

The Hotel Oakland



It is 1912 and if you stroll east of Broadway along 13th Street you will come upon a newly completed Italian Renaissance building that fills the entire city block. Its beige "Carnegie Pressed Brick" facade and terra cotta tile roof are crowned with towers. Twelve stories above the elegantly landscaped courtyard an enormous Old Glory waves on the west tower's flagpole; on the east tower a blue banner emblazoned "Hotel Oakland" whips in the breeze. Workmen putting finishing touches to the upper floors can look eastward and see other

Oakland's finest hostelry: the elegant lobby of the Hotel Oakland in 1915. (Vernon Sappers collection, Oakland History Room)

workmen swarming over the scaffolding of Oakland's new Beaux Arts City Hall and the steel framework of the Rotunda dome that rises over Broadway's retail corridor.

Studebakers, Model T's, and Packards parade up to the hotel carriage entrance while street cars clang along the street. Women in ankle length skirts and picture hats pass under the entrance marquee on



A much admired early view of the Hotel Oakland, with its twin towers and courtyard. (Oakland History Room)

the way to club meetings or tea in the lobby. Bellboys and porters in jaunty red and black uniforms make a colorful accent as they wheel luggage toward the check-in counter amidst the sober suited bankers, businessmen, and drummers. You can almost feel the pride, prosperity, and optimism of the crowds.

After the great quake of '06, according to E.I. Blake's Greater Oakland (1911), "Oakland's business community [wanted] suitably impressive quarters to entertain and accommodate important visitors, a hotel... large enough and sufficiently appointed to attract big conventions." Observing the post quake influx of San Francisco commerce and residents to the East Bay, Oakland capitalists Edson Adams, W.W. Garthwaite, and Borax Smith took the lead in organizing the Oakland Hotel Company. It was commonly known as the "bankers' hotel." Major retail investors included H.C. Capwell, Kahn Bros., and Taft and Penoyer. After the initial subscription of \$1,500,000, prominent East Coast architect Henry Janeway Hardenburgh was asked to provide a design. The Panic of 1907 halted all work and Hardenburgh declined to stay with the project.

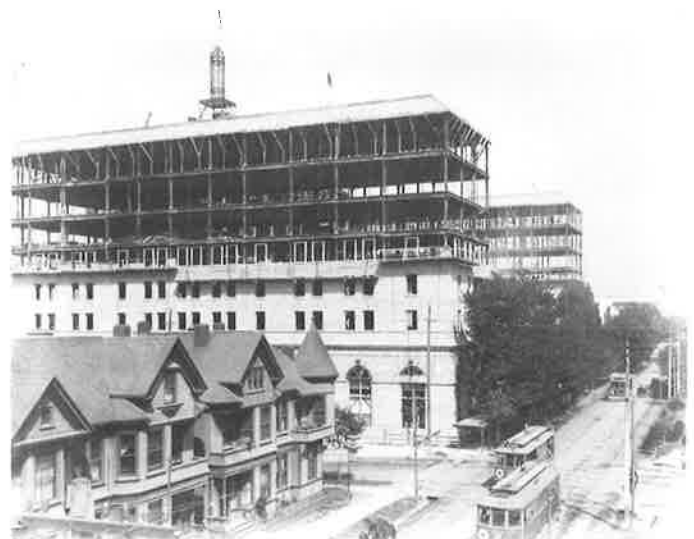
Work resumed in 1910 under the San Francisco architectural firm of Bliss and Faville and the construction firm of P.J. Walker. The Oakland Tribune bragged in January 1912, "The materials used and the construction are of as high standards as those employed in the building of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco which has hitherto been regarded as a model of perfection in those respects; but, owing to favorable conditions of the materials and labor markets at the time contracts for the Hotel Oakland were let, its actual cost has been forty percent less per square foot than that of the Palace."

Architects Walter D. Bliss and William B. Faville were greatly influenced by the

historicism of McKim, Mead & White, the important New York architectural firm where they both apprenticed. Both firms had an enthusiasm for the Renaissance palazzo and the ornamented ceilings and superb detailing that characterize that style. Already credited with two of San Francisco's most admired banking temples and the St. Francis Hotel, as well as the Greene Library in Oakland, Bliss and Faville were an obvious choice to design Oakland's grandest building. The U-shaped hotel with its arcades and Doric columns, its arched windows and loggia, is an echo of similar McKim, Mead & White palazzos in the east as well as other Bliss and Faville buildings in the Bay Area. Walter Bliss also designed the furniture, tapestries, hangings, and rugs.

The opening banquet and ball were held on December 23, 1912, and reported at great length in the Tribune. "From early evening until the chill of midnight, the great monument... was an illuminated wonderland... alive with happy men and women who strolled through the acres of carpeted elegance with ... delight." Police stopped all traffic on the surrounding streets, and hundreds of amazed citizens toured the "apotheosis of refinement and triumph of civilization" located between Harrison and Alice Streets in downtown Oakland. Mayor F.K. Mott told the assembled throng, "Tonight you are making history in Oakland." Attorney Harmon Bell declared that the hotel "represents the resurrection of Oakland." No encomium was too flowery. The spirit of the City Beautiful Movement was abroad in the land, and the Hotel Oakland was its manifestation. The text on an early postcard of the hotel calls it "an institution of semi-public character, built by the patriotism of a community of 300,000 people."

The exterior of the hotel is impressive. The steel frame building with reinforced



Hotel Oakland under construction, looking east from 13th and Harrison. Streetcars are headed to City Hall. (Vernon Sappers coll., Oakland History Room)

concrete and masonry floors and walls surrounds a semi-circular courtyard with drive, measuring 90 by 155 feet. The wings have ground level arcades supported by Doric columns. There are large windows with medallions between the bays and volutes surmounting each arch. Originally the roofs of the arcades held a series of light poles. The wings have seven stories while the central section has eight stories; a covered loggia encloses the top two. Gray towers surmounted by fishscale patterned domes rise four stories above the roof.

The hotel's interior spaces were, and still are, among the finest in Oakland. Visitors entered the 40 by 80 foot lounge or lobby to find "handsome divans, soft sensuous tapestries, thick draperies and Kildare rugs." Walls of soft gray stone-textured plaster rise to the barrel vaulted ceiling decorated with creamy classical figures on a field of golden bronze highlighted with touches of sky blue. An orchestra might be on the marble balcony opposite the main entrance. A white marble fireplace centers the east wall. Under the rugs is a floor of marble and tile.

The southwest corner of the building housed a cafe or bar designed to resemble Ye Olde English Inn with oak paneled walls and decorated ceiling. In recent years the cafe was converted into a grocery store; the beautiful ceiling was covered and thereby preserved. In the northwest corner was the "Renaissance Grill Room," also paneled in oak with a richly decorated ceiling. In 1931 the Grill Room was converted into a coffee shop, entered from Harrison Street. This change was said to emulate "some of the very finest coffee shops in eastern metropolitan cities."

The dramatic climax of the public rooms is the ballroom and adjoining dining room that fill the center rear and northeast portion of the building. These rooms could also be directly entered from 14th Street. As in all the public rooms, tall and spacious windows allow light to flood in. Two rows of free standing Corinthian columns soar to the decorated plaster ceiling where once hung "the most wonderful chandelier in the West," eight feet in diameter, surrounded by four smaller chandeliers of the same design in Austrian cut crystal and golden bronze. (A smaller version of the chandelier has been restored and can be seen in the "Tea Room" just off the lobby.) The decor was ivory and mulberry highlighted with gold and the gold brocade of the dining chairs.

Sumptuous public interiors (from top) included the Renaissance Grill Room, ballroom, and dining room. Utilitarian facilities in this "down-town rendezvous of men of affairs" included sample rooms (bottom) for traveling salesmen or "drummers" to display their wares. (Oakland History Room; Dean Yabuki)





Wedding party at the Hotel Oakland c.1925: marriage of Dr. Frank Takeshi Inukai, Oakland dentist, and Amy Ayako Matsuda, secretary at the Japanese consulate. Both were Hawaii-born Nissei who moved to Oakland c.1903. The tall European woman at right was the wife of the Japanese consul general in San Francisco. (Yabuki family photos, Oakland History Room)



From 1912 to 1943 this was Oakland's finest hostelry and an important social center of the East Bay. A full page advertisement in the 1929 Tribune Year Book, headed "one of America's distinctive hotels," promotes the 500 spacious outside rooms and states that "Successful business men, physicians, attorneys and bankers who appreciate the environment, comfort, courtesy and unrivaled cuisine that characterize this Hotel, make THE OAKLAND their permanent home." Meetings and conventions were regular events; a ball held in 1919 drew approximately 4,000 people. Guests in the early years included Presidents Wilson, Coolidge, and Hoover as well as Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Sarah Bernhardt, and Jean Harlow. Mary Pickford sold Liberty Bonds at the hotel in 1918.

The hotel rebounded from bankruptcy several times during the Depression of the

1930s only to succumb to military needs during World War II. In February 1943 the Army commandeered the building for a regional hospital and the furnishings were auctioned off. The Veterans Administration maintained a hospital in the hotel until August 1963. The building then stood empty until 1979 when it was remodeled as senior housing. The upper floors were turned into apartments and a shear wall was built which bisects the building into north and south spaces with almost no communication at the ground floor. The lobby is still used as a sitting room; the bar room became a grocery store. The Renaissance Grill Room, the dining room, and the ballroom are vacant. Although the latter two rooms are painted and their chandeliers have vanished, the wonderful spaces still amaze. The 1989 earthquake caused serious damage to the structure and its facade, but its occupancy was not interrupted and repairs and further strengthening were recently completed.

Today the sheer size of the Hotel Oakland still dominates its surroundings despite eighty years of wear and tear, bankruptcy and earthquakes. Instead of a carriage drive, the courtyard gardens are freshly planted and attractive. The prosperous crowds are gone along with the streetcars, the bellboys, and the flags. Today senior citizens sit in the lobby where the glorious baroque ceiling is a reminder of former splendor. There is only silence in the ballroom where the fashionably dressed elite of Oakland once waltzed over highly polished oak floors. If old buildings have ghosts, perhaps the spirit of Oakland's grandest hotel gazes enviously through dusty windows at Chinatown's hustle and bustle, and remembers its proud yesterdays.

--Gaye Lenahan



Earthquake damage in 1989 took four years to repair, but few residents were displaced. Work was recently completed by the Ratcliff Architects. (Phil Bellman)

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.

■ PRESERVATION ELEMENT MOVES ALONG

With a public hearing and work session on October 27, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and City Planning Commission began consideration of the draft Historic Preservation Element (see also Landmarks Board report). If adopted, the Element will become part of the city's General Plan and will provide policy guidance for the treatment of its historic resources. In addition to setting out policy, the Element provides a detailed list of implementation actions, including zoning changes, preservation incentives, and recommended changes to administrative procedures within city government which could have far reaching - and hopefully favorable - impacts on historic resources.

Presentation of the draft Element to the Landmarks Board and Planning Commission is the first step in a process which will ultimately result in consideration of the document by the City Council. Adoption of the Element has been identified as a goal by Oakland-Sharing the Vision (see Fall 1992 OHA News). A task force representing a wide range of community and business groups, city staff, and representatives from the Landmarks Board and Planning Commission have worked since 1988 to develop the Element.

The task force was initiated in 1988 in response to the controversy surrounding the proposed demolition of the Christian Science Church on Lake Merritt. Ultimately the Classic Revival church was demolished and replaced by a modern copper domed structure. It was apparent that the city lacked clear policies on historic preservation. Planning Commissioner Bruce Black was concerned that existing policies offered little guidance in making decisions affecting historic buildings, and he convinced Planning Director Alvin James to convene the task force.

As the Loma Prieta earthquake made clear, the built character of Oakland, particularly downtown, is largely defined by historic buildings. Viewed in this light, city policies toward these resources affect not only those who appreciate architecture or history, but a whole range of diverse groups who have an investment in Oakland's future. The draft Element is available for review at the City Planning Department (3rd floor, 1330 Broadway) and at the OHA office. --Carolyn Douthat

■ ST. FRANCIS DE SALES: 1891-1993

The end has come for St. Francis de Sales Cathedral. The hoped-for sale of the Gothic cathedral did not materialize, and the Diocese received authorization to demolish. Trinity Missionary Baptist Church was not able to come up with the funds within the time specified, and the Diocese would not agree to any extensions. Demolition began the week of November 8.

--Annalee Allen



St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, a symbol of Oakland for 100 years, was reduced to rubble in mid-November, after unsuccessful attempts to find a buyer or reuse.

■ CHURCH PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

On January 29, 1994, a one-day workshop on seismic, economic, and facilities management issues facing historic religious properties will take place at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in San Francisco. It is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service, California Preservation Foundation, Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, Oakland Heritage Alliance, Victorian Alliance, and San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.

The workshop will focus on two basic aspects: building management and financial development. The goal is to equip decision makers and users with concrete examples of how others have affordably maintained religious properties and adapted them to modern and diverse needs. Educational sessions and a handbook will include information on the process of landmarking, an overview of the San Francisco and Oakland seismic programs, adapting religious properties to modern demands, ordinary repair and maintenance, ADA compliance, financing and fundraising, and new technologies and sensitive methods for seismic upgrading.

Neighborhood religious buildings are

often centers of community life. In addition to worship, they provide senior services, food banks, day care, education, meeting and activity space, and overnight accommodation. They play a fundamental role in the livability and stability of our communities. This workshop is designed to help churches sustain that role, by showing preservationists, clergy, parishioners, and others how other communities have faced similar challenges. For more information and workshop registration, contact Courtney Damkroger at the Western Regional Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1 Sutter Street, Suite 707, San Francisco CA 94104, 415-956-0610. --Susan McCue

■ FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF LOMA PRIETA

Four years after the earthquake, downtown and many of its distinctive structures are still distressed. The City Council/Redevelopment Agency is currently working on an \$80 million five year plan to spur redevelopment in the central business district. Of that amount, \$10 million is earmarked for earthquake damaged buildings. At least one council member, Natalie Bayton, who represents the Broadway core as part of her district, doesn't think that \$10 million is nearly enough. "When people come into our downtown they see scaffold after scaffold after scaffold," Bayton has said.

The redevelopment plan calls for spending \$15 million toward a new city administration building, \$5 million to renovate City Hall Plaza, \$8 million on the Rotunda

View of City Hall Plaza during Red Cross parade in 1918 shows the Rotunda (Kahn's, at right), Drake Building (center distance, with upper stories under construction), Plaza Building and City Hall at left. (collection of Ted Wurm & Bud Naas)



building, and \$1 million to \$3.2 million on more downtown housing.

A plan to house an educational center sponsored by California State University, Hayward, is under consideration for the City-owned Rotunda. An extensive night school program would focus on city, state, and federal government employment. The hope is that classes would dramatically increase downtown traffic at night.

Two significant earthquake damaged buildings, the Unity Building at 1300 Broadway and the Key System Building at 1100 Broadway, apparently still have no plans for repair. Other historic downtown buildings are slowly making their way back. These include the San Pablo Hotel (\$4.5 million), the Drake at 532 16th Street (\$740,000), and the Wakefield Building at 426 17th Street (\$700,000). --Annalee Allen

■ OLD MERRITT COLLEGE DEVELOPER SELECTED

A giant step forward for the University High-Old Merritt College complex took place in early October, as the City Council unanimously endorsed the recommendation of a citizen review panel to choose the IDG Architects/Baner Financial team to develop the site. This team's plan calls for medical offices, clinic and library, as well as a senior center, child care facility and health and fitness club. The medical uses are expected to be the economic engine that drives the project and minimizes the need for city or other subsidies. Forty-four units of market rate housing, designed to "blend" with the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood would also be part of the development. Council members commented that the team should incorporate input on the

ethnic/cultural center planned for the site, to reflect the strong interest in African-American culture. IDG/Baner has six months to come up with the financing needed to proceed with the development.

Letters from OHA and other community groups urged Council to move forward so that the deteriorating complex can once more be an asset to Oakland. (See Summer 1993 OHA News for a summary of the three proposals considered.)

--Annalee Allen



■ ISTE A GRANT FOR 16TH STREET STATION

As reported in the Summer 1993 **OHA News**, the City of Oakland submitted an application in August to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to fund Phase I of an adaptive reuse project for the 16th Street Southern Pacific Station. The \$87,000 requested would pay for preliminary architectural and engineering work, an appraisal, and toxics assessment. In addition, possible uses for the 1912 Beaux Arts station would be studied.

The funds are being sought from the second round of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancements Act (ISTEA) funding program. The train station is a City Landmark and, having been officially determined eligible for the National Register, is listed on the California Register of Historical Resources. In the first step of project selection, applications from the nine-county Bay Area region are ranked by MTC staff and referred to the Commission for action. The Commission is scheduled to make its recommendations to the California Transportation Commission in November and final selection of the projects should be made by the CTC early in 1994.

According to MTC staff, over 203 requests for funding, totalling \$96.9 million, were received. Of these, 22 projects fall within the category of historic preservation and archaeology, representing \$12 million of the total. The initial rankings for project applications were announced in early October by MTC staff. The 16th Street Station ranked second only to an application by the State Coastal Conservancy for acquisition of San Pedro Point. Letters of support for the depot project came from historical

Southern Pacific's 16th Street Station, brand new in 1913. Prospects now look good for an adaptive reuse study. (California Photo Views, Vernon J. Sappers)

groups, railroad enthusiasts, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, California Preservation Foundation, CalTrans, and the Oakland Landmarks Board. Architecture critic Allen Temko joined local, state, and federal legislators in support.

Oakland Heritage Alliance, which has been working on this project for several years, helped underwrite the cost of preparing the application, and will continue to monitor its progress through the funding process. Public support for the project will make a difference in the selection process. Call Helen Lore at the OHA office (763-9218) for the details of when and where to send your cards and letters. --Carolyn Douthat

■ C.P.F. PRESERVATION DESIGN AWARDS

The California Preservation Foundation has issued a Call for Entries for their 11th annual Preservation Design Awards competition. The competition recognizes excellence in safeguarding California's historic resources. Awards are given in six categories: restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, preservation/stabilization, cultural resources studies, and craftsmanship. Last year's winning projects included Oakland City Hall which received an award for the innovative seismic strengthening program currently under construction. Entry forms and information are available from the California Preservation Foundation, 763-0972. Winners will get their awards at a gala ceremony February 2, 1994 at Union Station in Los Angeles. --Carolyn Douthat



OHA Update

■ ANNUAL MEETING AT THE HOTEL OAKLAND

Nearly 100 OHA members and guests who attended OHA's Annual Meeting in October had the chance to view the newly restored public rooms of the landmark Hotel Oakland. This preview of the interiors was possible because **Oakland Heritage Alliance** is in the process of acquiring a facade easement for the Hotel Oakland as well as an easement for the public rooms. The vaulted, gold-leafed foyer is a spectacular restoration as is the adjoining tea room. The meeting was held in the spacious dining room, which boasts the original chandelier (although not yet lit). The adjoining ballroom, scene of many parties from 1913 until World War II, still has the grandeur of its former days. Strolling through the vast rooms, many people reminisced about high school graduation dances and wedding receptions they had attended in the hotel.

Bill Sturm, librarian of the Oakland History Room, gave a short social history of the hotel. Bill McClure, speaking for the hotel's owner, A.F. Evans Company, told of future plans for the hotel, which involve serving the local community, especially the senior citizen residents. A comprehensive presentation of the seismic retrofitting of the hotel was given by James Vann, project manager of the restoration for The Ratcliff Architects. Marlene Wilson, OHA president, explained **Oakland Heritage Alliance's** role in monitoring the continuing preservation of the hotel's exterior and public rooms when it acquires the facade easement.

In addition to thanking the many volunteers who have contributed to OHA in the last year, Marlene gave a special award to architect Donald Wardlaw for the beautiful art work and graphics he rendered for the last three OHA house tours, and for preparing the calendar pages of the OHA News for the last two years.

Thanks also go to Maxine Goodrich, manager of the Hotel Oakland, for her hospitality and helpfulness in setting up the meeting; Don and Shirley Tyler for help with refreshments; OHA Vice President Bill Coburn for arranging the Annual Meeting; and Cherie Morrison and Christine Geetan from The Corinthian League for giving the evening a touch of historical authenticity by greeting guests in costumes of 1913, the year the hotel opened. --Helen Lore

■ NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the Annual Meeting OHA welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors, each serving a two year term.

MARINA CARLSON has an extensive background in historic preservation activism. Currently a Planning Intern for the City of Oakland Zoning Department, she has worked as a coordinator for Oakland - Sharing the Vision, and is a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) and Oakland's Historic Preservation Task Force. Active in the Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association, Marina was instrumental in the creation of the 10th Avenue Preservation District and the citywide Residential Design Review Ordinance.

XANDRA GRUBE comes to the board with many years of experience as a city planner. She has been employed as a planner by the City and County of San Francisco and by the City of Alameda, and is presently working for the City of Berkeley as landmarks planner and TIC/condo planner. Also a resident of the Brooklyn area, she was president of the Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association in 1983-85, and was active in preserving that area's historic district. She has an M.S. in Civil Engineering and Planning.

OHA Board members reelected for two year terms are William Coburn, architect; Alan Dreyfuss, architect; Susan McCue, economic development coordinator; Jane Spangler, restoration consultant; Don Tyler, teacher; and Marlene Wilson, teacher and attorney.

OHA thanks outgoing board members David Hoard and Dean Yabuki for their many years of service - David as secretary and membership development chair, and Dean as program chair, which included the summer walking tours. --Helen Lore



OHA's annual meeting was in the great tradition of festive gatherings in the Hotel Oakland ballroom: this is New Year's Eve, 1930 (Oakland History Room)

■ SPECIAL OFFER FROM OLD HOUSE JOURNAL

You can subscribe to The Old House Journal through Oakland Heritage Alliance, receive a 17% discount, and also benefit OHA. Regularly \$24 a year, the monthly magazine on restoration and maintenance of pre-1939 houses is \$20 a year through OHA. OHA keeps \$10 from each subscription.

Renewals as well as new subscriptions qualify for this special offer. Orders must be received at the OHA office by December 31, with checks payable to Oakland Heritage Alliance. For information call the office at 763-9218. --Helen Lore

■ OAKLAND HISTORY BACK IN PRINT!

OHA is pleased to announce the coming reprint of Beth Bagwell's 1982 book, Oakland, The Story of a City. Long out of print and much in demand, the book is considered a definitive history of Oakland. The author has given publishing rights as well as a generous donation of royalties to OHA. A founder of Oakland Heritage Alliance, Beth Bagwell served as its first president in 1980-81. She is now residing in Paris, France.

Bill Coburn, Harlan Kessel, Helen Lore, and Betty Marvin are the committee overseeing the book's production and distribution. It will be available in paperback and hardcover. The hope is to have it available by the end of the year. --Helen Lore

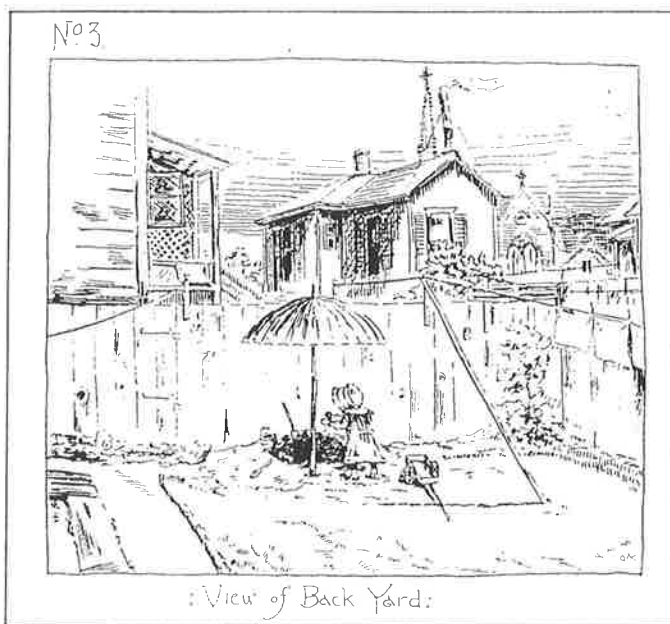
■ NEW AND NOTABLE BOOKS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

In addition to OHA's forthcoming reprint of Oakland, The Story of A City, a number of other recent books of local interest have come to OHA's attention.

Dickinson Weber, researcher, traveler, and artist, recently published Downtown Street Views of Early Tall Buildings from the Bayside Cities and Tidewater Towns of Northern California: A Main Street California Sentimental Sketchbook. This 136-page spiral-bound book synthesizes a massive amount of information from local archives, surveys, and historical societies from San Luis Obispo to Eureka. For each town there is a catalog of major buildings, with dates, architects, and brief, pithy characterizations (Weber refers to "the habitually remodeled" Havens Block in Berkeley), and exquisite pencil sketches. There is also an earlier companion volume, Early Tall Buildings from the Agricultural Valley Towns... The books are available at the Oakland Museum and from Sandscape Press, 1647 Willow Pass Road, Suite 300, Concord CA 94518, 682-5327. Price is \$15 each plus postage and packing.

The East Bay Genealogical Society announces a new Alameda County, California Genealogical Research Guide, a 200-page overview of genealogical materials in the county. Eight sections cover a historical introduction, books (including family histories and government and organization records), cemeteries and mortuaries, city and county government, libraries, public school districts, religious organizations (both active and defunct), and supplemental information including city and name indexes. Price is \$24 including postage and handling, from Alameda County Research Guide, East Bay Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 20417, Oakland CA 94620-0417.

The Oakland History Room of the Oakland Public Library still has a few copies of Souvenir Views of No. 1462 Castro Street, a 16-page sketchbook published in 1982. In 1894 the unidentified "A.M.M." sketched the interior and exterior of the little Italianate cottage where he lived with his wife "Bird" and their baby son Lloyd. The sketches are a unique record of ordinary people's life, showing "Bird making biscuit," Lloyd holding a Kahn Bros. balloon, Lloyd playing in the backyard with the steeple of St. Francis de Sales in the distance, the birdcage, the umbrella plant, the parlor, and finally the family leaving Oakland for Portland. This booklet is available for \$2 at the OHR (second floor, Main Library, 125 14th Street, 238-3222). Also available for \$2 is a reprint of the 1860 Whitcher map of Oakland, with a border of vignettes of prominent buildings of the day.



From Souvenir Views of No. 1462 Castro Street, 1894: Baby Lloyd plays in the shadow of the new St. Francis de Sales Church. (Oakland History Room)



The Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life has two important books published in 1989-90, Visions Toward Tomorrow and Delilah Leontium Beasley: Oakland's Crusading Journalist. Visions, originally written to accompany the Oakland Museum exhibit organized by Lawrence Crouchett, is a remarkably comprehensive and lavishly illustrated 70-page book that has been called "a model for local histories." Delilah Beasley, a biography of the Tribune reporter and civil rights activist by Lorraine Crouchett, weaves in extensive quotes from Beasley's Negro Trail Blazers. (A short version of the biography appeared in OHA News in Winter 1988-89.) Both books are available at \$10 each from the Center, 5606 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland 94608, 658-3158. The Center is open Tuesday through Saturday afternoons and well worth a visit; or add \$1 per book for postage and packing if you order by mail.

Historic Commercial Buildings of Alameda, by Woody Minor, has just been published by the City of Alameda Historical Advisory Board. A product of Alameda's survey, this 66-page book is lavishly illustrated with historic and current photographs. It examines the history of Alameda's two main streets (Webster and Park Streets) and neighborhood commercial districts, with emphasis on the role of transportation, and highlights the distinctive features of Alameda's commercial architecture. The book is \$10 from the Alameda Planning Department (basement of City Hall, or phone 748-4554 for information on ordering by mail). They also have Woody's booklets on the Park Avenue, Bay Station, Burbank-Portola, and Leonardville Heritage Areas, for \$5 each.

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association's The Berkeley Fire: Memoirs and Mementos contains facsimile reprints of two illustrated pamphlets published after the 1923 fire, and Hildegard Flanner's account of the 1923 fire, originally published in the New Yorker. This handsome booklet is available at the Builder's Booksource, or by mail from BAHHA, Box 1137, Berkeley 94701, for \$12.50 including tax, postage, and packing.

Marking the rehabilitation/reconstruction of North Gate Hall at U.C. Berkeley, the Graduate School of Journalism earlier this year published En Charette/On Deadline: An Architectural History of North Gate Hall, a 42-page illustrated book with histories of the architecture school by Sally Woodbridge and of the Journalism School by Susan E. Davis, an introduction by Allan Temko, and many quotes from students through the years. The book is available for \$5 from the Graduate School of Journalism, attn. Susan Davis, 121 North Gate Hall, U.C. Berkeley, Berkeley 94720. --Betty Marvin

■ PARDEE HOME MUSEUM: EXHIBIT AND TOURS

The Pardee Home Museum announces an exhibit of mid 19th to early 20th century Eskimo and Northwest Coast Indian objects from the collection of George and Helen Pardee, through December. Helen Pardee was an avid collector of ethnographic artifacts, or "curiosities" as they were then known. Museum registrar Heidi Casebolt has curated the exhibit to highlight artifacts that might otherwise be overlooked in the Museum's period room displays. The juxtaposition of rare and tourist trade pieces exemplifies Victorian collecting practice. Objects include carved snow goggles, a carved kayak model with two figures, infant snow boots, and hunting and sewing tools. By seeing this exhibit and then seeing how Mrs. Pardee displayed her collections in the rest of the house, visitors will get an understanding of the 19th century aesthetic and how it differs from current methods of museum display.

The exhibit is on view during tours of the house, which take place by reservation only. Tours can be scheduled Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 11:00, 1:00, and 2:30, by calling 444-2187. The museum is at 672 11th Street at Castro, Oakland 94607. Admission is \$4 general, \$3 senior, under 12 free with adult.

The Pardee Home Museum is a living history of three generations of one prominent Oakland family, from the time the house was built in 1868 to 1981. After the last survivor of the family, Helen Penniman Pardee, died at the home in 1981, a private foundation was formed to maintain it as a museum.

A new membership organization, Friends of the Pardee Home, has been established to help organize community efforts in support of the home. Memberships start at \$20 (\$10 for seniors and students). Call 444-2187 for more information. --Pardee Home Museum

■ VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

OHA needs your help! This is an appeal to members with particular skills to share their expertise with us. We need:

GRAPHIC ARTISTS and DESKTOP PUBLISHERS for flyers and brochures for our various events, especially the Summer Walking Tours and the Spring House Tour.

FINANCIAL EXPERTS to assist with the budget and financial reports.

MAILING HELP for big bulk mailings.

MARKETING/DISTRIBUTING of Beth Bagwell's book, Oakland, The Story of a City, when it is reprinted later this year.

This is your chance to make an important contribution to **OHA**. To volunteer, call the office at 763-9218 or speak to any Board member. --Helen Lore

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.

AUGUST

There was no August meeting.

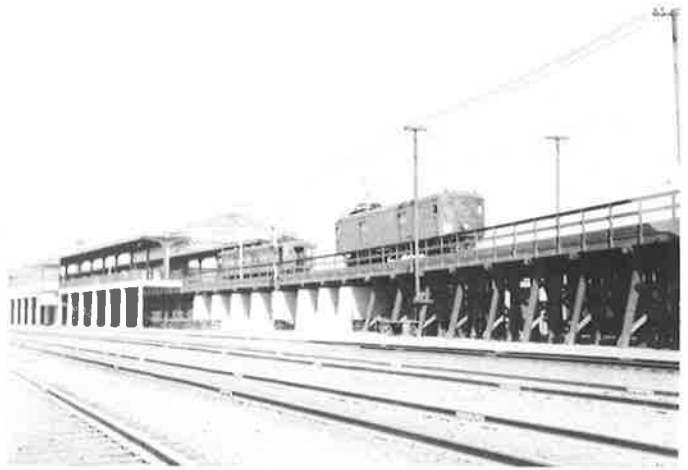
SEPTEMBER

In design review, Board approved signage at 817 Washington Street (Gooch Block/Ratto's International Grocery), a city landmark in the Victorian Row Preservation District, details to be worked out by the applicant, Board secretary, and Board member Andrew Carpentier, architect. Board approved a preliminary landmark eligibility rating for the Oakland Museum (1000 Oak Street; Roche & Dinkeloo, 1969) and accepted a draft resolution with some limits on design review to accommodate user needs.

Board voted to recommend that the City endorse State Point of Historical Interest designation of the Interurban Electric Railway 26th Street Y Bridge, in response to a request from the Department of the Army. The recommendation was made with the knowledge that the Department is about to demolish half the structure; designation involves no controls on demolition.

Secretary Helaine Prentice asked if the Board wished to review plans for work on the Townsend Apartments at 1029 Oak Street under the Unreinforced Masonry Building Ordinance. The building is on the Study List and rated B by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Board decided to invite the applicants to make a presentation.

Board approved a draft letter to the Planning Director requesting referral of S-8 (Downtown) design review applications that affect historic structures and new construction on the perimeter of City Hall Plaza; a City Hall Plaza Preservation District was suggested. Andrew Carpentier suggested that the interior of City Hall be considered for landmark designation, considering the restoration now in progress. He particularly noted the restoration of the Mayor's office, which had been much altered in the past.



S.P.'s Interurban Electric trains ran behind the 16th Street Station on elevated tracks. The "Y" bridge at the west end of 26th Street, built of heavy timbers like the structure in the foreground, was part of this system, carrying interurban trains onto the Bay Bridge. (Oakland History Room)

Board noted and discussed the proposed sale of St. Francis de Sales Cathedral to Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, and the ISTEPA grant application for a study of adaptive reuse of the Southern Pacific station at 16th and Wood Streets. Many letters of support for the grant were received from public and officials, and Southern Pacific was reportedly interested in working with the City.

An Oakland General Plan Congress was being organized to participate in revision of the General Plan. Les Hausrath will represent the Board, with Annalee Allen as alternate. Board members were encouraged to attend the Certified Local Government workshop in Sacramento October 14-15. The CLG program is a partnership of national, state, and local preservation agencies, and makes Oakland eligible to apply for the grants that have funded the Survey.

OCTOBER

Board approved a square-patterned wire fence (probably vinyl-covered and landscaped) to enclose an aviary at the Rotary Science Center in Lakeside Park.

Board discussed the threatened demolition of St. Francis de Sales Cathedral, and state legislation limiting landmarking of churches. Chair Les Hausrath reported on discussions with the chair of the Planning Commission. Commissioners reportedly felt they did not receive sufficient information on proposed landmarks, were uncomfortable with group designations like the four Carnegie library interiors, and were reluctant to designate interiors generally.

The proposed Historic Preservation Element of the Oakland General Plan was discussed. Board's main concerns were the

requirements for owner consent, and the apparent need to redesignate all existing landmarks (over 100), because regulations under the Element will be different from those now in effect. Possible ways of speeding up the process were discussed. Annalee Allen suggested that the California Main Street Program should have a higher priority in the Element.

Board responded to an inquiry from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, for comments on proposed rehabilitation of the Peralta Villa housing project in West Oakland, determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Board agreed not to oppose the plans, which call for building gable roofs over the existing flat roofs to improve the project's "image." Annalee Allen suggested that residents' opinions should be sought.

Valerie Winemiller of PANIL (Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League) reported that a street-level door had been removed and replaced on the Julia Morgan commercial building on Piedmont Avenue. Possible rehabilitation of the Montgomery Ward building at 29th Avenue and East 14th Street was discussed; Board decided to request a special presentation by the Office of Economic Development and Employment when action appears likely.

Chris Buckley (substituting as secretary) reported on the Port of Oakland's proposal to demolish the Grove Street Pier (Howard Terminal Transit Shed #1, 1 M.L. King Jr. Way), on the Study List and rated A by the Cultural Heritage Survey. The draft EIR was to be sent to the Board. Board reiterated its suggestion that the office portion of the structure be preserved if at all possible.

SPECIAL MEETING

On October 27 a joint work session of the City Planning Commission and the Landmarks Board reviewed the proposed Historic Preservation Element and held a public hearing on it. Planner Chris Buckley, former Board secretary and the author of the Element, reviewed the history of the Element from 1988 to the present. It was developed by the Preservation Task Force, composed of representatives of preservation, development, neighborhood, and other interests; over 100 people participated. The resulting document will be the first component of the upcoming revision of the Oakland General Plan. Buckley showed slides illustrating preservation problems, the rating system for historic resources, and preservation opportunities. A variety of preservation incentives are proposed in the Element.

Noting the small attendance, Task Force members Gary Pound and Frederick Hertz (present and original chairs) and Marina Carlson called the absence of controversy a testament to the success of the Task Force's five-year consensus building process. Planning Commissioners asked if adequate notice of the meeting had been given, and adequate notice of the existence of the Element. Ellen Wyrick, president of the Oak Center Neighborhood Association, said the proposal needed to be taken to the neighborhoods.

Commissioner Judy Rowe had questions about the format of the Element, and whether the other new elements would be similar: she found its length, discussion of existing conditions, and detailed action recommendations excessive for a broad policy document. Commissioner Peter Smith and Task Force member Art Geen both thought that some of the illustrations (maps of areas with large numbers of "Potential Heritage Properties"; a photo of the Claremont Hotel) might be interpreted as recommendations for designations.

Other subjects of discussion included notification of owners of properties being considered for designation, as well as buyers of properties already designated; design review procedure for "minor alterations"; the need to redesignate existing landmarks; replacing the Study List with the new Heritage Property category; and whether the Landmarks Board should consider the economic and social implications of each nomination. Annalee Allen noted that there had been consideration of making the Landmarks Board a commission, making its recommendations directly to the City Council; by remaining an advisory board, its role was to determine landmark eligibility, and the Planning Commission's was to consider other aspects. Regarding notification, Andrew Carpentier said that zoning information given by the city (including



When the Oakland Museum was designed 25 years ago, the aim was to create a "landmark building." Aerial photo by Chalmer Alexander, from the Roche-Dinkeloo office, shows its innovative design. (Oak. Hist.Room)

landmark and study list status) was not always accurate; improvement was one of the recommendations in the Element.

The public hearing was closed, subject to reopening, and it was agreed to accept further written comments. Buckley arranged to make a presentation to the Oak Center Neighborhood Association.

NOVEMBER

Calvin Wong of the Seismic Safety Division, Office of Planning and Building, gave a presentation on the Unreinforced Masonry Building Ordinance, which was approved by the City Council on July 27. Notices will be sent in December or January to owners of about 1650 URM buildings, defined as masonry bearing wall, infill, or veneer buildings constructed before the 1948 code. Required upgrade consists of securing falling hazards (e.g., parapet bracing). Retrofit to the standards of the Uniform Code for Building Conservation (UCBC) is voluntary. These options were established on the basis of a socio-economic study that showed probable compliance at this level, in contrast to a stricter requirement such as bringing up to modern code, which would probably result in many demolitions. The city expects to have bond-financed loan funds available. Priority for completion of work depends on the type of building, occupancy, amount of pedestrian traffic, etc. Special design review and code provisions apply for historic buildings, including landmarks, National Register, and buildings rated A or B by the Survey. Board decided to write a letter indicating the urgency of the Survey's completing evaluations of all the URM buildings.

Karoline DeMartini and Max Chance from the Oakland Museum reported that the Museum's various boards and support groups approved of the proposed landmark designation of the Museum. The resolution would be written to allow necessary flexibility for exhibits. Board approved the preliminary eligibility rating.

Veronica Martin of the City's Architectural Services department presented plans for meeting rooms in the renovated City Hall, including the room where the Landmarks Board would meet. Historic detailing would be combined with state of the art audio-visual equipment; occupancy was expected in early 1995. She described progress on earthquake repairs on other city-owned buildings: the Paramount (completed), bandstand, Greene Library (to be occupied by the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life), and the Calvin Simmons Theater (Oakland Auditorium), where a very fine permanent netting has been installed under the plaster ceiling.



Helaine Prentice, Annalee Allen, and Veronica Martin tour the extensive seismic work at City Hall. Completion is expected in early 1995. (Betty Marvin)

Betty Marvin reported for the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey on the Certified Local Government (CLG) workshop in Sacramento that she and Survey Coordinator Gary Knecht attended. The CLG program, in which Oakland has participated since 1986, provides for local participation in federal historic preservation programs administered by the states. This multi-level partnership is designed to assure consistent standards and wide participation in preservation programs. The State Office places great emphasis on integrating preservation into the local planning process. Preservation staff and board members are expected to attend workshops to exchange ideas and experiences, and to keep current on new legislation. Important legislative updates at this workshop covered the California Register of Historical Resources (see Winter 1992-93 OHA News), established by AB 2881, which gives an official definition of "historic resource" for CEQA purposes; Executive Order W-26-92 directing state agencies to "preserve, maintain, and restore" historic and archaeological properties under their control; and the California Heritage Fund.

Board secretary Helaine Prentice reported on a meeting on design guidelines for the proposed state office building at 15th and Clay Streets. She had suggested occupying a historic building (such as the PG&E building a block away) in order to reduce the bulk of the new building. Board discussed the Element and the meeting with the Planning Commission, and decided to send a follow-up letter. Board members volunteered to attend the Planning Commission hearing on landmark designation of the Chinese Presbyterian Church, and to participate in the Dunsmuir House and Gardens restoration plan. --Kathy Olson



OHA Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to OHA members. 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, (T. 10-5:30, W-Th. 12-8, F. 12-5:30, Sat. 1-5:30), Oakland History Room, current exhibit: "Music Published in Oakland," Main Library, 125 14th. St., 238-3222.

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; Tu.-Sat.

through January 2, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-7), "Alphabets, Bobbins and Cross-stitch: Samplers & Needlework Tools from the Collections of the Oakland Museum," history gallery, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$4/\$2 (members free).

through February 6, (T-W. 10-5, Th. 10-9, Sat-Sun. 11-5), "The Color of Elements: The Architecture of Mark Mack," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 401 Van Ness, 415-252-4102.

through February 12, (M-F. 7-7, Sat. 8-4, Sun. 10-4), "Bay Area Sculptors II," 2nd anniversary exhibition of Sculpture Court, Philip Dow, Eddy Hood, Susan Marie Johnson, Seymour Locks, Zhee Singer, Charles Splyady, Gale Wagner, Gerald Walberg & Suzanne Wilbroe, The Oakland Museum Sculpture Court at City Center, 1111 Broadway, free, 238-3401.

through February 13, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-7), "Here and Now: Bay Area Masterworks from the di Rosa Collections," highlights of a great patron's 30 year focus on the work of Bay Area artists, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$4/\$2 (members free).

November 13-February 20, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-7), "Selections from the Irvine Museum," selected landscapes by California painters from 1930-36 showing an emerging focus on intimate settings and modernist techniques, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$4/\$2 (members free).

December 2-31, Th-Sun., 1-4, "Christmas 1886," Victorian era Christmas toys, decorations & festivities, McConaghy House, 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, \$3/\$2 (Sr.)/\$0.50 (children), 276-3010.

December 2-January 8, (Th.-Sat. 11, 1 & 2:30), "Santa Claus Exhibition," 100 antique Santa Claus mechanical dolls, candles and ceramic figures, Pardee Home Museum, 672 11th St., \$4/\$3(Sr.) (children under 12 free), 276-3010.

Nov. 27-December 19, Th.-Sun. 10-5, "Christmas at Dunsmuir," tour \$9/\$7 sr, \$4 jr; info. 562-0328. Teas, lunch, and Dec. 16 Christmas Dinner by reservation, 562-3232.

December 5-31, Sun.1-5 & Wed.11-4, Camron-Stanford House Christmas display, 1418 Lakeside, \$2/\$1, 836-1976.

December 5 & 12, Sun. 1-3, "19th Century St. Nick Drops In," carols and storytelling for children, refreshments, Pardee Home Museum, 672 11th St., \$8/\$5(Sr.)/\$2(children), call for reservation, 276-3010.

December 15, filing deadline for "10th Annual Design Awards Program," California Preservation Foundation, call for details, 763-0972.

December 15, W., 3-8, "Holiday Open House," McCreary-Greer House, BAHA, free, 841-2242.



January 15, Sat. 1-3, "Young Jack London in Oakland," Rod Neves & Dean Yabuki lead tour on anniversary of London's birthday, Garfield School, 22nd Ave. & East 17th St., OHA Walk, \$6/\$4, 763-9218.

January 22, Sat., "The Sacred & The Secular: Religious Properties and Assembly Spaces," workshop with Michael Crowe, co-sponsored by OHA, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, et. al., St. Mark's Lutheran Church, San Francisco, call for details, 415-956-0610.

February 10, Th., "Ruskin & the Arts & Crafts Movement," lecture by professor Michael Wheeler, BAHA & Royal Oak Foundation, call for details, 841-2242.

March 5-May 8, "Raymond Saunders: New Work," internationally prominent painter, CCAC instructor, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$4/\$2 (members free).

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., Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont, \$5/\$3 (Sr.)/\$2.50 (Jr.); 796-0663.

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

Dunsmuir House, Colonial Revival mansion, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, 562-0328.

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

McConaghy House, 104 year old farmhouse, Th-Sun., 1-4, 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, \$3/\$2 (Sr.)/\$0.50 (children), 276-3010.

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

Pardee Home Museum, 1868 Italianate Villa, Pardee family residence 1868-1981, tours by reservation, (Th.-Sat. 11, 1 & 2:30), 672 11th St., \$4/\$3 (Sr.), accompanied children free, 444-2187.

Presidio, National Park Service walks, every Sat. 11am, meet at main parade grounds, 10am, free, (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 (April through June 1993) are:

Bob & Carol Brown, Lillian Bunin, Charles & Jean Busch, Sally Caughren, Janine Chagoya, Elliot Cohen, Steven Danziger, Virginia Davis, Elisabeth Gorski, Hilda Hansen, Morgan/Linda/Sean Hanser, Deborah Hilton, Jan Hoch, H. Mack Horton, Marianne Hurley, Tom & Barbara Job, Elizabeth Johnson, Alexa & Robert Kubik, Kevin Levine, Alden & Barbara McElrath, Forrest & Viola Mehrten, Mary Moore, Merrily Murray-Walsh, Joyce Riaz, Sergei E. Rei, Adelaide Rule, Irene Tinker, Nancy Vanket, Walter & Rose Van Sandt, Stephen Wagoner, Karen Ward, & Margaret Weinberg.

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Special thanks to those joining/renewing as:

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Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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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

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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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Oakland History Notes: Senram and Co.

When, in the year 1871, Mr. Frederick Senram opened his shoe shop on the west side of Broadway between 9th and 10th Streets, Oakland had, including Mr. Senram, nine sellers of boots and shoes. Senram and Company enjoyed a prominent location in the city's newly burgeoning downtown area. The store was situated in the freshly constructed Delger Block, a handsome two-story Italianate structure comprising, on its first level, sundry stores, and, on its second floor, various earnest enterprises including attorneys and merchants. This building was the

predecessor of the "new" 1880 Delger Block that still stands at 901-33 Broadway.

Mr. Senram, like the building's owner Frederick Delger, came from Germany, and was one of many German merchants active in Oakland's early commercial life. His shop prospered, and by 1876 Mr. Senram was advertising himself as a "dealer in fine boots and shoes, a large assortment constantly on hand." Customers were advised that boots and shoes could be made to order, and the firm's motto was "quick sales and small profits."

In 1886, Senram and Co. moved to a new location in a building on the west side of Broadway between 10th and 11th Streets. An 1886 Oakland Tribune article observed that Mr. Senram "...occupies the fine, large, and handsomely fitted-up store, 1005 Broadway... and does a large share of the best trade in town."

The family-owned enterprise closed its doors in 1912, having witnessed the transformation of Oakland's downtown from the era of gaslight to the age of electricity, from the time of horse-drawn trolleys to the epoch of the electric transit system. The site of Mr. Senram's shoe shop is now occupied by the Parc Oakland Hotel.

--William W. Sturm

This remarkable all-glass storefront graced Senram's shop at 1005 Broadway, c.1890.
(Oakland History Room)



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