Heritage Alliance  
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