

## Mayor Mott's Finest Oakland's Police in the Progressive Era

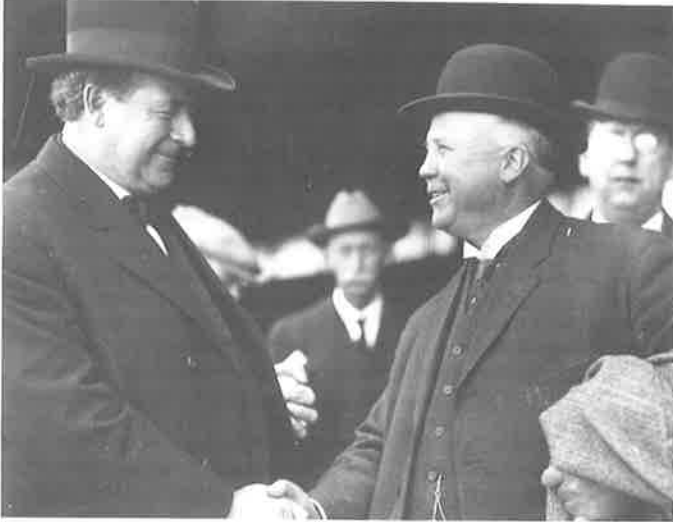


Independence Day celebration in Oakland, 1915: left to right, Oakland Police Chief Walter Petersen, Police Commissioner Harry Anderson, Berkeley Police Chief August Vollmer, Eddie Hughes ("first to drive an Oakland police car"), and Captain Charles Bock. Vollmer was another famous Progressive Era exponent of modern police work. (Oakland History Room)

"The city is the storm center of our civilization," wrote Walter J. Petersen, Oakland's Chief of Police in 1915. As the nation changed from an agricultural to an industrial society and the population of the cities grew, urban institutions were subjected to unprecedented stress. In response to the problems of the day, the Progressive Movement arose and called for a wide spectrum of moral, social, and political reforms. The Oakland Police Department as we know it took shape in the Progressive Era. The Department used new technology (automobiles, fingerprinting), benefited from civil service reform, moved into state of the art quarters in the new City Hall, and employed female officers for the first time. It was involved in the controversies over prohibition and prostitution, and played important roles in World War I and the Spanish Flu epidemic.

Early in the 20th century, according to Frank Merritt's 1928 history, the Department's equipment "was scanty and... obsolete. One or two ancient horse-drawn patrol wagons without ambulance service were in use, while a number of scattered ill-kept and unsanitary lockups served as branch detaining jails. The main police headquarters was little better." By 1915 this had been corrected due to the leadership of two police chiefs, Adelbert Wilson and Walter Petersen, and Mayor Frank Mott. Mott, in office from 1905 to 1915, was a progressive Republican whose administration was often cited as an example of good government in contrast to the corrupt machine politics of San Francisco.

**Chief Wilson (1906-1912).** Adelbert Wilson became Chief of Police on January 2, 1906. Starting as a special officer in



**Progressive Republican greets Populist Democrat: Mayor Mott welcomes Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to Oakland. Frank K. Mott served as mayor of Oakland from 1905 to 1915. (Oakland History Room)**

1870 he worked his way up through the ranks and was offered the chief's job several times. According to news reports he declined because "the head position was in politics... He accordingly did not accept until... he was entitled to retirement both by reason of age and years of service." The grand old man of the Department and the obvious choice for the job, he presided masterfully over Oakland's response to the 1906 earthquake.

By 1906 horseless carriages were causing increasing problems of noise, speed, and danger to pedestrians, horses, and streetcars. In residential districts drivers blithely disregarded the 10 mile an hour limit. The Department responded with a special enforcement effort. Four officers issued fourteen traffic citations in one day. At Eighth and Brush Streets, a news report said, they "stand on the corner, watch in hand, and time the flying autos as they speed toward them; if the speed is too great they rush out in front of the machine and place the chauffeurs under arrest." Chief Wilson stated firmly that arrests would continue until drivers obeyed the speed limit. (As, in fact, they have.)

The police soon saw that the automobile could be more than a nuisance: its speed and mobility made it ideal for patrol in outlying areas. In October 1906, Chief Wilson proposed that the Department try an automobile, and Council appropriated \$250 to rent one. The vehicle and its owner "drove up to City Hall with pomp and ceremony each evening at 6 o'clock, to serve as a taxi for the police until 2 a.m. the next morning." Thus Oakland's became the first police department west of the Mississippi to use a patrol car.

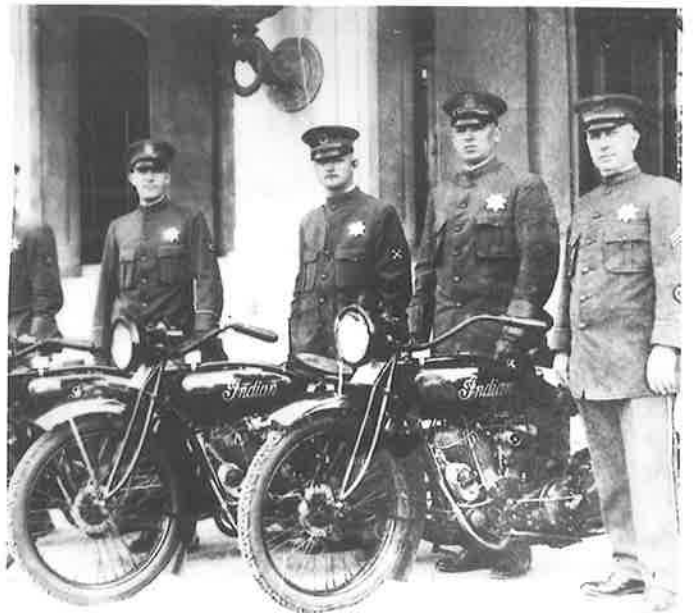
By mid-December the car was so successful that the Council decided on "a permanent machine." Officials were especially pleased by the time saved in reaching crime scenes "after the streetcars stop." The city purchased a two-seater Auto-Car for full time use (\$2936.50), a motorcycle (\$279), and an electric-powered patrol wagon (\$3650). From then on, the Department bought more and more vehicles. In November 1917 the last four horses were sold at a city auction, and Chief Nedderman

announced that the Department was completely motorized.

In 1907 Chief Wilson reorganized the Detective Bureau, calling it the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. To emphasize the difference the term "detective" was dropped in 1911 and replaced by "inspector," a term from Scotland Yard. Wilson also obtained funds to create a Bureau of Identification and to "install the Bertillon and fingerprint systems for the identification of criminals." Oakland thus became the first police department west of Chicago to maintain fingerprint files.

One of the last important events of Chief Wilson's administration was the extension of civil service status to police officers when the new City Charter was adopted in 1911. This was hailed as ending the days of political patronage in the Department. The new rules, written by Captain Petersen, required applicants to pass standardized examinations and promotions to be based on professional accomplishments. This reform changed the Department permanently.

**Chief Petersen (1912-1917).** Chief Wilson was succeeded in 1912 by Walter J. Petersen. Like Wilson, Chief Petersen was a "civil reformer." He introduced a host of changes to improve the Department's technical efficiency and persuaded the City Council to pass record-setting budgets to implement them. His views on the issues of the day made him a controversial figure. He authorized the first motorcycle detail for traffic control. He also installed electric semaphores to improve downtown traffic control. The semaphores were operated by officers in booths in the intersections. Chief Petersen ordered the adoption of new uniforms, replacing the old-fashioned helmets with "new caps of modern appearance." Another enduring change introduced by Chief Petersen was the arrest report, specifying the events leading up to the arrest, the names and addresses of the witnesses, and the actions taken by the officer. One copy went to the prosecutor's office for use in court, and the other to the Chief for review before being filed with the officer's records.



**The motorcycle squad, 1914. (Oakland History Room)**



Tribune cartoonist "Ket" crossed the fully motorized Department with the jail on top of City Hall and came up with "Aero-Cop." (Sept. 26, 1919)

A large percentage of space in the new City Hall was earmarked for police use. The offices of the captains, lieutenants, property clerk, and court bailiffs were on the first floor and directly accessible to the public. The Chief and the Bureau of Inspectors were on the second floor. The Bureau of Criminal Identification was on the ninth floor, and on the tenth was a fully equipped hospital. The eleventh floor was occupied by the new City Jail. The cells were steel and finished with white enamel. Wags described it as a luxury hotel. In the basement a gymnasium, shooting range, shower stalls, and meeting rooms were provided. City Hall continued to house the Department's main headquarters until December 1962 when the current Police Administration Building opened.

The Progressive campaign against alcohol and prostitution reached Oakland in 1912. It manifested itself, according to one paper, as a "crusade against the downtown dance hall and... disorderly road houses and other social evils." At that time, with about 200,000 people, Oakland had 450 saloons and 31 brothels. A "civic purity" group called for an ordinance against "rag dancing" and police officers were detailed to view exhibitions of the Bunny Hug and the Grizzly Bear: they disappointed the reformers by finding the dances innocuous.

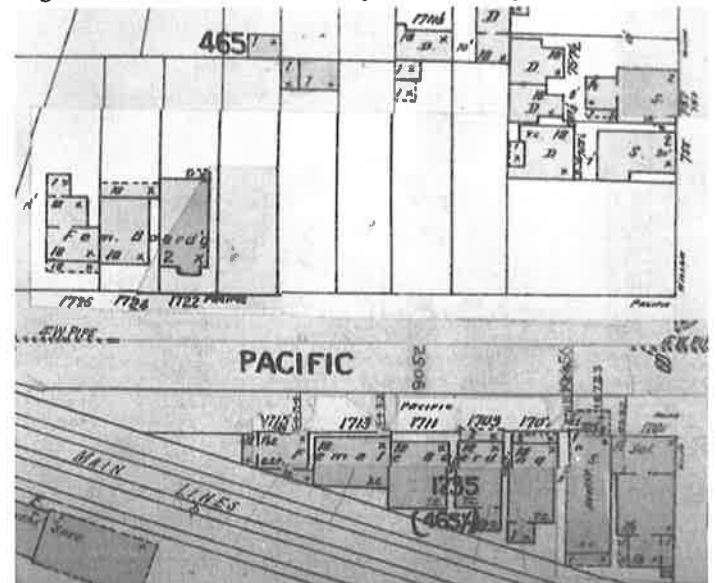
The City's administration believed it ran a "clean" town and could withstand a fair-minded scrutiny. Oakland's saloon ordinance was described as "one of the most drastic in the

country... commendably enforced and obeyed." The "segregated district" (red light district) was thought to keep "the social evil" within bounds. All the "landladies" were registered and the district was said to be well regulated. Reformers vigorously disagreed. They called for reduction of saloons from 450 to 200, and for lifting the license of any place that sold liquor to minors. Saloon owners saw such restrictions as a first step toward prohibition, and certain rental property owners feared loss of income if the segregated district were closed.

The administration sought a middle ground. Chief Petersen said he "would be the first to recommend against... habitual violators of the law" but believed some of the saloons were "not places of an evil character." The next day a leading reformer called him a "champion of vice." Ultimately the reformers won a reduction in the number of licensed saloons, and this was, effectively, a first step toward prohibition.

Prostitution appeared in Oakland as early as the 1860s and, like gambling, was a misdemeanor and an intractable enforcement problem. Although laws against it dated from the earliest days of the state, sometime in the 1880s Oakland decided to follow the example of other California cities and control prostitution by allowing a "segregated district" where brothels were tolerated if they abided by rules enforced by the police.

By 1913 this compromise was being questioned. When challenged for tolerating the segregated district, Police Commissioner Turner said, "When I went into office it appeared to be the consensus of public opinion that the segregated district was a necessary evil and that the law in this regard might best be allowed to remain in abeyance. This was not my opinion... But I bowed to public opinion while studying the matter..." It was still the age of the double standard, and he hesitated to make a decision which, in the prevailing view, put good women at risk. In fact he was reported as having been brought to the edge of a nervous breakdown by the difficulty of the issue.



The 1911 Sanborn map shows "Female Boarding Houses" along the tracks in West Oakland behind the present 7th Street post office. This part of the "segregated district" was recently excavated by Caltrans archaeologists. Another section was around 6th and Broadway. (Oakland History Room)



When reformers made strident attacks on "fallen women" as sources of corruption, Chief Petersen suggested this "should be tempered to some degree by Christian charity, and that, at the very least, their customers shared responsibility for the 'social evil.'" He was roundly denounced for this.

In March 1913 the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a Red Light Abatement Bill. In October Commissioner Turner ordered Oakland's segregated district closed effective midnight December 31, 1913. Chief Petersen carried out the order, and the district closed in an orderly manner. The various madams were advised to leave town and given time to make their arrangements.

Los Angeles appointed a policewoman in 1912, and women's groups in Oakland requested a similar appointment. Chief Petersen agreed and recommended the appointment of two. After a civil service test, Beatrice McCall and Alice Richardson were appointed to the Women's Protective Bureau. The job description said, "The scope of the work in a general way is for the protection of women and children and prevention of crimes against them... Some of the matters that applicants will be required to be more or less familiar with are crimes against women; probation work; dance hall, saloon, and cafe ordinances as applied to women; lost persons... and state labor laws." In three and a half years, the Bureau handled over a thousand cases. It was abolished in 1917 by Mayor Davie on grounds that it cost too much and its services could be provided by private philanthropic organizations.

**World War I and After.** In the early days of this century, Oakland residents paid more attention to local affairs than to what was going on elsewhere. In 1914, World War I seemed important but distant. By the time the U.S. declared war in April 1917, large quantities of munitions were passing through Oakland to the waterfront, and City officials were determined to prevent carelessness or sabotage from causing a disastrous

explosion. Chief Petersen issued a Special Order to all officers to diligently "watch all telegraph manholes, pipe lines, electric lines, gas plants, manufacturing shops and buildings, places where powder or dynamite are stored." The Department acquired a small boat for patrolling the estuary.

In addition to war-related activities, the Department continued all its peacetime functions. At times routine police work and the war were strangely juxtaposed. In October 1917, during a family disturbance call, Officer Herman Rumetsch was shot by a mentally unbalanced man. He was saved from death by George Stone, a young medical corpsman stationed at Angel Island. In 1918 Stone was killed on the Western Front.

Many Oakland officers were granted indefinite leaves of absence for military service, including Chief Petersen. Some served in critical battles during 1918, including the famous Meuse-Argonne offensive. News of the Armistice caused a vast celebration in downtown Oakland on November 11, 1918, but it was not until the East Bay regiments were demobilized and people saw them marching by City Hall that many Oaklanders felt the war was finally over.

The Spanish Influenza of 1918-19 has been largely forgotten today. Medical historians estimate that this epidemic - actually a pandemic - killed 20 million people, more than the World War. The epidemic began almost unnoticed in late summer of 1918 and reached its peak after the winter set in. More than 1,000 people died in Oakland. In October 1918, there were 336 deaths. Schools were closed and large gatherings forbidden, but to no avail. In November, influenza claimed another 247 residents of the city, and in December, 104 more. Oakland's medical facilities were overwhelmed, and volunteers from the Police Department helped open a temporary hospital at the Oakland Auditorium. Deaths rose again in January 1919, when 277 people died. Thereafter the number declined, and the epidemic faded as mysteriously as it arrived. By April, it was over. So, one might say, was the Progressive era.

The decline of a social movement is hard to chart, but the Progressive era appears to have ended sometime during the war or in the early days after the Armistice. Its ideals caused major permanent change in the Oakland Police Department, leaving a modern bureaucratic structure and a core of officers - leaders and future leaders - who were open to the use of new technology to improve the delivery of services to the people of Oakland. --Phil McArdle



**Armistice Day 1918, looking north from 13th and Broadway. Three monuments of Mayor Mott's time - the Rotunda, Broadway, and Cathedral Buildings - rising above their Victorian neighbors, as well as the throng of motor vehicles, give a sense of the rapid modernization in Oakland in the Progressive era. (Oakland History Room)**

Phil McArdle is an author and former technical writer with the Oakland Police Department. His "Early Years of the Oakland Police Department, 1853-1906" appeared in the OHA News in 1994.

# Oakland Briefing

## ■ ROTUNDA REPORT

With the skeletons of the new city and state office buildings emerging, the much touted revitalization of the City Hall area is visibly underway. One piece of the plan, however, has not fallen into place. The earthquake damaged Rotunda, across from the new construction, remains vacant and unrepaired. City plans for the building have long focused on an education and high tech center which would anchor a "Rotunda Innovative Technologies District" in an area bounded roughly by Broadway, San Pablo, Franklin, 20th, and 12th Streets.

In the Downtown Redevelopment Area Plan adopted by the City Council in 1993, \$5 million was set aside for renovation and seismic strengthening of the former Kahn's department store building, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If private investment did not materialize to complete the work, estimated to cost \$20 million, the plan recommended that the Redevelopment Agency consider allocating up to \$13 million for the work and \$3 million for the education center with a projected completion date of 1995. Recognizing the key position of the building in the City Hall area, the report noted that "without some public investment, the highly visible and historic, but earthquake damaged building is likely to hamper revitalization by remaining empty for the next few years."

In 1995, the City Council again addressed the Rotunda. In approving the environmental impact report for the City Administration Building, Council also committed to "an aggressive timeline for transforming the Rotunda into a premier education and technology transfer center. Under this timeline initial project construction would begin in mid-1996. The structural repairs, seismic strengthening, and improvements to common areas would be completed by December 1997."

This summer the Rotunda was again the subject of a series of recommendations. In a report prepared for the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA), consultants Applied Development Economics studied the market and financial feasibility of converting the Rotunda into a high tech and education center. This report estimated the cost of the project at \$24.78 million, and recommended a financing plan of \$14 million in city funds, \$4.5 million in tax credits and \$6.3 million in below market financing. Of the total cost, \$13.5 million was for seismic work and repair, \$6.7 million for tenant improvements and \$4.7 million for "soft costs" such as architectural and engineering fees and property management.

Characterizing the high tech center as a catalyst project, the report concluded: "Devoting a magnificent architectural specimen such as the Rotunda to high tech business activities and holding a portion of the building open to various public uses, creates an identity for the... technologies district and allows smaller firms to feel a part of this business cluster in the East Bay..." As with earlier recommendations, this report concluded that architectural and engineering work should begin immediately to make the building usable and marketable: "If left unoccupied after [the new city and state offices] are



**Ambitious rehabilitation job on the Rotunda was begun in the mid-1980s and has been interrupted by various financial and natural disasters. High tech reuse project now seems stalled. (Survey photo, c. 1985)**

completed, the Rotunda would fail to deliver its tremendous potential as a public attraction and may seriously undermine the City Hall Plaza environment."

It is not clear how the Rotunda ranks in Council priorities among projects competing for limited redevelopment funds, including restoration of the Fox, rehabilitation of the Plaza Building, site acquisition in the proposed Uptown Retail and Entertainment District, and development of the vacant half block in Preservation Park. The 1993 plan called for developing the Rotunda in increments, beginning with seismic work and ground floor retail improvements, which would reduce the initial cost of the project and improve the marketability of the public spaces and upper floors. While this option was not explored in the most recent report, it was the direction the Council gave in 1993 and deserves renewed consideration, particularly in light of the effect a vacant, unrepaired landmark would have on the success of the City Hall Plaza area revitalization. --Carolyn Douthat

## ■ MEASURE I TO BENEFIT HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Four Carnegie Libraries, Dunsmuir House, Peralta Hacienda Park, and the Oakland Museum are all in line for funding with passage of Measure I in November. Councilmembers Dick



Spees and John Russo cobbled together a number of unfunded projects into a "life enhancement" general obligation bond measure. Of most interest to preservationists from the long list of city-wide projects are the following. The three branch Carnegie libraries, Temescal, Golden Gate, and Melrose, will have seismic upgrades, code improvements, and ADA work. The Greene Library will receive funding for rehabilitation and seismic work, allowing after years of delays the establishment of the African American Museum and Library at that location. The Oakland Museum - a recently designated City landmark - will receive funding for rooftop garden work, and Dunsmuir House and Peralta Hacienda are also in line for funding. If the measure had failed, all of the above projects as well as the numerous other parks and rec, observatory, and zoo items on the measure would have been competing with each other for scarce general funds. The URM threat hanging over the two North Oakland branches and the time-value of funding already pledged to the Greene Library made failure of the measure a frightening prospect. We must now make sure that work on historic buildings is carried out responsibly. --Robert Brokl

#### ■ WORK BEGINS ON MERRITT

Since the Summer OHA News update on Old Merritt, we have seen not only "movement" on the project but the actual start of renovation. Work began after the City and Hensel Phelps Construction reached agreement on a \$15,400,000 design-build contract that includes core and shell work, roof and window sash replacement (all but 15% is considered too deteriorated to reuse), elevators and a new entrance at the back of the main building, and tenant improvements for the senior center in the auditorium. Some \$10.7 million for this phase is available from HUD 108 loan and Measure K funds; the source of the remaining \$4.7 million has not been identified.



Recent rear view of Old Merritt showing roof tiles stacked and wrapped while roof is reinforced and repaired. (Betty Marvin)

Since early September, roof tiles have been removed and stored on pallets, and the deteriorating plywood panels barely securing the doors and windows finally came off. Thirty-seven steel trusses will be put in under a new plywood membrane before the tiles are eventually replaced. Plans are well underway for the senior center. A large, active senior group is working with the Office on Aging and VBN Architects, the firm replacing IDG Architects on the project.

NOVA engaged in a bit of detective work to track down the scroll missing from above the auditorium's proscenium stage. Letters from our files indicated previous project manager Lois (Parr) Butler in 1988 released the scroll to the University High School class of '41 for their reunion. The scroll reads "Progress of All, Through All, Under the Leadership of the Wisest and the Best," in incised and gilded letters on dark wood, in two 18 foot and one 14 foot sections. The scroll was found too unwieldy for the reunion, and was consigned to the woodshop at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Rockridge, its place of origin. The current project manager and VBN are negotiating with CCAC to return the scroll to its former setting next summer, after completion of renovation.

Children's Hospital Oakland is edging closer to committing to the project as anchor tenant. Their board of directors has agreed to negotiate exclusively with the City for expansion of their Research Institute at Old Merritt. They desire 40,000 square feet, and may occupy the entire area between the manual arts wing (the cement floor is considered an asset for heavy equipment) and the library. They may restore the library as a library and conference area, and are about to select an architectural firm for tenant improvements. With the strong ongoing interest of CHO, the City has focused on bio-medical uses for the remaining spaces. Leasing efforts are gearing up; Chiron has expressed interest in an incubator space in Oakland and Merritt is one option.

In addition to the hunt for tenants and the fate of the gymnasium (not included in the contract with Hensel Phelps), the nature and location of the promised cultural center and the fate of the existing landscaping are up in the air. Landscape architect Chris Pattillo has proposed removal of fewer trees than previously indicated in the manual arts wing courtyard, but NOVA worries the ancient wisteria in the inner courts may be too severely trimmed during construction. At the moment, plans call for the mature trees in the north courtyard to be spared the axe - the chief beneficiaries of the years of neglect.

Despite uncertainties over what portion of the project will ultimately qualify for historic tax credits, the City - to its credit and our relief - is conducting the renovation in full cooperation with the National Park Service (which oversees the tax credit program) and the State Office of Historic Preservation, according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The nature of venting, reinstallation of wood trim, moldings, and other historic fabric after the seismic retrofit, and reuse of the manual arts wing skylights have all been urged by the Park Service, and the City, VBN, and CHO all appear interested in accommodation. More on this later as plans become more detailed. --Robert Brokl



A long-hidden frieze is revealed on the former Toyhouse building on Lakeshore. Scallops on the parapet recall the shape of the mid-century metal cladding. (Carolyn Douthat)

## ■ NATIONAL TRUST AWARD TO CITY HALL

In October **Oakland Heritage Alliance** was recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation for its role in the restoration of City Hall. At its national conference in Chicago, the Trust presented a National Preservation Honor Award to **OHA**, VBN Architects, Forell Elsesser Engineers, Michael Willis and Associates, and Carey & Co., for the restoration and the innovative base isolation retrofit scheme, the first of its kind to be used on a historic building in California.

After the traumatic and widely visible damage City Hall suffered in the Loma Prieta earthquake, repair of the building was by no means a foregone conclusion. Along with other members of the Preservation Advisory Committee, which included representatives from Oakland Design Advocates (Chris Pattillo), the AIA (Allen McDonald), the National Trust (Lisbeth Henning) and the California Preservation Foundation (John Merritt), **OHA** representative Alan Dreyfuss convinced the city to look at alternatives to standard engineering methods for seismic retrofit, which proved much less intrusive than earlier repair schemes and ultimately led to the restoration now being enjoyed by all who enter City Hall. Credit also goes to former Assistant City Manager Ezra Rapport for asking for the participation of the preservation community, and to the Mayor and City Council for recognizing the importance of retaining this most visible symbol of Oakland history. --Carolyn Douthat

## ■ GRANT TO FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

On October 23 the Oakland City Council voted 8-1, with Mayor Harris dissenting, to grant the First Unitarian Church and the Center for Urban Family Life \$2.15 million to renovate and retrofit the 1891 building they share at 14th and Castro Streets in downtown Oakland. Before the vote the Church and Center had already raised nearly \$3 million from individuals, foundations, and the federal government toward the project's total cost of \$7 million; they are now willing to assume a \$2 million loan so work can begin in the near future, with a projected completion date of November 1997.

Church and Center supporters thronged the council chamber for the vote, and afterwards gathered at the church for a moving celebration of thanksgiving. Mayor Harris commented on the extraordinary lobbying effort, which resulted in brief debate and limited public comment before the vote was taken.

Preservationists unite in applauding the restoration of one of downtown's most valuable landmarks. Still, some aspects of the council action raise concern. Debate was not only brief but superficial. The church's original proposal was that half the \$2.15 million be a grant and half a deferred-payment low-interest loan, and the staff report by Kofi Bonner, Director of the Community and Economic Development Agency, recommended no city funding but urged that if the council did decide to aid the project, to offer half as a loan. When Councilmember Bayton's resolution for a half-grant, half-loan package came to vote, church supporters stood up and declared that their most recent negotiation with council members and city

## ■ NEW OLD BUILDING ON LAKESHORE

The new home of Noah's Bagels and Starbuck's Coffee at 3345 Lakeshore Avenue, previously a toy store and real estate office, was built in 1929, one of several buildings on the block developed by F.T. Malley and designed by A.W. Smith. It was remodeled sometime around the 1950s with a new sheet metal facade. In the course of removing the metal cladding recently, workers found an original band of ornament above the storefront. Although the city did not require that the owner retain or restore the original facade, plans were altered to retain the frieze in the new design.

Lakeshore Avenue between Lake Merritt and Mandana was originally developed as a residential street, subdivided in the early 1900s by Wickham Havens. By the late 1920s stores appeared alongside the houses, notably the classically influenced Stier's Drugs building at 3401 Lakeshore, and a number of decorative brick buildings. While the Depression slowed building activity in general, along Lakeshore the architectural firm of Miller and Warnecke kept busy in the 1930s designing the small scale tiled Art Deco buildings that are characteristic of the street. By the late 1930s it was solidly commercial.

The new facade is a welcome addition to the street. It would be interesting to see what else lurks behind awnings and signage that could further enliven the historic character of this neighborhood shopping district. --Carolyn Douthat

staff had arrived at a 100% grant. With little further debate, the grant proposal was passed.

Secondly, only the last public speaker raised the issue of whether the grant would violate the constitutional separation of church and state. The city attorney responded briefly that "staff had researched that and found no problem," and without any comment by council members on this difficult issue, the vote proceeded. But in 1991 when the Church received almost \$1 million in funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for proposed seismic upgrade, FEMA officials made clear that federal funds could only apply to work on the Center's East Wing offices and social hall, not to the sanctuary; in fact, one room in the East Wing was ineligible for FEMA money: the minister's office. According to an informative article by **Oakland Tribune** reporter Jonathan Schorr, the same will indeed apply to the city grant - i.e., none of it can be spent on the sanctuary - but it is troubling that the council voted with apparently little knowledge or concern about this important constitutional issue.

Finally, the council was able to offer this generous grant only by redirecting money previously approved for other projects, including the Rotunda. A third of the funding, or \$700,000, came from the Preservation Park III project, the cleanup and redevelopment of the unsightly lot adjacent to the Pardee Home Museum on Martin Luther King Way between 11th and 12th Streets. Mayor Harris, who voted against the grant because of his belief that too many downtown projects are already underfunded, specifically challenged Bayton when she promised to restore the \$700,000 to the Preservation Park project: "Is she going to invent it or counterfeit it?"

The vitality of the Preservation Park historic district depends on the restoration of all its contributing structures and redevelopment of its blighted areas. With funds from Measure I committed to the restoration of the Greene Library and Lafayette Square, and with funding in place for restoration of First Unitarian Church, we must work to ensure completion of the Preservation Park III plan. --David Nicolai

David Nicolai is Secretary of OHA and has an intimate view of Preservation Park as curator of the Pardee Home Museum.

## ■ DESIGN REVIEW WORKING GROUP

The City of Oakland has fifteen different residential design review processes, each with different standards and fees. What began as a laudable effort to streamline and simplify these criteria and processes has become a cause for concern for preservationists and for neighborhoods wanting to maintain their architectural character.

In April 1996 the city council authorized the formation of a "Design Review Working Group" to develop recommendations for changes in the ordinances, with Councilmember-at-Large Henry Chang, Jr. as facilitator. Each councilmember and the mayor appointed two representatives to the group, with special seats set aside for representatives of the Oakland Development Council (a developer lobbying group), Chamber of Commerce, and American Institute of Architects. Commissioner Joseph

DeLuca participated as liaison from the Planning Commission.

Under current regulations, all new residential construction, as well as major additions and alterations that affect the streetscape appearance, are covered by some set of design review criteria. Several custom processes cover hill area development, fire zone rebuilding, high density development, and designated historic buildings or districts. Many of Oakland's interesting Victorian and early 20th century houses, though not designated landmarks, contribute to the unique and attractive character of our neighborhoods. It is these neighborhoods that may be most at risk under proposals put forward by city staff at the September 30 Working Group meeting.

The Working Group's original assignment was to develop one city-wide process, to be more efficient for builders and staff and to better protect neighborhoods. However, since then, FEMA funding has ended for design review of fire-area rebuilding, city council has approved a budget with fewer design review staff, and Kofi Bonner has been hired to head a reorganized super-agency which folds the planning and zoning divisions in with economic development and housing. Mr. Bonner has told the Working Group he wants even fewer staff devoted to residential design review. He intends to move the architecture-trained staff to reviewing large projects, and have residential reviews done by planners who will receive some additional unspecified training in design review. One observer has commented that staff are treating the Working Group deliberations as a budget session, rather than a policy session.

Under the September 30 proposals, city staff, with former firestorm recovery center head Tom Doctor as consultant, proposes to eliminate additions and alterations from review, apply the new design review process only to new construction of one and two units, and to review new construction of three or more units under the high density housing criteria. A numerical formula for each zone (as yet unproposed) would control lot coverage and building bulk.

Several Working Group members objected to this for three reasons: (1) Equity. Staff time would be concentrated on hills development, as older fully built up flatlands neighborhoods see mostly additions and alterations to existing buildings (including alterations that add units). (2) Weakened controls. Many neighborhoods have complained that the high density criteria are too vague and do not adequately protect them. (3) Historic building protection. When the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan was drafted and passed in 1994, preservationists counted on continued design review of additions and alterations and therefore did not push for these protections to be included in the Element.

On December 2, staff is to return to the Working Group with a proposal that answers more of the group's concerns, and with information about the costs of administering the proposal. Meetings are open to the public. For information, call Valerie Winemiller at 653-4552 or Rhonda Hirata in Henry Chang's office at 238-7083. --Valerie Winemiller

Valerie Winemiller is chair of the Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League (PANIL) and was appointed to the Design Review Working Group by Mayor Elihu Harris.



## ■ RESOURCES AT RISK IN ADAMS POINT

Adams Point's collection of apartment buildings, single family homes, churches, and commercial spaces make it one of the most visually interesting neighborhoods in the city. The meandering streets, hugging the contours of the gentle rise beyond the lake, create vistas at every corner. The long sought goal of downzoning has become reality in recent months, and a historic district nomination is in progress for the "Crescent" on the lake (see Landmarks Board report). Unfortunately some major buildings are still at risk and Adams Point stands to lose them unless strong community pressure is brought to bear.

Since summer of 1994 the former Cadillac showroom on the "gateway" corner of 27th and Harrison Streets has stood vacant and increasingly forlorn. The Cultural Heritage Survey finds it individually eligible for the National Register (and therefore a potential tax credit project) yet no viable developers have come forward and demolition seems possible. It has been on the Preservation Study List since 1986.

In 1925 architect Clay Burrell (of an Oakland pioneer family) transformed the older building on the site into an elegant automobile showroom, at a time when the affluent in nearby Adams Point and Piedmont were purchasing cars in droves. The original building was a powerhouse and carbarn for Oakland's own cable car line. For a few brief years in the early 1890s the Consolidated Piedmont Cable Company ran a line up Oakland Avenue to Highland Avenue, on a continuously moving underground cable powered by coal burning generators. Next door a pleasure palace known as the Piedmont Baths used the heat from the generators for its indoor public "plunge."

Currently controlled by Wells Fargo Bank, the showroom (a qualified historic structure under the URM ordinance) is in need of structural upgrade and toxic abatement. Apparently the bank prefers to ignore the building's considerable potential and apply for demolition in order to create a parking lot - the

**Oakland's finest remaining auto palace languishes at 27th and Harrison, while Auto Row project focuses on Broadway. Pinnacled Gothic terra cotta exterior (see p.16) and tiled, beamed interior are still remarkably intact. (Oakland History Room)**



The site of the turreted Piedmont Baths is now a long-vacant lot at 27th and Vernon. The brick building at left was the powerhouse, remodeled in 1925 as Don Lee Cadillac. (Mitchell postcard c. 1910)

major loophole in our demolition ordinance. The Landmarks Board has authority to review the application and can stay demolition of a Study List building for 60 days, allowing time for public concern or potential new uses to come to light.

A short distance from the showroom is another threatened property, the Casa Romana. This Mediterranean style structure at 124 Montecito was built in 1923 for the Oakland Club, a women's service club founded in 1899 and credited with creation of many of the city's playgrounds and recreation centers. Architect A.W. Smith, like Burrell a prolific designer who was responsible for many of Oakland's most distinctive buildings, created an intimate yet stately "club home" for these activists. Next door, a 1920s fourplex by Felix Sommarstrom is highly characteristic of the neighborhoods around Lake Merritt. Both the apartment building and the clubhouse are owned by St. Paul's School, their neighbor to the south.

Representatives of the school have appeared many times before the Landmarks Board to declare why these two structures not only do not meet their needs for expansion, but must be removed. After meetings with community groups including **OHA**, the school has agreed to offer the buildings for sale and removal if qualified buyers come forward. That reprieve will end by early next year and if no one takes the buildings off the school's hands they too will be demolished.

The Adams Point Preservation Society has been vocal about the potential loss of these landmarks to the neighborhood. When the decision-makers who control these properties discover that the buildings are valued as public assets and the costs and delays associated with demolition are more than they anticipated, preservation alternatives may look a lot more attractive and cost effective. Readers who agree may call or write the **OHA** office and we will see that your comments reach those who need to hear the message. --Annalee Allen

## ■ BIFF'S, J.J.'S, MCCHEVRON: WHAT NOW?

Many frustrations have dogged advocates and preservationists in the struggle to keep J.J.'s Diner open at 27th and Broadway since last reported in the **OHA News**. Successive waves of interest groups have taken up the preservation cause in the intervening months, as yet to no avail. These have included restaurant patron Arthur Pritchard and his team, the neighboring Gateway Organization representing local churches, a vocal elderly population within easy walking distance of the restaurant, Councilmember Natalie Bayton, **Oakland Heritage Alliance**, and an ad hoc group, Friends of J.J.'s, led by architects Joyce Roy and Leal Charonnat. However, these combined forces, plus the reported 10,000 signatures on a petition to save J.J.'s, have not kept Chevron from forcing J.J.'s to close, despite numerous meetings, wide press coverage, and a public show of support.

During the continuing series of meetings involving interest groups and the City, support for keeping J.J.'s, organized by Natalie Bayton's office, was neutralized by conflicting actions of city staff, which sent confusing messages to the public. Particularly frustrating was the closing of the restaurant on October 28, right after the "Restaurant Hugging" organized to publicize support for the business, and just before a potentially positive City Council hearing on the project requested by Councilmember Bayton. The abrupt closure of the restaurant by its operators, without public announcement, and removal of its signs and interior fixtures, seemed specifically designed to facilitate Chevron's "co-brand" "McChevron" proposal for an updated gas station, a mini-mart, and a McDonald's restaurant.

This site, at one of the most visible intersections along the recently designated Auto Row revitalization area, has garnered unusual attention because it has come to symbolize many long simmering community issues and has raised the specter of some new issues. The intersection of 27th and Broadway illustrates the complexity of land use planning in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. As well as being an entry point to downtown from highways 980 and 580 and a gateway to Auto Row, it is the center of a downtown elderly community and of a cluster of architecturally and historically prominent Oakland churches, including Temple Sinai, First Presbyterian, First Congregational, St. Paul's, and First Christian.

The Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA), in its haste to reinvent itself as an effective economic development machine, has focused on a fast track plan to show auto related businesses that it means "business" and can get things done. Other issues - corporate responsibility to urban neighborhoods, retention of a full service restaurant serving nearby residents, local business vs. national chains, and the demolition of a signature example of 1960s modernist design from the era when the car was king - were given short shrift. Proposed "solutions" like the shuttle to the Merritt Bakery appear to assume that the building, the business, and the ambience can all be easily replaced.

The Auto Row Project is being guided by a study prepared by consultant landscape architects LaRocca and Associates.



**Biff's about 1968, with the original roof surface and light fixtures. First Christian, left rear, is one of several churches that share the area with "Auto Row." The crane is probably at work on one of the senior apartment complexes that now also define the neighborhood. (Oakland City Planning Department, 701 urban design study)**

Following their recommendations the city has installed "Auto Row" signs at intersections along Broadway from Grand Avenue to the 580 underpass, to be supplemented by a \$3.5 million public right of way and physical improvement plan. Unfortunately the plan did not assess the needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood and community institutions, nor did it identify urban design and architectural resources that might contribute to an Auto Row identity unique to Oakland. The Chevron proposal, a standardized, suburban architectural treatment of the site, represents a lost opportunity. The J.J.'s building - built in 1962-64 as Biff's Coffee Shop - embodies many qualities of style and use that could enhance the Auto Row strip. A full service restaurant is a use considered important for the project. However, partly because staff was not guided by a clear urban design vision, a fast food franchise was apparently considered to be a positive economic development. Even though Friends of J.J.'s may have initiated a landmark application by the time this issue is at press, its revival now seems a long shot.

It is time for the preservation community, as well as city planners, to consider buildings from the recent past in discussions about preserving Oakland's heritage and integrity. We need to learn from the successful landmarking of the Oakland Museum, and to prevent the kind of unconsidered remodeling of significant modernist structures that was recently seen at the Oakland Coliseum. We must emphasize that we are aware of environmental quality of any age and can discern value in the present and the future as well as historically. The J.J.'s fight has brought out an impressive array of people, signifying a healthy community that cares about its future. This spirit of activism, linked to intelligent discussion of the role of urban design and architectural values in successful economic revitalization, offers the best chance for Oakland's environmental future. --William P. Coburn

## ■ UPTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

Uptown business people and property owners are raising questions about city actions in the so-called Uptown Retail and Entertainment Area Project, in the area between 17th and 20th Streets, Broadway, and San Pablo. Redevelopment staff is requesting that the City Council declare an "activity area" within a larger, already-designated redevelopment area. (Longtime downtown-watchers may recognize this as the former "Rouse Project" area from ten years ago.) This is part of an effort to facilitate land acquisition for a project being planned by Burnham-Pacific and Johnson-MacFarland under an exclusive right to negotiate with the city. City staff is asking the Planning Commission to update a 1990 Central District Urban Renewal Plan, giving the city continued powers of eminent domain.

Although local business people are generally eager to see development and upgrading of the area, and were happy to see the opening of the new Sears store in the old Capwell's building, the handling of this redevelopment project has caused doubts to arise. Some local property owners were alarmed to receive letters from the city requesting a six-month option to discuss property acquisition, assess condition of property, and perform inspection prefatory to possible acquisition, offering a \$1000 option contract. This raises fears of another period of land speculation, commercial vacancies, and inability to negotiate long-term leases while the future of the area is in doubt. For viable businesses it threatens expensive relocations, business interruptions, and radical rezoning changing allowable property uses. Many experienced the previous decay following collapse of the Rouse Galleria project in the same area just a few years ago. Several others, including booksellers from the Pardee Building opposite City Hall, were recently relocated into this neighborhood from other Oakland project sites.

In the light of the city's financial exposure in the ice rink development (reported recently as being in default on loan payments), the widely reported Oakland Raiders and Coliseum renovation arrangements, and its ownership of the nearby Rotunda (which according to a city study would require a \$27 million investment to fulfill its destiny as a high-tech incubator), what are the chances that this project will go forward in a timely manner? Will the area, just showing signs of turning around, simply go into yet another redevelopment-induced slump? The City Planning Commission shared many of these doubts, asking questions about development financing and how the city's interests would be protected.

Among the concerns raised by local businesses, historic preservation looms large. Although the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey for the area has been complete for ten years, no Uptown historic district has ever been designated, nor has the city pursued individual landmarking of such key buildings as I. Magnin and the Floral Depot, or numerous other Art Deco, glazed terra cotta, and other early commercial buildings that give the area considerable charm.

Nervousness is compounded by the staff's apparent desire to convince BART to relocate its headquarters to 19th and Broadway, on the same block as the Floral Depot, on the site of two

other historic buildings. One obvious worry is that a large office building would occupy all of this block south of Sears, leaving only some of the outermost facade of the Floral Depot as a kind of decorative fringe, a solution that many area business people find unacceptable. This would remove yet more potential retail frontage, since for security reasons BART does not want any retail use of its ground floor.

While Burnham-Pacific is known to be interested in preserving some of the old buildings, aspects of the project raise questions about overall planning. For example, the plan at present includes a large multiplex cinema backing on the ice rink. This would mean demolition of all the buildings between 17th and 18th on the west side of Telegraph, an architecturally less distinguished block but one with several locally-owned business tenants. While the developer's market studies seem to indicate a ready movie audience, the competition could affect the Grand Lake and Jack London Square theaters.

Another tentative component would require closure of 19th Street, currently a main connector to the 980 freeway, 18th Street, which leads to the ice rink entrance, and William, the street that runs along the Sears parking lot. This reworking of the historic street grid would also entail complete removal of two renovated buildings, both recently upgraded to meet city seismic regulations, housing locally-owned businesses, and likely contributors to a historic district.

While city staff has repeatedly stated that current actions are only preliminary, and that any plans would undergo substantial review, a letter from Sears's attorneys questioned the lack of an EIR at this point, saying that the planning process was clearly already underway, and that the city had an obligation to do studies before the project was too far along.

Once again, the question arises whether large-scale redevelopment is the best approach. Local businesses are rooting for a more piecemeal, modest, business-retaining, and preservationist approach. --Naomi Schiff



This 1984 photo - showing Newberry's, the pre-earthquake Capwell's, I. Magnin's, the Paramount, and the Breuner's building - is from the Cultural Heritage Survey's inventory form on the Uptown District, which could form the basis for a historic district nomination.

## O.H.A. Update

### ■ ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

More than 100 OHA members gathered in the historic Madison Street Temple in downtown Oakland on November 7, for the 1996 OHA Annual Meeting. The dinner meeting was highlighted by a slide lecture by architectural historian and outgoing OHA board member Michael Crowe, "Architecture from the Recent Past." Michael discussed distinguishing features of postwar architecture and issues in evaluating integrity of recent buildings, using examples from Oakland, San Francisco, and farther afield. His topic was particularly timely in view of the J.J.'s and Coliseum controversies and the landmark designation of the Oakland Museum.

Members were delighted with the chance to see the interior of the unique Madison Street Temple, built in 1908-09 as a Scottish Rite Cathedral and now the Islamic Cultural Center. The Cultural Heritage Survey describes it as "Mission Revival loosely derived from California architecture of the Spanish Colonial period." The new owners plan extensive renovation.

Kudos to Xandra Grube, who, as vice president, organized the event. Her hard work and ingenuity created an extraordinary evening. Also thanks to board members and friends David Nicolai, Jane Spangler, Don Tyler, Joe Ware, Damien Strength, and Charlene Millett for their help.

Board members elected for 1996-98 terms are three incumbents and three new members. Departing directors MICHAEL CROWE, ALAN DREYFUSS, and HARLAN KESSEL are gratefully acknowledged. Continuing on the board are:

BETTY MARVIN, historian with Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey and in private practice, editor of OHA News, tour guide, and currently president of Berkeley Historical Society.

DAVID NICOLAI, interim curator, Pardee Home Museum, consultant to the Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland (Cohen-Bray House), and secretary, OHA board of directors.

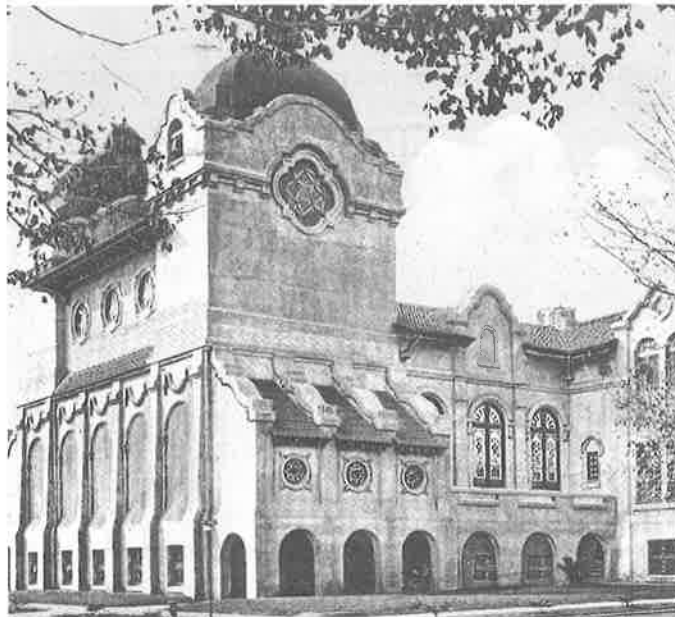
JOSEPH WARE, retired from a career in retail management; currently restoring his home, the Bates House, an Oakland City Landmark in the Adams Point neighborhood.

New members welcomed to the board for 1996-98 are:

ROBERT BROKL, visual artist and neighborhood activist. Founding member of North Oakland Voters Alliance (NOVA), which led the fight to save the Old Merritt College building in North Oakland, as well as the two North Oakland Carnegie branch libraries and Sacred Heart Church.

PAMELA MAGNUSON-PEDDLE, graphic artist and designer, currently a monitor technician at Alta Bates Hospital. Community activist in the High Street neighborhood. Volunteer with Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Participated in the Oakland Historic Preservation Task Force.

ETHEL TINNEMANN, Ph.D., history professor at Holy Names College, where her classes have included Oakland, California, and European history. Member of Oakland Landmarks Board 1981-86. Former board member, Camron-Stanford House, and volunteer, Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey; contributor to the OHA News. --Helen Lore



Madison Street Temple was designed by O'Brien & Werner, architects of many California Masonic halls. It is rated A1+ by the Survey, eminently eligible for National Register and Landmark listing. OHA members were delighted with the opulent, intact interiors. (Mitchell postcard c.1910)

### ■ CULTURAL HERITAGE SURVEY UPDATE

The Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey recently completed two 1995-96 survey projects funded by the State Office of Historic Preservation under the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. Phase 2 of the San Antonio survey photographed and described buildings in four study areas (10th Avenue, Downtown Brooklyn, Clinton Park, and 23rd Avenue Residential) and researched, evaluated, and wrote up three other districts (Bella Vista, Simon Wade, and 23rd Avenue Commercial) that had been photographed in Phase 1, producing close to 800 inventory forms.

Phase 3 of the Citywide Reconnaissance Survey prepared Primary Record forms (photograph, description, location) for over 600 important buildings and districts identified in the 1985-86 windshield survey and other early survey phases but not yet recorded on inventory forms. The intent is to give staff and the public a citywide overview of Oakland's resources, provide some recognition to these properties until the Survey has a chance to research and evaluate them, and to begin implementing Preservation Element Action 1.1.1b, photographing all Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs). Districts ranged in size from 3 to 1165 buildings, so this project covered 12,000+ properties - a hard act to follow.

The Survey has been awarded a new state grant for 1996-97 to complete the citywide windshield survey and an inventory of city-owned historic properties. The city funds appropriated in June will support customer service and other Survey duties. Thanks to everyone who wrote in support of both city and state funding, and to the volunteers and neighborhood advisors on our 1995-96 projects: Beth Armstrong, Lindy Armstrong, Marina Carlson, Carolyn Douthat, Xandra Grube, Annette

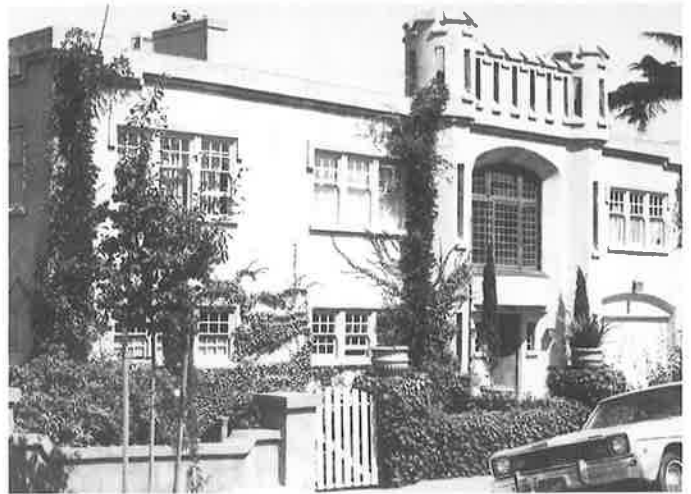
Hoffmann, Herbert Hoffmann, Linda Kastner, Jennifer Katz, Michael Knight, Gaye Lenahan, Cecile Litherland, Yorkman Lowe, Pamela Magnuson-Peddle, David Nicolai, Gene Peck, Fred Reichman, Jane Spangler. As always, if you have a question about a building or neighborhood, or if you would like to help with the Survey, call Betty Marvin, Gail Lombardi, or Gary Knecht at City Planning, 238-3941. --Betty Marvin

#### ■ ANTHONY HOLDSWORTH PAINTINGS TO BE PUBLISHED AS OHA POSTCARDS

OHA's Publications Committee will soon be issuing a series of postcards featuring reproductions of paintings by noted Oakland artist Anthony Holdsworth. The committee met with Anthony at his Lewis Street studio in West Oakland to select a dozen of his images of our city that we most wanted to see reproduced, and visited the Post Script Press to confirm that this West Oakland firm would bring the highest standards to printing the cards. Proofs were perused at the November OHA board meeting, and we hope to have cards ready for sale by the holiday party in December and in select stores in the East Bay and beyond. Anthony's paintings feature many of Oakland's most famous landmark buildings as well as less familiar West Oakland neighborhood scenes, and he brings a unique aesthetic and social perspective to his images of the urban landscape that render them most compelling. --David Nicolai



Anthony Holdsworth painting the Pardee Home Museum in 1994 (Pardee Home Museum, Melissa Rosengard)



This 1911 Rockridge castle was one of five remarkable Oakland houses on the recent tour: in contrast to the fantasy exterior, the inside was indeed pure Arts and Crafts. A survivor of the 1991 fire, it was also one of the 600 individual "PDHPs" documented in the 1995-96 citywide Survey project. (Survey photo by Jennifer Katz)

#### ■ ARTS AND CRAFTS HOUSE TOUR

The Arts and Crafts House Tour in September, sponsored jointly by **Oakland Heritage Alliance (OHA)** and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA), attracted more than 1,000 people, an unqualified success. The first cooperative venture between the two groups, the tour featured 12 Craftsman homes built between 1900 and 1913, by architects such as Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, John Hudson Thomas, A.W. Smith, and John Galen Howard.

Co-chairs Barbara O'Hay (BAHA) and Marlene Wilson (OHA) thank all the volunteers from both groups: committee members planning and guiding the event, house captains and docents at the houses, reception assistants (including members of the Oakland High School Kiwins service club and especially Don Tyler for taking charge of the garden reception), Jane Powell as chair of house selection, brochure writers (Xandra Grube, Jennifer Katz, David Nicolai for OHA), Nina Winans and Helen Lore for publicity, and Bruce Smith and Yoshiko Yamamoto of BAHA for design and production of the brochure and flyers. Special thanks to Anthony Bruce, Executive Director of BAHA, for his key role, and to the homeowners who graciously opened their homes. It is hoped that BAHA and OHA will share more events in the future. --Helen Lore

#### ■ OLD HOUSE JOURNAL

If you are maintaining or restoring a pre-1939 house, **Old House Journal** is the magazine for you. You can subscribe at a reduced rate of \$24 per year (normally \$27) and also contribute to OHA. Through a group plan OHA keeps \$10 of each subscription ordered (or renewed) through our office. Remember, subscriptions also make good holiday gifts, and will help assure that we maintain our group status. Call OHA at 763-9218 for further information. --Helen Lore

## ■ MITIGATION STUDY SEEKS INFORMATION

Attorney Carolyn Douthat, former OHA board member and longtime advocate for historic preservation, has received a research grant from the James Marston Fitch Charitable Trust of New York under its Mid-Career Grant Program. Of interest to OHA members, her topic is a study of creative mitigations for adverse effects to historic resources and an analysis of their success. Any information from OHA members who know of projects involving historic resource mitigation would be welcome. Contact Carolyn Douthat at (510) 763-5370.

## ■ CITY HALL TIME CAPSULE

Oakland's first City Hall time capsule was placed in the building's cornerstone on October 13, 1911, on the occasion of the cornerstone laying ceremony. Attending the ceremonies were Mayor Frank Mott and President William Howard Taft. The time capsule was not so called, for the term had not yet been invented: the 1939 New York World's Fair first gave rise to the term. The **Oakland Tribune** dubbed the capsule "the cornerstone casket" and listed its contents in the issue of October 13th. The casket contained mostly pictures and city documents. Also included were the state flag, American flag, newspapers from October 13, 1911, the Holy Bible, and "three great lights of Masonry." (Masonic lodges officiated at both the 1911 and 1996 ceremonies.)

The 1996 time capsule portrays Oakland through newspapers, neighborhood and organization newsletters (including OHA's "Landmarks Board Comes of Age" issue), children's art, earthquake and fire memorabilia, books, and promotional material. Contents of both capsules are on exhibit at City Hall. (Oakland History Room)

The casket buried in 1911 again saw the light of day in 1992 during restoration of City Hall. Opened by museum officials, the old time capsule revealed all save one of its listed contents: "United States gold and silver coins of mintage 1911."

No record appears to exist to explain why or by whom the items in the original time capsule were chosen. Whether by accident or design, however, the contents reflect the era. Photos abound of "modern" inventions and new modes of transportation: views of modern automobiles, a modern linotype, modern airships, telephone instruments, typewriters, and motorcycles. There were photographs of electric trains, trolley cars, and "the largest steamship in the world." (The following year the Titanic sank in the Atlantic Ocean.) A delight in inventions, an unquestioning belief in technological and scientific progress emanates from the old time capsule. The year 1911 was in the heart of an age of idealism and heady optimism. Every day in every way, mankind was getting better and better. The Titanic disaster and then World War I belied and finally destroyed the assumptions of the Progressive era.

The new time capsule seeks to reflect today's Oakland. The items selected for inclusion, many suggested by community organizations, were chosen to reflect the city in its full social, economic, ethnic, political, and cultural diversity. Special emphasis was placed upon items that uniquely expressed (1) an aspect of the city's diversity, (2) an important facet of municipal services, and (3) futuristic visions of Oakland. Also included were items that might not survive through time, such as BART tickets and promotional leaflets. It is hoped that a future generation of Oaklanders will see a vision of their city from another age. In the words of City Manager Craig Kocian at the ceremony, "This will help them remember who and what we were and what we intended." --William W. Sturm



## ■ NEW HISTORY ROOM EXHIBIT: MAYOR MOTT'S OAKLAND 1905-1915

Commemorating the 85th anniversary of the cornerstone laying of City Hall, the Oakland History Room's new display focuses on changes and developments in Oakland in the time of Mayor Frank K. Mott, a period that saw a new City Hall, the area's first major public transportation system, the founding of the Oakland Museum, creation of the City's park system, development of the Port of Oakland, modernization of city government, and transformation of the city's appearance with architectural gems from the Hotel Oakland to the Auditorium. These exciting and colorful years are celebrated in historical photographs and newspaper articles. "Mayor Mott's Oakland: 1905-1915" is at the Oakland History Room, 125 14th Street, through January 1997. Hours are Monday and Tuesday 10-5:30, Wednesday and Thursday 12-8, Friday 12-5:30, Saturday 10-5:30, Sunday 1-5. For information call 238-3222. --William Sturm

## City Landmarks Board Actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month, 4 pm, in City Hall Hearing Room 1. 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. Five districts and 127 landmarks have been designated since the Board was created in 1973. Members are Annalee Allen, Andrew Carpentier (chair), Renee Dymond, Les Hausrath, and George Lythcott. (Two appointments are expected soon.) Secretary is Helaine Kaplan Prentice.

### AUGUST

Board voted to forward designation of the Brownie McGhee house, 688 43rd St., to the Planning Commission (see May).

Board approved application of Ellen Hui, owner of 701-15 Broadway (Dahlke's Bar, in the Old Oakland district), for storefront rehabilitation. Originally two stories, the 1889 building was remodeled in the 1960s and the second story completely removed. Architect Jim Chao said his client might consider rebuilding the second story in the future but not now. The proposed use is a brew pub. Approval was subject to staff review of colors, signage, finishes, and other details.

Board approved an application by Noll and Tam, architects, to add elevator towers at the Temescal and Golden Gate libraries, both landmarks listed on the National Register. Seismic upgrade plans involved no changes to the exterior appearance and no major changes to the interiors. Selection of materials for the towers is to be reviewed and approved by staff.

Board voted to write to the State Office of Historic Preservation supporting the National Register nomination of a Harrison and 15th Streets Historic District: owners were submitting the nomination in order to qualify for tax credits.

Maalik Al-Maalik had requested that 1771 Chase Street be placed on the Study List to forestall demolition by Code Compliance. The building was a contributor to the Oakland Point District; the district was determined eligible for the National Register in 1990. Secretary Helaine Prentice reported that the building had already been demolished earlier that day. Board briefly discussed ways to avoid similar events in the future.

Andrew Thomas of the Comprehensive Planning Division discussed negotiations between the City and Southern Pacific for a land use study on the 16th and Wood Street station; George Lythcott will represent the Board (see October).

Gary Knecht reported on the State Preservation Conference in San Jose in June, and presented packets of educational material from conference sessions for all the Board members.

Chair Les Hausrath reported on a meeting with Kofi Bonner, Community and Economic Development Agency director, to discuss the Board's role in the new structure. Prentice reported that the City was soliciting consultants to administer Preservation Regulatory Compliance and Downtown Preservation Mitigations. She had notified City departments of California Heritage Fund Grants available for City-owned National Register buildings.



Period Revival Normandy Gardens subdivision in East Oakland is now known for its holiday decorations as well as for its picturesque 1920s mini-castles. Survey documented it as potential district in 1981. (Survey photo)

Les Hausrath reported on his role in a KTOP show on preservation hosted by Bill Wong; Phil Tagami and Carolyn Douthat had also participated. Andrew Carpentier mentioned neighborhood interest in making Normandy Gardens/Picardy Drive a historic district. Board elected Andrew Carpentier chair for 1996-7 and George Lythcott vice-chair.

### SEPTEMBER

Board approved signage guidelines prepared for the Old Oakland S-7 Preservation District by architect Ed Detmer.

In response to a request from owner John Lewis, Board agreed to delete 1681 8th Street from landmark designation: this is the site of the Oakland Point firehouse, demolished two years ago after earthquake and fire damage. Board reiterated that a plaque or other recognition should be placed on the site.

Loretta Meyer of the Port of Oakland reported on activities related to reuse of the Naval Supply Center: Legacy Grant application, historic building survey, and public access issues.



1771 Chase Street: this 19th century saltbox with 1917 Craftsman porch became part of a continuing series of losses to the Oakland Point District by demolition, fire, or neglect. (Survey photo, 1987)



Proposed work at Chapel of the Chimes will extend the flat-roofed mausoleum at rear, enlarge the tile-roofed mortuary, and remove houses and commercial buildings at left. The Julia Morgan building (right) will not be physically altered, but its setting will be changed.

Community input is sought. Board again urged retention of one of the enormous 1940s warehouses.

Board considered a Mitigated Negative Declaration for additions to the Chapel of the Chimes (4499 Piedmont Ave., Julia Morgan, rated A1+ by the Survey). Plans call for mausoleum and mortuary additions, demolition of five houses and commercial structures on Piedmont Avenue and Howe Street, and removal of trees for a parking lot. Lythcott and Carpentier will review the plans, Prentice and Dymond the landscape issues.

Board reports: Andrew Carpentier was monitoring ground floor architectural treatment of the Broadway Building. George Lythcott suggested a workshop for homeowners on researching the history of one's house and the benefits of landmark status. Annalee Allen emphasized the urgency of publishing the Preservation Element and reviving the committee that was supposed to oversee implementation of the Element.

Prentice reported on inquiries regarding demolition of the Don Lee Cadillac showroom (2500 Harrison Street, rated B+ by the Survey and on the Study List: see Briefing). Wells Fargo Bank is now the owner.



A familiar sight at the gateway to Adams Point, the Don Lee Cadillac building (1925, Clay Burrell, architect) is threatened with demolition. Several reuses have been proposed but none has materialized. (Survey)

Prentice reported on the Certified Local Government training workshop August 10 in Berkeley.

In Open Forum, John Moran protested the demolition of the two small buildings adjoining the YMCA at 21st and Telegraph, which is being rehabbed by CREDO Housing.

## OCTOBER

A certificate of appreciation was presented to former Board member Phil Tagami, now a Planning Commissioner. In accepting, he stressed the importance of communication between the Commission and the Board.

Board approved an application by Collard Jang, architect, for awnings on the Harrison Street facade of the Asian Resource Center (310 8th Street); color and door placement to be worked out with staff. Board approved a proposal by Robert Nicol, architect, to restore the exterior of the V.O. Lawrence building (116-26 Broadway), a historic URM in the Port area. Board and secretary both praised the project.



This view across the lake in 1929 shows the Bellevue-Staten under construction, the Women's Athletic Club, and several other buildings in the Bellevue-Staten Apartment District proposed for S-7 designation.

In response to a referral from the City Planning Commission in connection with rezoning in Adams Point, Board recommended S-7 historic district status for the Bellevue-Staten Apartment District in the "Crescent" below Grand Avenue. A community meeting on October 7 had been thinly attended. The proposed apartment district of ten buildings was identified by the Survey in 1986. One speaker questioned why his building was included; another pointed out that at least one house on Ellita Avenue outside the district had historical significance. Board agreed to investigate.

Board discussed design review fees in S-7 districts. Fees are waived for individual landmarks, but not for buildings in districts. Fees could influence neighborhoods considering district designation, such as Bellevue-Staten or Picardy Drive. A waiver would require revision of the city fee schedule.





Steve Costa, executive director of Oakland Sharing the Vision, distributed copies of the updated Oakland Strategic Plan, noting adoption of the Historic Preservation Element among accomplishments to date. Annalee Allen said it was important to monitor the preservation goals in view of staff changes and the restructuring of the Community and Economic Development Agency. The Main Street program now under-way in Fruitvale was noted.

Annalee Allen reported on three recent events: the OHA-BAHA Craftsman house tour, the City Hall time capsule dedication, and the groundbreaking for Martin Luther King Plaza (University High School, Old Merritt College). Since Bob Brokl and Al Crofts were omitted in official acknowledgments, the Board decided to send them a letter of appreciation.

Betty Marvin reported on completion of the 1995-96 Cultural Heritage Survey projects (see OHA Update), explaining the CLG grant program, reconnaissance and intensive surveys, and the documentation of 150 districts. Board decided to send letters of thanks to Survey volunteers.

Board member George Lythcott and planner Andrew Thomas reported on negotiations between the City and Southern Pacific on the reuse study for the S.P. Station at 16th and Wood Streets, a City Landmark and eligible for the National Register. Southern Pacific is doing the market analysis and Phase I environmental assessment; the City, with ISTEAG grant funds, is responsible for structural and toxic analysis.

Secretary Helaine Prentice reported on efforts to relocate the 1960s mosaics from Dahlke's exterior (701 Broadway); on the landmark nomination of the Brownie McGhee house, unanimously approved by Planning Commission and forwarded to City Council; on a feeler regarding moving the Casa Romana (124 Montecito) and neighboring apartment building; on the Chapel of the Chimes, where the neighborhood group was appealing the Mitigated Negative Declaration on piecemeal changes and calling for an EIR on the Chapel's master plan as a whole; and on "demolition fever" as the deadline for seismic

It could get hit by a truck: container parking in front of the S.P. station is taking a toll on exterior features like this cast iron lamp post and metal clad canopy. (Carolyn Douthat, Betty Marvin)



Preserving the recent past: Dahlke's remodeling of 1962-63 by architect Harry Bruno is a period design in its own right, and a reuse is being sought for these blue-green mosaics. (Betty Marvin)

work under the URM ordinance approaches. Demolition applications or inquiries included the Don Lee Cadillac building, various buildings of PG&E (which owns 10 URMs), a building in the 25th Street Garage District (a potential National Register district), and the Friedman's/Dalziel building at 1917-23 San Pablo Avenue (earlier proposed for landmark designation).

In Open Forum, Ron Morra of Adams Point Preservation commented on the proposed demolition of the Don Lee building at the gateway to Adams Point, Lake Merritt, and downtown. The neighborhood would oppose demolition, and toxics and archaeology would complicate reuse of the former cable car powerhouse site. City economic development staff should help Wells Fargo find a use for the building.

John and Russell Moran also spoke in Open Forum, protesting inappropriate construction work at the old YMCA: a rooftop machinery box and interior work that blocks windows. Prentice agreed to investigate. --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) or Wardlaw@aol.com

## Upcoming Activities

through January 11, (M.-Fri. 11-4, Sat. 12-4), "Toyland Treasures," a display of childhood toys, Hayward Area Historical Society Museum, 22701 Main St., Hayward, \$1/\$.50 children 6-12, 581-0223.

December 1-January 1, (Wed. 11-4, Sun.1-5), "Oh, What a Beautiful Tree," Camron Stanford House in Victorian holiday trim, 1418 Lakeside Dr., \$4 Adult/\$2 Senior/\$2 12-18, children under 12 free.

December 4-January 5, (W-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-7), "Christmas Decorations of Different Areas," Gold Rush, Victorian and WWII eras, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$5/\$3 (members free), 238-2200.

December 5-January 5, (Th.-Sun.1-4), "The Roses of Christmas", Christmas 1886 at the McConaghy House, 18701 Hesperian Blvd., \$4 Adult/\$3 Senior/\$.50 children, 848-0181.

December 6-December 22, 10-4, "Holiday Faire," turn of the century style festivities, Dunsmuir House & Gardens, call for details, 615-5555.

December 8, Sun. 1-4, "Holiday Reception," carol singing by St. Paul's Choristers, Pardee Home Museum, 672 11th. St., San Francisco Estuary Institute, call for details, 231-9566.

December 8, (Sun. 1-4), "Winterfest," Kwanzaa, Japanese New Year, Hanukkah, Christmas & Las Posadas, The Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, \$5/\$3 (members free), 238-2200.

December 12, Th. 8pm., "Lucia Kleinhans Mathews, artist & craftswoman," Arts & Crafts lecture by Stephanie McCoy, Swedenborgian Church, call for details, (415) 550-7818.

December 13, Fri. 5:30-7:30, "OHA Holiday Party," 763-9218.

December 14, Sat. 10am-11:30 am, "Preservation Park Holiday Tour," floral designer Sharon Kidder shares tips on holiday decorating, call for details, 238-3234.

December 15, Sun. 1-4, "Holiday Celebration," tour Cohen Bray House and nearby merchant area, 1440 29th Avenue, \$5, call for reservations, 444-2187.

December 29, F. 2-4, "Christmas Tea and Tour," Cohen Bray House, 1440 29th Avenue, \$10, \$5 VPCO members, call for reservations, 843-2906.

January 4, Sat. 6pm., "Twelfth Night Celebration," sit down dinner for 20, Cohen Bray House and nearby merchant area, 1440 29th Avenue, \$75, call for reservations, 524-5780.

## Regularly Scheduled Exhibits & Tours

**The African American Museum & Library at Oakland,** museum, archives & programs, 5606 San Pablo Ave., 597-5053.

**Alameda Historical Museum,** Wed.-Sat. 1:30-4, Sat. 11-4, 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, \$6/\$3.50 (Sr.)/\$2.50 (Jr.), 796-0663.

**Berkeley Historical Society,** museum, archives, walking tours, Th.-Sat 1-5, 1931 Center Street (Veteran's Memorial Bldg.), 848-0181.

**Cohen Bray House,** 1884 Eastlake Stick Style, original furnishings & wall papers, 1440 29th Ave., open 4th Sunday, 2pm tours by appt., for info Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland, \$5, 532-0704.

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

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

**McConaghy House,** 1886 farmhouse, Th-Sun., 1-4, 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, \$3/\$2 Senior/\$.50 (Sr.)/\$0.50 (children), 581-0223.

**Mountain View Cemetery Tours,** second Saturday every month, 10am, docent led tours sponsored by Mountain View Cemetery, free, 658-2588.

**Oakland Tours Program,** guided tours of restored City Hall, first Tuesday of the month, meet on front steps. Free, Full tour schedule resumes in May, group tours welcome, 238-3234.

**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 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 OHA, 763-9218, 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 City Hall. 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 (July through October) are:

Betty & Lowrie Ames, Linda Ayscue, Claudia Baldwin, Barbara Fletcher Barbour, Sandra Biasotti, Annamaria Blower, Noah Booker, Tom Brian, Charles Chisholm, Michael Cochran, Robert Cole, Irene Cordes, Harry Cullen, Natalie & David Cuttler, Don Donohue, Constance Eldridge, Marilyn Ford, Alane Foug, Lynn Fountain, Nancy Friedman, James Gormley, Roy & Joan Holman, Jane Hutchins, Mary Anne Joseph, Anita Kratka, Ronald & Elena Krause, Jessie Lee, Michael Mannix, Michael & Karen McMahon, Mary Ann McNicholas, Betsy Merck, Brent Milne/Krista Marks, Sandra Miraglia, Dick & Gloria Morchick, Paul Myers, Susan Nichols, David Nesmith/Mary Duryee/Olga Paredes, Bill O'Brien, Zetta Lynne Poli, Edgar Pye, Suzanne Renne, Morgan & Mayrene Rice, Ann Richter, Katherine Roswall, Owen Rubin/Dianne Jacob, Roy & Melinda Samuelson, M.B. & Norma Shattuck, Helen Sheward, Lucy Smith, David Somers, Susan Stryker & families, Madelyn Taylor, Phil Tecau/Hal Bornstein, Donald & Joyce Temby, Andrea Thomas, Gloria Trincherro, Inga Vanek, Rose Whitfield.

## Donors

Special thanks to those joining/renewing as:

**PATRON (\$250):** Aila Dawe

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## Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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### 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 or BetMarv@aol.com, or OHA, 763-9218. Back issues \$2. © 1996 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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Vice President	Xandra Grube
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## Oakland History Notes

### The Snow Museum

Snow Park at 19th and Harrison Streets is today a tranquil urban oasis of greenery and shady trees. Its present benignity, however, belies its troubled past.

It all began in 1922 when famed African big-game hunter Henry Snow donated his collection of animals on the stipulation that the City build a suitable museum to house it. The City accepted with alacrity, recognizing the value of a natural history museum to complement the Oakland Museum of history in the Camron-Stanford house and the art gallery on the Auditorium's second floor. The former residence of cannery mogul Francis Cutting, built in 1903 on 19th Street facing Alice, became the new museum's temporary home.



The house was transformed to a taxidermic menagerie of elephants, bears, leopards, lions, snakes, and birds, plus a small live zoo next to the museum. The zoo, the city's first, attracted much attention but little funding for a new museum. In June 1923 the newspapers announced the City's intent to build a grand two-story Snow museum; it never materialized. Mr. Snow returned from the Arctic with his own fundraising scheme: a "Jungle Movie Ball" at the Auditorium on December 9, 1924. The event featured a film on Snow's exploits and a beauty contest in honor of sundry movie starlets invited to the event. Nearly 4000 fans filled the auditorium but the glittering event was a financial disaster. Mayor Davie, stalwart champion of Snow, appropriated \$200,000 in 1925 for a new museum; the City Council found other uses for the funds. An embittered Snow died in 1927. His daughter Nydine Snow Latham continued as curator of the collection.

In the 1950s developers began casting covetous eyes upon the park. The Mayor's Cultural Affairs Committee countered with an ambitious plan for three museums at the site. In April 1961 Oakland voters approved funding for a new museum at 10th and Fallon Streets; the following month, they said no to a measure giving hotel developers a lease option on Snow park. In 1967 the Snow Museum closed and most of its contents were auctioned off. In 1970 it was demolished.

Today Snow Park is bereft of tangible reminders of Henry Snow's museum. Elsewhere, however, one piece of its history endures. Visiting the old museum as a Cub Scout, I must admit that I found it dark, stuffy, and foreboding. On completion of the tour, our troop burst from the building into sunlight and fresh air and scabbled on top of a petrified log in front of the building. Today, that log rests in a corner of the Oakland Museum courtyard.

--William W. Sturm

(Oakland History Room)

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