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# NEWS

## THE OAKLAND OAKS of the Pacific Coast League 1903-1955

At the present-day northwest corner of Park Street and San Pablo Avenue in Emeryville, a few construction trailers and some clumps of wild grass are the sole signs of life. A block away to the south, the East Bay Bridge shopping center bustles with activity. At the southwest corner of the intersection, a club called Oaks Corner offers gaming, tavern fare and libations. The name of this establishment and about a dozen photographs decorating its walls are the only links the area provides to the storied big-league baseball team that played at that corner from 1913 until 1955. The Oakland Oaks, also known as the Oakland Acorns, were charter members and one of the most consistent upper-division teams in the fabled Pacific Coast League.

In the mid- to late 1800's, a few loosely organized neighborhood teams were playing in the Bay Area. Though Californians and other West Coasters could follow the National League's teams in the East by way of newspaper box scores, baseball was becoming a bigger business and a bigger part of America, and interest in local play and being able to watch the game in person was building. Then in 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings visited San Francisco to play a few exhibition games. The first all-professional team in baseball, the Red Stockings would go on to win 60 games that season and lose none. They caused such a

stir in the imaginations of would-be ballplayers and fans in the Bay Area that more highly organized leagues soon developed.

In 1887, the California League was organized with teams in Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento. Meanwhile, back East, the Western League became the American League in 1900 and struggled to compete with the National League for fan loyalty and advertiser dollars. In 1903, following strained negotiations, the two leagues—still comprised only of teams in cities east of the Mississippi—agreed to play separate seasons, ending the year with a championship series between the two league champions. In that first meeting between the two leagues, the Boston Pilgrims defeated the Pittsburg Pirates 5 games to 3,



The still un-nicknamed California League team of 1890.  
(Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)



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Another packed house at the Oaks ballpark as seen from the right-field stands. Light standards were erected in 1948, the most magical year in the Oak's proud history. (Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library )

with pitchers Bill Dinneen and Cy Young leading the way.

The year before, 1902, the team known simply as the Oakland Baseball Club had won the California League title. They played their home games at a ball field laid out in Freeman's Park at 59th & San Pablo. The park had been called Klinker's Park, named for a real estate businessman who sponsored one of the earliest teams in the East Bay. Across the bay, the rival San Francisco Stars (later to become the Young Americans in 1906 and finally the Seals in 1909) hosted games at Rec Park. This cross-bay rivalry would continue throughout the century, reaching a peak during the heyday of the Pacific Coast League, and again in the 1980's when the Giants and Athletics met in the World Series.

The California League became the Pacific Coast League in 1903. The new league consisted of four teams from the California League—the Los Angeles Angels, the San Francisco Stars, the Oakland Oaks and the Sacramento Solons—as well as the Portland Beavers and the Seattle

Rainiers. 1903 was the first year the Oakland team took the name Oaks. They fared poorly, finishing the season in last place and setting a dubious record by committing 15 errors in one game against Seattle. But their poor season did not turn out to be a sign of things to come, and their record improved each year. Finally, in 1912 the Oaks captured their first Pacific Coast League pennant.

Originally, there had been only a few bleachers at Freeman's Park. By 1912, a substantial grandstand had been added for spectators. In a photograph of an Oaks game from that year, the packed grandstand is seen overflowing with onlookers, who are seated along the dirt warning track and on the grass in foul territory from the end of the dugouts to the outfield wall. This is surprising given the preferred attire for attending a ballgame in that early era—suits and fedoras for the gentlemen, and dresses and sun hats for the ladies. The standing-room-only support was a sure sign that Oaklanders were following their Oaks. After the Oaks won the PCL title, interest in the team was sky-high. Investors



decided to build a new stadium in Emeryville for the 1913 season, where more fans could come to each game and where the owners could sell more tickets. (In that era, players weren't paid nearly as well as today, but owners didn't benefit from the merchandising integral to today's professional sports; more seats meant more tickets, and that was where the team made its money.) The Oaks Ballpark was built from the ground up in less than three months, with a canopy-positioned press box, and an underground water sprinkler system. The field faced southwest, with the left-field foul line running parallel to San Pablo Avenue. As projected, fans turned out in large numbers to see their Oaks play.

The Pacific Coast League continued to thrive, and the teams' stadiums were, for their time, very nice places to play and to watch games. Many of the West Coast's talented athletes elected to play in the Pacific Coast League rather than the American or National Leagues, because they could stay closer to home and they preferred the milder summers. The mild climate also allowed the PCL season to run from March through October, eventually reaching 200 games, compared to the shorter April-September schedule of the eastern Major Leagues.

Of course, many PCL ballplayers did play in the majors. Joe DiMaggio joined the Seals in 1933 and hit safely in 61 straight games, a streak he would break by one in his career as a Yankee. Ted Williams helped the San Diego Padres win the PCL in 1937 before going on to become the best hitter in Boston Red Sox history, and the last person to this day to bat .400. Jim Thorpe, Mickey Cochrane, Luis Tiant and Lou Pinella all played for the Portland Beavers early in their careers. Pirates mainstay Bill Mazeroski was a Hollywood Star in 1956, and Sparky Anderson, who would go on to manage World Series champions in Cincinnati and Detroit, was a Los Angeles Angel.

The Oaks were consistently near the top of the League, and in 1927 Ernie Lombardi, their line-drive-belting catcher, led them to their second PCL title. By this time, home games were broadcast over KLX radio, and away games were "re-created" using tapes of crowd noise and sound effects such as two sticks being struck together to simulate the crack of the bat hitting the ball.

On the 4th of July, 1929, Oaks outfielder Roy Carlyle hit a home run off the Mission Reds' pitcher Ernie Nevers that traveled an incredible 618 feet. The ball landed on the roof of a house that stood beyond the Oaks' centerfield fence, and was found lying in the rooftop gutter days later when the Oaks managed to measure Carlyle's blast. This tremendous hit broke the previous record for a long ball, Babe Ruth's 587-foot shot in 1919. Carlyle's 618-footer still stands as the longest home run ever hit in a professional baseball game.

The Oaks continued to develop an intense rivalry with the San Francisco Seals. The rivalry was fueled by the

schedule format for the PCL: two teams would play each other seven games in a row, usually ending with a Sunday double-header. In the case of this match-up, the first game of the double-header would be played in San Francisco, and the second would be a seven-inning affair at the Oaks Ballpark. Many fans would take in the first game in San Francisco, then travel by ferry over to the East Bay for the second game. During the years 1946-1948, the rivalry was spurred on by the presence of two fiery, colorful managers, the Seals' Lefty O'Doul and the Oaks' Casey Stengel. O'Doul and Stengel were masters of rattling the opposition and the umpires, and firing up their own players and fans.

Bud Foster, a former war correspondent, became the radio voice of the Oaks in 1946. His spirited game calls, helped to generate excitement and foster loyalty among fans. The Oaks drew over 600,000 fans in the 1946 season, a "minor-league" record. In 1947, the stadium was remodeled to accommodate larger crowds, and another attendance record was set. In 1948, light posts were added, and the team played its first night game in July. That year, kids could see games from the outfield bleachers for a dime. Box seats on the infield sold for \$1.75.

Ernie Lombardi left the Oaks in 1930 and joined the Brooklyn Dodgers. Two years later he went to Cincinnati, where he won the batting crown in 1938 with a .342 average. He won another batting title with the Boston Braves in 1942, then played for the New York Giants. In 1948, Lombardi returned to the PCL with the Sacramento Solons, where he hit a 578-foot home run off Oaks' pitcher Lloyd Hittle. His association with the Oaks was rekindled, when the team brought him back to Oakland early in the 1948 season. Along with Billy Raimondi, "Cookie" Lavagetto and Dario Lodigiani, Ernie was one of the players sportswriters began calling the "nine old men," because several players on the roster were PCL and Major League veterans. Their ability and experience would bring the Oaks many victories in 1948.

One 1948 Oaks player was far from being a veteran. Alfred Manual Martin had been a standout athlete in baseball and basketball at Berkeley High before playing for two years in the Oaks' minor league system. In his second year with the Class C club in Phoenix, he batted .392 with 230 hits and 174 runs during 130 games. The following year he was brought up to the Oaks, where the veteran players took him under their wing. They started calling him "The Kid," a nickname which led to another nickname, "Billy," which is how most fans know the eventual player and manager for the New York Yankees, Billy Martin. Casey Stengel, Billy Martin, Ernie Lombardi and the rest of the "old men" gave Oaks fans a season to remember.

On the last day of the season, the Oaks, leading the San Francisco Seals by two games in the standings, were set to play a double-header against the Sacramento Solons at Oaks Park, while the Seals were playing a double-header of



An Oaks player strides for first base, 1950.  
(Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

their own against Seattle. With control over their own destiny, the Oaks battled the Solons, coming from behind three times during the game to reach a seventh-inning, 8-8 tie. Ralph Buxton, Merrill Combs and George "Catfish" Metkovich all hit safely and Eddie Samcoff, running for Buxton, scored when the Solons' Len Ratto made a throwing error. Nick Etten drove Combs home with another run, and the Oaks held on to clench their third Pacific Coast League championship. Revelry swept through the stadium and the surrounding area as Oaklanders celebrated, many of them leaving the ballpark before the second game even started. The Oaks won the second game, while Lefty O'Doul's Seals swept their double-header to no avail. The Oaks finished the season 114-74 to the Seals' 112-76. The 21-year drought was over, and the Oaks were the best baseball team west of the Mississippi.

The 1949 season began on a sour note with the departure of manager Casey Stengel, hired away to manage the Yankees. Though his previous stint in the majors was not spectacular, Yankee's co-owner Del Webb had observed Stengel hitting infield practice for several kids at Oaks Park early one morning during the summer of '48, and believed that Casey's enthusiasm belonged back in the majors. That enthusiasm proved to be just what the Yanks needed, as he led them to five straight World Series crowns. A key member of those championship teams in New York was another integral piece of Oakland's championship in '48, Billy Martin.

The Oaks' 1949 season was also significant in a positive way. At the age of 28, Artie Wilson became the first African American to play full time for the Oaks. After starting the season with the San Diego Padres, Wilson finished it with the Oaks. That year, he won the PCL batting championship with 211 hits and a .348 average, and also led the league in stolen bases (47). His roommate that year was Billy Martin. In 1950, Artie batted .312, with a career-high 27 doubles, and led the league in both runs (168) and hits (264). He went to the NY Giants briefly in 1951, and later played for the Seattle Rainiers, the Portland Beavers, and the Sacramento Solons. He led the league in batting in 1952, 1953, and 1954.

Charlie Dressen would manage the Oaks to another PCL pennant in 1950, with a record of 118-82. Earl Rapp, George Metkovich, and Don Padgett led the team in hitting, while Allen Gettel was the ace of the pitching staff with a 23-7 record. 1950 also marked the debut of Lee Susman's lovable cartoon drawings of the happy, speedy, baseball-playing "Li'l Acorn," who appeared in newspapers and programs through the 1955 season.

Piper Davis, who had played for the Birmingham Black Barons and managed Willie Mays and Artie Wilson, came to Oakland in 1951. A born leader, his normal position was behind the plate, but in 122 games he filled in wherever he was needed. In the last game of the season, manager Mel Ott started Davis on the pitcher's mound. After retiring three batters, Davis then played each of the remaining positions during the 10 inning game, receiving a \$500 bond from the Oaks' boosters for the feat.

The Oaks managed a second-place finish in '52 and third place in '54, but the team, and the Pacific Coast League, were on the slide. The PCL was beginning to feel the effects of both television's growing entertainment dominance and the popularity of live national radio broadcasts of Major League games. In addition to these challenges, the Pacific Coast League faced the problem of competing with the Major Leagues on salaries. Major League clubs, with larger stadiums and more advertising capital—particularly once national radio and television broadcasts began to pay dividends—could afford to pay well enough that the PCL could no longer hold on to its young, talented players. Informal agreements between teams like the Yankees and Seals became more pronounced, and players were channeled from the Pacific Coast League up to teams in the American and National Leagues.

Lefty O'Doul, who had moved on from San Francisco and managed the Padres to the PCL title in 1954, was hired to manage the Oaks in 1955, but attendance had been slipping year by year, and reached only a paltry 175,000 in 1955.

The Oaks finished just one game out of last place, and on the final day of the season lost both ends of a double-header to the hated rival Seals. At the end of the season, the team was moved to Vancouver, British Columbia.

Fans on the West Coast in the late '40s and early '50s had hoped that the Pacific Coast League would join the Major Leagues. The level of play in the PCL was considered competitive with the big leagues and the league fought for its "AAAA" or "unclassified" status, which placed it higher than the highest minor league level. But the PCL was still not considered an equal by the two Major Leagues. Hopes for the PCL teams to join the majors dwindled when attendance at games started to drop in the early '50s. Hopes were finally completely crushed after the 1957 season when Walter O'Malley, the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, bought the Los Angeles Angels and moved them to Spokane, Washington. He was making room to move his Dodgers to Los Angeles in 1958. Brooklyn fans were devastated. Many didn't believe the Dodgers would actually move, but move they did. Once the deal was a sure thing, Brooklyn's biggest rivals, the New York Giants, followed suit, moving their legendary team to San Francisco, where they played their first two seasons in Seals Stadium. The Bay Area could now see Major League baseball games, following their new home team on radio and television, but its home-grown teams, the Seals and the Oaks, were gone.

The last year the Oaks were in Oakland, the Philadelphia Athletics were playing their first season in their new home, Kansas City. Twelve years later, in 1967, Athletics' owner Charles O'Finley moved the team again, this time to the Coliseum in Oakland. The A's have enjoyed great success in Oakland, winning the World Series as many times in their 32-year history here as the Oaks did PCL championships in their 52 years.

The Pacific Coast League has now become part of the minor league system, with teams as far away as Memphis and New Orleans, all operating under the structure of Major League ownership. The Oakland As' triple-A team is one member of the current PCL. This year will be their first season in Sacramento, having moved from Vancouver and changed their name from the Canadians to the River Cats.

The Oaks name lives on in the form of one of the As' single-A affiliates, the Visalia Oaks. What was once Freeman's Park is now a residential neighborhood, with some small businesses along San Pablo. There are no signs of the former ballpark. But memories of the Pacific Coast League's golden era, the Oakland Oaks, their ballpark in Emeryville, and their magical season in 1948 will live on in the hearts of baseball fans here for many years to come. - *Chris Weidenbach (Thanks to the following sources for their assistance and information: William B. Shubb's Oakland Oaks 1948 Website; the Oakland Library's Oakland History Room; the San Francisco Seals Website; "The Baseball Chronolgy" at CBSSportsline.com; and the Emeryville Chamber of Commerce.)*



## LATHAM FOUNTAIN REVEALED

A respite for weary travelers

Recent demolition of a concrete zigzag bus shelter at the intersection of Telegraph and Broadway in downtown Oakland has restored the 1913 Latham Fountain to prominence. Originally built in the roadway by the children of James H. and Henrietta Marshall Latham, the fountain was dedicated to animal welfare and designed so that work horses could stop for a drink of water. Walk around the fountain to see a medallion which appears to illustrate an early animal welfare lesson from the Bible, Numbers: 22. (If anyone can verify this, OHA would appreciate confirmation that we see here the angel rebuking Balaam for smiting his ass.)

For several decades the fountain was a lonely outpost, visible primarily to drivers attempting a hazardous merge maneuver. Since the bus shelter's removal, this gracious monument to the era of thirsty horse traffic looks much less incongruous on its point just south of the Cathedral Building. Developers of the Rotunda project had urged the city to go forward with the long-planned demolition of the old shelter; now bus passengers and pedestrians are eagerly hoping for new, more attractive and functional shelters for the bus stop. May we even dare to hope for new plumbing for this charming remnant of the past? - *Naomi Schiff (photo also)*

## ALARM OVER A BUILDING'S FATE

*(Reprinted with permission of the Montclarion)*

Oakland's historic Fire Alarm Building is so low-key you may not have noticed it before. Tucked into the triangular-shaped plot next to the Courthouse on Oak Street, the one-story structure was deliberately built to "harmonize with the general plans of park improvement" (according to a 1910 article in the *Oakland Tribune*), and thus blends in, to a certain extent, with the trees and shrubbery. Bridesmaids are never supposed to outshine the bride, and similarly the Fire Alarm Building complements but doesn't compete with its neighbor, the Courthouse, though the two buildings sport similar fenestration and design elements.

While the Beaux Arts-style building doesn't look the way it did when it was constructed in 1910, the original elements are still there, hidden under a layer of modern improvements. A beautiful interior mosaic floor is presently covered by linoleum, and the exterior cream-colored sandstone walls are covered by a 1953 stucco layer. Still intact within the building are the original fire alarm circuit board system, and Vermont marble wainscoting. The building's architect, Walter Mathews, was also responsible for the Hotel Oakland, the Athenian Club and the Orpheum Theater.

The Fire Alarm structure was originally erected as a municipal electric building, to house both the fire and police telegraph. Oakland's first alarm circuit had been installed in 1870 by the police captain, using his own money. It consisted of four miles of wire and five Morse code stations. All officers at the time were required to know Morse code.

Three years later, the City bought the system from the captain for \$800. Later, city prisoners in a labor program built a fire line separate from the police wire. The first eleven fire alarm boxes were installed in 1876, and they were actually locked. To ring an alarm, one had to go to a neighboring business or residence, obtain a key and return to the alarm box.

By 1879, there were 21 boxes citywide, with 30 miles of wire. In 1909, the year before the

## Oaklanders' Favorite Buildings

On a recent Sunday, photographer Cheryl Owen and I took to the streets of downtown Oakland, to find out which buildings Oaklanders cherish. Cheryl's favorite building is the green-tiled I. Magnin Building on Broadway, and my favorite is the Fox Theater, on Telegraph. Here are a few picks from the people we talked to. - *Erika Mailman*

### THE BROADWAY BUILDING

"I kind of like that one since they cleaned it up. I've been looking at it for years. It's just an unusual building; it's not all glass and steel. Anything that's going to be a favorite of mine, it has to have been around for a while."

- Leo Lauchie



### THE FEDERAL BUILDING

"I like its unique design and its size. It's quite big, with all the windows."

-Constancia Arriba

"It's so neat and clean. I like the towers and the bridge between them."

-Lydia McGonigle



Constancia Arriba (Photo by Cheryl Owen)

## MONTGOMERY WARDS BUILDING

"I'm thinking they're taking that down and I'm very sad. I'm hoping that whatever they decide to do, they don't demolish it. I want it to be a cultural center with artists' lofts in the upper floors--that would be amazing. It's in such an incredible location and the architecture itself is beautiful. It's a landmark for a lot of people who grew up in Fruitvale."

-Svea Rodgers



## THE VA HOSPITAL

"It's a nice hospital, across from the Greyhound Station on Telegraph. It's been here a long time. It's nice inside."

-Claud Perry



## HIGHLAND HOSPITAL

"I grew up by Highland Hospital. I like the structure, the detail that they used. I mainly like the steeples; how they did details on the steeples. We gotta keep the landmarks so we have a memory of what Oakland is. That's what makes Oakland." -Eric Murphy



Fire Alarm Building was built, there were 157 boxes--still locked, though the change to the present break-glass boxes came soon thereafter. The number of alarm boxes rose steadily until 1978, when 1,300 of them were removed, because of the rising cost of maintenance and false alarms. The building is presently being used as storage space and a carpentry shop for the city.

A clear and present danger: Part of Mayor Brown's plan to bring 10,000 new residents to downtown involves the demolition of the Fire Alarm Building and the erection of a 22-story apartment complex in its place. While the 10K plan is a smart one to revitalize a sleepy downtown, preservationists feel there are plenty of other adequate sites that can be used.

Although the Fire Alarm Building is historically important and aesthetically pleasing (underneath the facade "improvements"), probably the most valuable argument for its preservation is the fact that the land it sits on is park land. Building a high rise on public land would be tantamount to constructing a high-rise in the middle of Joaquin Miller Park, or a Costner-esque waterworld set in the middle of Lake Merritt.

Back in the early part of last century, a municipal bond was floated to build the Fire Alarm Building--meaning it was built by the people of Oakland. There are serious ramifications to privatizing land that is publicly owned. In fact, a 1910 indenture document, recorded in 1912, clearly sets out that the land the building sits on was sold to the city for \$49,500, "to have and to hold all and singular the said premises together with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, and to its successors and assigns FOREVER (emphasis added)". Doesn't sound like anyone intended for the City to sell the land to build a high-rise on the shores of our beautiful lake.

A January 22nd town hall meeting on the subject of the proposed high-rise was well-attended (81 concerned citizens signed in). Only one person spoke in favor of it. The Board of Supervisors has also voted unanimously to oppose the high-rise. - Erika Mailman

# ANNUAL OHA PRESERVATION AWARDS: 1999

Each year OHA celebrates preservation projects and people that reflect the diversity of Oakland, making us aware and proud of our culture and history. The projects can be in a neighborhood or downtown, grand or small, physical or cultural; we like to cast a wide net. But the people and projects we celebrate contribute to making Oakland the special place it is. OHA members are encouraged to contribute to this project next year by nominating deserving programs or people--just call the OHA office at 510/763-9218. Now on with the awards. We had nine honorees in 1999.

1. **The Central Building**, owned by Neil and Patricia Smithers, was built in 1926 for Central Bank on the corner of 14th and Broadway by architects George Kelham and Walter J. Mathews. It replaced Central Bank's existing five-story building on this prime corner of downtown, and for 15 years after it was built it was the tallest building west of the Mississippi. It was a civil defense shelter in 1963 and now has its own private BART entrance. Since their purchase of the building in 1998, the Smithers have restored its architectural integrity while preparing for the future with the newest technology. They have also been committed to bringing out the best of the building's classic features by restoring the arched entrance on 14th Street, along with the bronze, marble and mahogany offices within the rich interior. The restoration architect was Kirk Peterson.

2. **The West Coast Crab Company** at 116 Broadway (owner Don Puccini) has belonged to the Puccini family since 1947. Originally the O.V. Lawrence building, it was built in 1925 by famous local architect Clay Burrell. It now houses Everett & Jones (owners Dorothy King and John Jernejan). On the corner of 2nd and Broadway near Jack London Square, the building's exterior has been sensitively renovated by owner Puccini and architect Robert Nichols, bringing out the graceful Beaux-Arts style and many lovely architectural details. The windows on Broadway were opened up, and the 2nd Street side was rebuilt to reflect the

design of the beautiful Broadway facade. The project also involved repair of terra cotta and brick, and replacement of lamps on the exterior.

3. **Fruitvale Plaza Park** at 35th Ave/International Boulevard is a multi-agency project, a renovation of an existing pocket park in the center of the Fruitvale commercial district. Artist Monica Praba Pilar and landscape architect Rod Garrett did the design, which includes a



(Photos by Jo Ann Coleman)

mosaic tile bench in the style of the architect Gaudi, a kiosk with tiles featuring references to the rich history of the neighborhood, and a mosaic referring to presence of the creek beneath. A Mission Bell installed by Montclair Women's Club notes the route of El Camino Real. Our OHA awards were given to designers Monica Praba Pilar and Rod Garrett, Margarita Murillo of the Montclair Women's Club, Raquel

Contreras of the Unity Council, and Nancy Conover of the University/Oakland Metropolitan Forum.

4. **Gondola Servizio**, owners April Quinn & Jeffrey Angelino Fischer, is an old tradition transplanted to Lake Merritt. Jeffrey spent 10 years in Italy as a tour guide and the couple have now brought four boats here because, as we all know, the ambiance of the lake with its necklace of lights and the weather creates a Mediterranean feel to the area. There are four boats, three used and one new. Roberto Dei Rossi, a famous gondola builder in San Traverso, Italy, made the new gondola; the owners spent three months in Italy overseeing its production. The new gondola is blessed by the Mayor of Venice and a local priest.

5. City Planner **Gary Knecht** retires this year, and we take the opportunity to honor him for both his professional involvement and his volunteer commitment to the cause of preservation. As City preservation planner and coordinator of the Cultural Heritage Survey for 15 years, Knecht has for



the last few years been working on zoning language that will help implement the city's Historic Preservation Element. A founding board member of OHA in 1980, he has been a resident since the early 80's of the waterfront warehouse district, where he is an active member of SONI and gives tours of both the warehouse and produce district.



6. **Okamoto Optometry** (above), at 3714 MacArthur in the Laurel District, is a partnership project between the city's Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR) and Dr. Dorothy Okamoto. This renovation of a 1931 storefront has produced a successful fusion of new materials complementing the old. The designers left both the woven paving tiles of the entrance and the unique reptilian textured brick of the sides, and combined them with a sensitive use of new tiles, creating vertical stripping effect on the siding. They also opened up and replaced the transom windows. Awards were presented to Heather Hensley of NCR, and architects Alan Dreyfuss and Blair Prentice.

7. The **Plaza Building** on Frank Ogawa Plaza has been a key building in the City Administration project, which included City Hall, the Lionel J. Wilson Building, reconfiguration of the Plaza, and the new Dalziel Building. Built in 1913 by architects Matthew O'Brien and Carl Werner, the unusual Plaza Building has a herringbone brick facade, large two-story iron window frames, terra cotta urns and panels, and a large galvanized iron cornice. It was a

project/facade restoration of the Public Works agency under Jack Young. Much of the success of the project is due to the generous donation of time by architects Ruth Knapp of Muller & Caulfield and Alan Dreyfuss.



8. **Temescal Library** (above), 5205 Telegraph, is a Tudor-style brick building designed by architects Charles Dickey (Claremont Hotel) and John J. Donovan (St. Elizabeth's, many Oakland public schools). Originally built with Carnegie funds and dedicated in 1918, renovation was finished this year. The project was financed by the 1996 Measure I, spearheaded by head librarian Martha Bergman and Christopher Noll of Noll & Tam Architects.



9. **Think Modern** at 4820 International Blvd. is a partnership between NCR/Prince Solomon; owner Mayer Shacter; and architects Alan Dreyfuss and Blair Prentice. Built in 1926 by Mason McDuffie for Van Vissing Midgley--design attributed to Walter Ratcliffe--it has housed many ventures. From

1922-36, it was a Piggly Wiggly market, from 1947-59 it was home to Atkins Candy Co., and in the 1980's it became a ceramics studio. Shacter, one of the original ceramists and now an antiques dealer, has owned the building since 1985, and approached NCR about facade improvement, including opening up display and transom windows, fresh painting to emphasize the classic stucco plaque details, and new tiles to complement the facade. - Pamela Magnuson-Peddle

## PRESERVATION ACTION

### ❑ **Montgomery Ward Lawsuit #3**

The League for the Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources filed suit on Dec. 29, 1999 to block demolition of the Montgomery Ward Building in the Fruitvale District. Despite a proposal on the table by S.F.-based Emerald Fund that would both provide a 600-student elementary school and develop the existing 1920's National Register Buildings for mixed use live/work lofts, the City and Oakland Unified School District approved a demolition plan.

The City Council made a gift of the site to the School District at their Dec. 7 council meeting. Their approval came after the School Board voted to certify the Environmental Impact Report and approve the demolition project. Despite skepticism concerning this demolition plan by a majority of commissioners at their July meeting, the City Planning Commission was directed by City staff to rule only on the very narrow grounds of General Plan conformity at their Nov. 17 meeting. They voted that the OUSD plan did conform. A representative of Emerald Fund was not allowed to present their shared use proposal at this meeting.

This is the third suit filed by the League on behalf of the Ward Building. The first challenged the City's failure to prepare an EIR for the demolition project despite substantial evidence to support a fair argument that demolition of the Ward Building would have significant effects on the historic environment. The Court of Appeal advanced the case for the California Environmental Quality Act statewide, ruling that the City violated CEQA by not preparing an EIR for the demolition project. The court also declared that demolition of National Register-eligible properties could not be mitigated. The city's interpretation of that ruling--EIRs for B- and A-rated buildings, out of the larger pool of historic buildings--has been helpful for Oakland's trophy buildings, but disastrous for historic buildings rated C or below.

The second suit was over the City entering into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with the School District

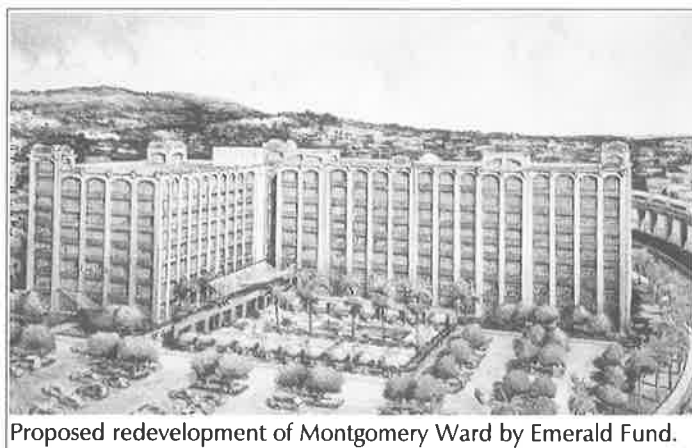
prior to environmental review and analysis of alternatives. The OUSD had made its intention to demolish the structures manifestly clear from the outset. The suit was never argued before a judge and expired with the ENA.

The current suit, which challenges the validity of the School District's EIR, argues approval of the demolition of the Ward Building violates Oakland's General Plan. The suit maintains that the City cannot approve a project when an environmentally superior feasible alternative project exists--in this case the plan for shared-use of the site with the school and the resulting preservation of the National Register buildings.

Organized support for saving the building has come from the Sierra Club, Eco-City Builders (led by Richard Register), and OHA. Both the Sierra Club and OHA, along with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the California Preservation Foundation are considering filing amicus briefs in support of the League suit. The Sierra Club and OHA also collaborated with the League to support a recent fundraiser featuring the national director of the Sierra Club, Carl Pope.

Rose Zoia of the law firm Brandt-Hawley & Zoia is handling the case. The firm's recent successes have included saving the Columbo Building in San Francisco's North Beach, and saving all but one building which had been threatened by the Padres stadium project in San Diego's Arts and Warehouse District.

Contributions are most appreciated and NECESSARY. To contact the League: Xandra Grube, 510/532-3010, 1703 19th Ave., Oakland, CA 94606. - *Robert Brokl*



Proposed redevelopment of Montgomery Ward by Emerald Fund.

### ❑ **Another C Bites the Dust?**

To hear City staff and politicians talk, Oakland is so rich in C- and D-rated buildings--not "average" or "barely passing," but historic and in some cases worthy to be upgraded to an A or B rating!--that we shouldn't fret about the loss of one or two here or there. But like the extinction of the passenger pigeon, which once numbered in the millions, we are seeing the ongoing, rapid, and uncharted demise of these "lesser buildings."

Case in point: the charming (albeit blighted), little-known Idaho Street fire station at 60th and Idaho, two blocks east of San Pablo Avenue (some may be familiar with the building from its previous use by the Depot for Creative Reuse). This C-rated branch fire station dating from the early 1950's is slated for demolition, having been donated



by the City Council to nearby Downs Memorial Church for a senior housing project. The parcel was one of many City-owned sites, mostly vacant lots, sold or given to the private sector for housing development in February 2000.

A nearby couple, Lisa Findley and Rod Hendmi, both architects, had developed an adaptive reuse plan for the fire station--a live/work space for their own use, with a rental unit. They offered to pay \$40,000 for the site, pre-qualified for a HUD loan, and collected some 60 signatures of support from nearby neighbors. But, even though this team was ranked No. 1 by a city/community assessment team, Downs Memorial, having partnered with Oakland Community Housing Inc., beat out the Findley-Hendmi proposal. Further, the City Council voted a \$1.3 million dollar loan/gift to the Church.

The site is zoned R-40 (single family /garden apartment) in a neighborhood of predominantly older single family homes. Downs is proposing a 3-story building to occupy almost all of the double lot, with at least 20 units of senior housing. According to city officials, the existing "low" R-40 zoning would permit only seven units of senior housing with additional "attachments," and the General Plan would only allow 24! Artist Dan Fontes, whose studio is across the street, has bravely continued to argue for the charm and character of the little fire station, but the battle appears to have shifted to land use issues and the scale and density of the proposed senior facility. Others concerned about the Downs Memorial project and the City's ready acquiescence have also pointed out the long two blocks that seniors would find between the proposed project and San Pablo Avenue where retail and transit are located.

From the perspective of historic preservation, our view remains that a laudable goal such as providing low-income senior housing should not necessarily trump a viable adaptive reuse plan with community support, especially when other sites nearby could accommodate senior housing. Further, neighbors and others unconvinced of the building's merit in its current condition will likely never benefit from the opportunity of seeing the Findley/Hendmi transformation realized.

Like the passenger pigeon, one building at a time, the ill-named C's and D's are imperceptibly slipping toward extinction. --Robert Brokl

## An Open Letter to Mayor Brown

*A letter sent from Xandra Grube to Mayor Brown, requesting that he meet with OHA board members. Grube was very involved in the Brown mayoral campaign as a precinct captain in her Fruitvale neighborhood. She is now co-chair of the League for the Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources.*



I know you are planning to build a lot of new residential buildings in downtown Oakland. I am for that.

However, you need to ensure the Preservation community that you are aware of an existing resource in the City that has been neglected--our existing buildings. We need to be assured that you are not going to waste this resource--that you understand the concept of infill development, which preserves what is good or salvageable and fills in between.

Do you know the concept of the embodied energy in an existing building? An existing building already represents an expenditure of energy to manufacture materials and transport them to the site and construct the building. This is wasted each time we destroy a building. Rehab teaches people to repair and maintain structures rather than throw them away.

Do you know that rehab provides more construction and permanent jobs per \$ spent than new construction? Rehab also offers skilled job training opportunities in the crafts.

Do you know that new buildings require the manufacture of new materials and many of these give off toxic emissions for a long time? Fewer and fewer buildings are being built of natural materials. Yet we have a huge stock of them in Oakland.

Do you know that most old buildings exhibit fine craftsmanship and many interesting features that one discovers as one gets to know them?

Do you know that older buildings are almost universally aesthetically better proportioned than newer ones?

Do you know that the vacancy rate for dwellings in the Bay Area varies from seven to eleven percent in cities of the Bay Area? Not all of these houses need rehabilitation. However, we could save a lot of energy and trees if we used these instead of demolishing them and building new buildings.

Do you know that demolition is an act of destruction, while rehabilitating a deteriorated building is uplifting to the spirit?

Finally, building new buildings is capital intensive while rehab is labor intensive. In a city such as Oakland, do I need to ask the question? Right, we need both. So let's stop warring!



# OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE

# UPDATE

**SPONSOR MEMBERSHIP (\$100)**

Alpha Parts  
Eldien J. Kistner  
Theodore A. Montgomery, M.D.  
Sarah Shaver  
Myron Zimmerman Investments

**BENEFACTOR MEMBERSHIP (\$50)**

Edmund Clausen  
Bill Gannon  
Heinhold's First & Last Chance  
Fredrick Hertz & Randolph Langenbach  
Caroline Kim & Bruce De Benedictis  
Louis & Sally Lewis  
Mary Jane McConvill & Peter Carlson  
Mountain View Cemetery Assoc.  
Gail Udkow M.D. & Michael Udkow M.D.  
Howard & Dorothy Stein  
George Strauss  
Janet Zampieri

**DONORS**

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Dario C. Meniketti  
George Strauss  
Bill Tilden  
Helen B. Tryon

**THANK YOU** and much appreciation to all those who have contributed time, money, and spirit to OHA, as we fight to ensure that the Oakland renaissance includes a renewed appreciation for our extraordinary architectural heritage. We welcome contributions to our effort at any time.

**■ MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Oakland Heritage Alliance. We started as a small band of dedicated preservationists in 1980 and have grown into an organization of over a thousand members. We are grateful for your continuing support. Our goal is 2000 members in the year 2000--a reachable goal. (20,000 for the 20th anniversary seemed unrealistic!) Encourage your neighbors, friends, and associates to join OHA. If each member signed up one other person, we'd be at 2000 in no time. And, as always, we gladly accept large and small amounts of money.

Speaking of contributions, since OHA has the most fabulous, intelligent, creative members in the universe, we just know there's someone out there who wants to design new OHA T-shirts or a membership brochure, or perhaps you're a computer genius who can make our website fabulous. Maybe writing for the OHA News will be the first step to becoming a published author, followed by a lecture tour, using skills picked up by speaking for OHA at public meetings. OHA mailing parties are well known for sparkling conversation and occasional refreshments. Leading a walking tour is a chance to share Oakland's wonderful neighborhoods with others. Meet fellow OHA members and other interesting people while having a good time.

Lots of exciting programs are planned for this year, starting with the Spring Lecture series in May and June: four talks about the kitchens, gardens, textiles, and craftspeople of the Arts and Crafts home. A fall lecture series is also in the works. Houses are wanted for this year's House Tour, planned for the Claremont Pines neighborhood. Offer your own home or maybe a neighbor's (just call Jo Ann Coleman at 510/763-9218). We're also excited about the many new neighborhoods featured in our Summer Walking Tours, which will begin July 2.

The Revolving Loan Fund will soon be a reality. Papers setting it up as a separate non-profit (which protects OHA from liability) are being drawn up right now, and we hope to launch it soon.

On a personal note, I am very excited about the publication of my first book, *Bungalow Kitchens* (Gibbs-Smith Publisher). Everything from obsessive restoration to incorporating modern technology is covered in detail, with fabulous color photographs by Linda Svendsen. You can buy it through OHA at 20% off the list price--save money and support OHA in the process.

**■ SPRING LECTURE SERIES**

Planning on redoing your kitchen, planting a new landscape, or redecorating the interior of your home? You'll find a wealth of information and ideas in our spring series of four illustrated talks.

The series begins Thursday, May 18 with a talk on *Bungalow Kitchens* by OHA President Jane Powell. The following week, historian Paul Duchscherer, author of *The Bungalow*, and *Inside the Bungalow*, as well as an upcoming book on Victorian architecture, will speak



about Arts and Crafts gardens, as featured in his latest book, *Outside the Bungalow*. On June 1, Chase Ewald, author of *Arts and Crafts Style and Spirit*, will talk about the many contemporary craftspeople who work in the style of, or have been inspired by, the Arts and Crafts Movement of the early 20th century. Finally, on June 8, textile designer Ann Wallace, author of *Arts and Crafts Textiles*, will take the mystery out of pillows, table runners, and curtains and how to use them. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the authors at each talk.

Talks begin at 7:30 p.m. at the College Avenue Presbyterian Church (architect: Julia Morgan), 5951 College Avenue, Oakland. Admission to individual lectures is \$8 for OHA members, \$10 for non-members. Tickets for the entire series (4 lectures) are available: \$27 for members, \$35 for non-members. Call the office (763-9218) for tickets.

#### ■ OHA BOOKSTORE: *BUNGALOW KITCHENS*

OHA is proud to announce the release of *Bungalow Kitchens*, the long-awaited book by OHA President Jane Powell and her co-author, photographer Linda Svendsen. The book is about how to restore or design a period, or period-style, kitchen for a bungalow or other early twentieth century house (including Colonial Revival, Tudor, Spanish Revival, and Deco). The book provides a wealth of ideas about cabinets, countertops, appliances, flooring, and all the other elements that make up a bungalow kitchen, as well as advice about how to integrate modern technology while maintaining the bungalow look, all presented in an entertaining way. A hundred and fifty stunning color photographs of original, restored, and new kitchens provide inspiration. Many of the photographs feature houses from Oakland and Berkeley.

The 160-page book includes a history of the modern kitchen, starting with the introduction of cookstoves, refrigeration, indoor plumbing, and electricity. The various kitchen elements are explained in detail with photographs and line drawings. Both the glamorous (cabinets, countertops, flooring, etc.) and not so glamorous (plumbing, electrical, ventilation) elements are included. Each chapter includes sidebars covering period-authentic restoration, as well as compromise solutions employing more modern materials or methods. Layout and design are also addressed, both for totally new construction and adding new elements to an existing kitchen. A chapter on assessing your needs and dealing with professionals has tips on getting the kitchen you want and maintaining your sanity in the process. Finally, an extensive resource list makes it easy to find all the items needed for a bungalow kitchen.

OHA is offering *Bungalow Kitchens* for \$35 (tax included), plus \$5.00 for postage and handling (this charge is waived if you pick up your book at the OHA office). This is approximately 20% off the list price of \$39.95. You will save money, and the difference between wholesale and retail (approximately \$12 per book) will benefit OHA. The book will be available beginning in April. If you would like a signed copy, please specify when you order. An order form can be found on page 23.

A lecture and booksigning by the author will serve as the kick-off to our Spring Lecture Series on May 18. (See page 12 for details.)

#### NEW MEMBERS (NOVEMBER - FEBRUARY)

Jim Blanke  
 Roger Bird  
 Antonette Bottano  
 Deborah J. Cooper  
 Elisabeth Dubin  
 Michael Falk  
 David & Susan Fetcho  
 Barbara Fritz  
 Cathy Galbraith  
 Bill Gannon  
 Melanie Gould  
 Keith Harris  
 Ken Katz  
 Caroline Kim & Bruce De Benedictis  
 Edwin Koumrian  
 Stephanie Manning  
 David Mix  
 Cheryl Owen  
 Marybeth Rinehart  
 Katherine Roswall  
 Claire White Rotko  
 J. Sahadi  
 Nicolas Sakkis Insurance Agency  
 Kirby Smith  
 Martin Stone  
 Sue & Martin Tierney

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HELP US SERVE YOU - We're trying to improve the office and there are a few items on our wish list that we thought maybe one of our members might have lying around unused. We're looking, hoping for the following:

Flatbed Scanner  
 Digital Camera  
 Zip Drive or Tape Drive Back-up  
 200 mhz or higher computer  
 (w/ or w/o monitor)

We're also looking for volunteers to help out in the office. If you have equipment to donate or would like to help out in the office, please call 510/763-9218.

## Cox Cadillac Site Again Proposed for Development

Yet another proposal is in the works to develop the historic Cox Cadillac site at Harrison and Bay Place. Proposed for landmark status by a vote of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and by the Planning Commission, and currently protected under U.R.M. regulations, the building was a prominent car dealership for many years, and before that a cable car terminus. Few details are available on the new proposal, but the would-be purchaser entered into a 45-day escrow with the owners on or about March 7. Oakland City Planning staff informed neighborhood residents that, after several weeks of investigating zoning

requirements, reviewing the previous discussions about the site, and studying the condition of the property, the developer would expect to hold informal discussions with preservation advocates and neighborhood groups. The new project has thus far been described as mixed-use, residential and commercial, but apparently the developer might consider some office use as well.

Several previous development attempts have come to naught, including a proposal from Rite Aid Corporation. That project was killed by Rite Aid's national corporate problems, but not before extensive conversations with preservation advocates, the Landmarks Board, the Planning Commission, and city staff about whether all or at least some of the existing historic buildings could be preserved. An Environmental Impact Report was drafted, but not completed, for that project.

In the meantime, growing neighborhood clamor about "demolition by neglect" led to a request by City Council member Nancy Nadel for a review of the property under city blight regulations. In response, the property owner is being required to perform some cleanup and maintenance.

- Naomi Schiff

### NATIONAL PRESERVATION CONFERENCE 2000

October 31-November 5, 2000  
Los Angeles, CA

- Join the National Trust to explore what Americans will value and seek to preserve in the coming decades, trends and developments affecting preservation, and strategies for accomplishing preservation in the 21st century.
- Choose from more than 70 educational sessions focusing on successful strategies and models to preserve America's diverse historic sites, includes sessions on, Commercial District Revitalization, Rural Preservation, Public Policy and Legal Issues, and Federal Stewardship of Historic Sites.
- Select from more than 40 field sessions that will explore the preservation issues and successes of urban neighborhoods and historic sites in Los Angeles and surrounding areas.

3 WAYS TO REQUEST  
REGISTRATION INFORMATION FROM THE  
NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

Call: 800/944-6847  
Website: [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)  
Email: [conference@nthp.org](mailto:conference@nthp.org)

## BIFF'S/JJ'S UPDATE: \_\_\_\_\_ A Googie Revival in Oakland?

Chevron no longer owns JJ's (historically known as Biff's) and the land on which it stands. As of January 1st, 2000, Steve Simi, who owns the Connell Auto Center located across Broadway from Biff's, is the new owner. In a promising development, Simi (whose careful restoration of his own historic auto showroom won an award from OHA) has hung a "Restaurant for Rent" sign on Biff's.

Other coffee shops of the same playful Googie genre of architecture have been restored after being threatened with demolition. Bob's Big Boy in Burbank and Pam-Pam's in Los Angeles are two examples of restorations that have been not only very successful, but have also helped to revitalize their surrounding neighborhoods.

Restored to its original flying saucer glory, a revived Biff's eatery could be expected to greatly add to Auto Row's vitality. Not only would former patrons flock once again to eat at their beloved Biff's, but new ones could be attracted by "Points of Historic Interest" signs on adjoining freeways.

The community won a hard-fought battle with Chevron to save this historic and economic resource. It will remain a hollow victory until this coffee shop, once a cherished local institution, comes back to life.

Potential operators of a restaurant in Biff's should contact Mr. Simi at 588-2013.- Joyce Roy

# SEARS: Back to the Future for Glamour Girl

The former Sears store at 27th and Telegraph will begin a new life as live/work and retail by going back to the future. The original masonry exterior that had been hiding behind a modern metal facade for all these years is being restored by developer/owner Madison Park REIT. It's as though a giant can opener has cut away the metal that encased a treasure for 36 years. As a bicyclist said as he whizzed by, "Hey, there were windows hiding behind all that metal!"

In 1964 the *Oakland Tribune's* headline declared "Ultra-Modern Sears Reopens." The article goes on, "No longer is the Oakland store one of the 'plain Janes' of the Sears chain. ... she's now a 'glamour girl.'" When new, she must have been, but she did not age very well. Whereas, we can expect the original solid masonry building to gain even more character with age.

The Sears, Roebuck & Co. building was originally built in 1929-30. The architect was Nimmons, Carr & Wright, a Chicago firm, and the builder was P. J. Walker Company. The Cultural Heritage Survey notes that it "was originally an outstanding example of an Art Deco store building." The patterned brick and elaborate cast ornament which distinguished the building was found to still be there, behind the metal facade, with only minimal damage due to the anchoring of the facade. Original windows were simply covered up, on the exterior by the metal screen and on the interior by sheet rock. Some of them even still had their window shades, as though preserved in a time capsule.

The building's central tower originally had four floors, with the exterior of the top floor covered by very ornate fan-shaped terra-cotta forms. Only two of these original floors remain, but the developers plan to restore the other two, including the ornate top floor. The original drawings still exist, so the work will be faithful to the original appearance, although lightweight materials will be substituted for the original heavy masonry due to seismic considerations. Even the flagpole, complete with flag, will be reinstated.

In its second act (or is it the third?), the building will have 16,000 sq. ft. of ground floor retail space, 20,000 sq. ft. of self-storage in the basement, and 50 live/work rental units on the second and third floors. The ground floor facade along 27th Street, which is presently solid masonry,

will be refitted with glazed storefront openings. This side of the building was originally designed to structurally accommodate expected future storefronts; the future has finally arrived.

Plans also call for a landscaped atrium with a fountain to be created in the building's center, through which a glass-enclosed elevator will pass. This atrium is visualized as an exciting public space that could be used by the community. All this is expected to be ready for inhabitants by early spring 2001.

Architects for the adaptive reuse are Kwan Henmi Architecture /Planning, Inc., while Barbara Judy is the preservation architect. The contractor for the project is Smith & Gysbers, Inc.

John Protopappas, President of Madison Park REIT, said they are "very excited about this project and the supportive way that the community has joined in the process." He sees it "as a catalyst for development in the area." Restoration of the historic character of this property should make its spaces easy to market and the

available tax credits have added to its financial feasibility. Its success will help revitalize the surrounding area.

The Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey has rated the building as a Da2\* (D, minor importance; potentially A, highest importance, if restored). Current owner Madison Park REIT is in the process of applying to place the property on the National Register in order to qualify for 20% federal tax credits. This project is a great example of a Potential Designated Historic Property (PDHP) that will realize its potential because of the vision of the developer/owner. This down-in-the-dumps building just needed a little love to be a glamour girl once again. - Joyce Roy



The 1964 metal facade is removed from the Sears buildings, revealing the intact original Art Deco exterior. (Joyce Roy)



## Requiem for Rubino

The late Rubino Building (3277-3287 Lakeshore Avenue) bit the dust the weekend of January 23rd. Its bones now lie in a rubbish heap.

Rated as a "C" building--with character, charisma, and charm to contribute to its neighborhood--it now contributes to our overflowing landfill.

It met its end before its time. At only 70 years, the distinctive two-story masonry steel-framed building could easily have been good for another 70 years. Its glazed brick, Mediterranean-style facade with deep-set arched windows graced by twisted columns gave it a delightful, strong, solid presence on the street. True, it had seen bad times due to neglect from an uncaring absentee owner, but it had not lost its integrity. Had the owner chosen to upgrade the building, as the GAP originally expected, they would have had their store in the neighborhood over a year ago.

The Rubino will be replaced with a one-story Butler-type prefab with a stage-set facade in which even the stucco is not real. At least when the new building is ready for demolition, which will surely be before 70 years have passed, it will not take up much landfill and no one will mourn its loss.

This is an example of unsustainable, dumb development--hustling backwards. - Joyce Roy



## 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. Six districts and 131 landmarks have been designated since the Board was created in 1973. Members of the Board are George Lythcott (chair), Annalee Allen, Janet Benson, Andrew Carpentier, Carolyn Douthat, Una Gilmartin, and Norman Hooks. Secretary is Helaine Kaplan Prentice.*

### SEPTEMBER

Interim Planning Director, Leslie Gould, reported that two separate reports could be prepared when staff position differs from Board position regarding potential landmarks, as is now done for the Planning Commission. An example would be the **Cox Cadillac** nomination where Rite Aid has withdrawn entirely, and the owner's attorney said that the property is in escrow to a different buyer who planned to retain all the buildings on the site. Board Member Annalee Allen complained that the problem was delaying the nomination's transmittal to the City Council which some members would prefer to do sooner rather than later. It was agreed that the proposal would be adopted, although close watch should be kept. Board Member Carolyn Douthat asked for a report on Council action relative to the **Cultural Heritage Survey**; briefing was requested in October. Gould also reported on counter procedures for Element implementation, such as computer screen fields and earlier notification for substandard buildings so interested parties could determine what is available for rehab.

Jeff Chew, CEDA, made a presentation on Mayor Brown's goal to create housing for 10,000 new residents in downtown Oakland by 2003. It will require about six thousand new housing units. He reviewed seven target areas on a display map, and said the City is also working closely with UC to create 1,000 rooms for students near BART or buslines. The targeted project areas are:

- (1) **Waverly/Valdez/Harrison**, currently occupied by auto-body shops and parking lots;
- (2) **Western Edge of Uptown**, proposed for entertainment and retail development;





(3) **Old Oakland**, where density is sought similar to that of Keating II on the **Housewives Market** block, and a sensitive transition project next to **Preservation Park** is anticipated;

(4) A location where CEDA is in discussion with the County because of institutional buildings which add to the psychological barrier of the freeway; when the **Produce Market** moves to the Army Base, an opening will be created for additional retail, entertainment, and support for the Loft District;

(5) The **Loft District**, which has 850 units underway and is handled exclusively by the private sector;

(6) The **Channel, Lake Merritt, Museum and Convention Center** area where amenities are incentives;

(7) Under-utilized properties off of **14th Street** near Alice, the **Merchants Garage** sight, and the **Chinatown** site at 9th and Franklin Streets.

Board Member Douthat asked whether Port projects count and when the count toward the 6,000 will start. Chew replied that they would like to count 870 now. Board Member Andrew Carpentier said he is concerned about the density proposed for the sight next to the **Pardee House**, asking if there are any incentives to keep a lower density there, so that historic areas will not be compromised.

Chew indicated that a mid-rise density of about 75 feet height has been chosen for the site next to the Pardee House. Board Member Allen asked about the **Fire Alarm Building** and the landmark nomination, noting that people are concerned about the impact of a tower on views of the County Courthouse from Lakeside Park and across the lake. Chew replied that he expects developers and architects to respond with awareness of the Courthouse magnitude and stature, but the lake as a major open space creates an opportunity for higher-density housing.

Board Chair George Lythcott reported on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) action regarding approval for **Vision 2000 Park**, including training wall mitigations. He said that a number of groups who do not normally support the Port were at the BCDC meeting to speak on the Port's behalf. Final decision was deferred to a later meeting.

Board Secretary Helaine Prentice reported that a special meeting would be scheduled for September 27, 1999 on revisions to the Zoning Regulations, Environment Review Regulations and Demolition Permit Regulations as they affect implementation of the **Preservation Element**. Board requested that material for this item be received by the Wednesday beforehand, if a full week in advance is not possible.

Board Secretary, Prentice reported that the State's Historic Resources Commission recommended listing the **San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge** on the National

Register of Historic Places, though they excluded certain modern accessory structures such as the toll plaza.

Board Member Douthat complained that a house in Elmwood came up for condemnation when the original complaint was that the heater did not work and the doors did not lock. Only nine months later, the house is slated for demolition. Douthat observed that in Sacramento the Landmark Board gets involved with Code Compliance at an early date.

Secretary Prentice asked the board and the audience for names and addresses of contractors or developers interested in rehabilitating sub-standard houses for re-occupancy.

Secretary Prentice noted that the Port-Counsel liaison committee would hear a status report on the **9th Avenue Transit Shed** (101-10th Avenue) landmark nomination September 24 rather than September 17, as previously scheduled.

## OCTOBER

Leslie Gould, Planning Director, announced a Liaison Committee meeting September 24, 1999 on the **9th Avenue Terminal**: both the City and the Port recognize the historic significance of the transit shed and are planning to work together on it. Board Member Annalee Allen asked about a feasibility study proposed by the Port. Gould replied that the Port plans to contract for the study which will provide critical input to the designation process. Board Member Allen said she expects a report from the Port Real Estate Director at the next Liaison Committee Meeting and a board representative should attend. Board Chair Lythcott volunteered.

Director Gould reported that the 400+ page Zoning Regulations are being re-written for conformance with a general plan. The work is starting with revisions related to the **Preservation Element**.

In response to an earlier request for information on Counsel action regarding the **Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey** and the **State Survey Forms**, Gould reported that on October 19, 1999 the City Council will get a report and the public will be apprised of action taken at the closed session meeting. She offered to arrange for the Council staff report to be mailed to each board member when it is published.

Gould said that Union Pacific, owner of the **Wood Street Train Station**, is in active negotiation with a buyer; they state that the buyer is informed of the historic status of the Southern Pacific train station in West Oakland; seismic reports and outstanding ISTE funding which is available. Chair Lythcott asked if UP discussed protection of the building from truck damage; as the parking lot adjoining the structure is being used for trucks, and the marquis appears to be damaged; protective barriers have been ineffective. Board Member Allen asked about the roof



condition. Director Gould said that no mention was made of these concerns, but UP has said that they are acting responsibly.

Board Chair Lythcott congratulated Director Gould on her appointment as Planning Director on behalf of the Board and thanked her for participating in Board Meetings. Board Member Allen announced the groundbreaking for the **Charles Greene Library** on October 15. Chair Lythcott will be a speaker at the ceremony.

Ian Birchall, architect, presented a project for an application by the AMIM Group to rehabilitate the façade at 1100 Broadway (**Key System Building**), an Oakland landmark, listed on the National Register, and to construct a seven-story addition immediately to the north (sight of the former Key System Building Annex). Board voted to recommend approval of design review application with the following conditions:

- (a) Improvement of the Broadway Entrance which seems weak visually and from a security standpoint;
- (b) Improve the appearance of the top level of the stairway where it adjoins the Key System Building;
- (c) Mezzanine windows and transitions appear disjointed, seeming to lack continuity seen at other levels;
- (d) Top of the new building's cornices should be stronger;
- (e) Reconsider the use of building materials and obtain staff approval;
- (f) Suitability of an offset that reveals the endwall of the Key System Building was questioned;
- (g) Apparent lack of depth of the new facade in contrast to the historic facade; and
- (h) Strengthen corner treatment at 12th and Broadway, including the cornice.

Gary Knecht, CEDA, reviewed the staff report on amendments to **City Environmental Review Regulations**. Board voted to accept report and forward amendments to the Planning Commission with a recommendation to approve.

Board voted to accept report on recommendations for the Planning Commission on amendments to the **City Demolition Permit Regulations** and to forward those amendments to the Planning Commission with a recommendation to approve. Board discussed proposed **Amendments to the City Zoning Code**. After reviewing a staff report on the proposed amendments, it was agreed that

- (1) landmarks will be reclassified as Class 2 until a project comes up where an owner requests reclassification. (De-designation is not an option.)
- (2) For designation over owner objection, everything on the LRHR is included plus C's and contingency A's and B's.
- (3) Appeals of rating.
- (4) Timeliness.

Gary Knecht was thanked for his time spent on the

report, and his upcoming retirement was announced.

## NOVEMBER

Planning Director Leslie Gould reported that the Planning Commission voted 4-2 to forward a recommendation to landmark the **Cox Cadillac Building**. She will work on getting the nomination placed on the Council calendar at the Rules Committee.

At the Planning Commission, the applicant for the **Keystone Hotel** agreed to accept almost all the Board's recommendations in the staff report. The Commission made no changes, but they strengthened language related to retaining historic wood windows. Union Pacific has been continually advised of the board's interest in the **West Oakland train station**, City policies as found in the Preservation Element, and procedures that would apply. A pending sale of the property did not conclude, and they are now seeking a new buyer. If Board has noticed problems, they can go to UP. Board Chair Lythcott said that the front parking lot is used for truck parking, and the concrete barriers intended to protect the marquis need to be pulled out farther from the marquis; protection is not working. The **Housing Planning and Code Complaints Departments** are meeting as a group; there is a preliminary list of possible buildings for rehab and reoccupancy; the Board plans to create a list to be published with a contact name plus a description of city programs to assist in rehab. However, a negligent owner cannot be forced to sell. Board Member Carpentier noted that an inducement is still missing. City funds should be available for property upgrade equal to the amount the City would have spent for demolition.

Gould continued, saying that there is a zoning application to demolish a **two-building Area of Primary Importance on Valdez St.** for a Hertz Rental Car facility. Staff is considering appropriateness of this use at the site, whether it would be appropriate for high-density housing, and the feasibility of moving the houses on the site. No decision has been made. Board Member Allen asked if there are mature trees on the Valdez site and what would happen to them. Gould offered to advise the case planner to look at the species as they may be protected under the **Tree Preservation Ordinance**.

There is a proposal to demolish an **older house on a block of Fifth Avenue** with industrial and residential use; staff is considering the advisability of long-term residential use at that location and the possibility moving or salvaging the house. Design Review criteria would require something equal to or better in its place. Board Member Douthat said that she lives nearby, and the house has received very good care by a long-term resident until last year; it is in excellent condition for moving.

Board Secretary Helaine Prentice noted that construction on the **Rotunda Building** has begun. The landmark



nomination will go to the Planning Commission as soon as possible. The development on **Castle Drive** is at the Administrative Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Some of the eucalyptus trees that form a part of the historic colonnade will be removed for driveways, but not the majority of the trees.

Regina Davis, representing Oak Center Neighborhood Association, submitted Notice of Intent to nominate the **Oak Center District** for designation as an S-7 Preservation Zone. She spoke on behalf of Ellen Wyrich-Parkinson who could not attend. Oak Center was one of the first re-development areas in the United States. Davis showed boards illustrating the history of the area; which includes four parks and four schools. She also recommended that a revised edition of *Rehab Right* be published; which would be most useful for Oak Center residents. Betty Marvin, coordinator of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, said the Survey is delighted to see one of its areas come through with a district nomination.

Director Gould reported on re-designation of existing landmarks, preservation districts, and preservation study list properties under the **revised Planning Code**, noting the full text would be in the December packet. There will be an informational workshop for owners. A public hearing on Zoning Text amendments is required by law. The first informational meeting should be with the Board. Notice would be sent to owners before Christmas. It was agreed that there will be two meetings in January. Board added that it wants to see the Final Draft of all materials before it is sent out to property owners. It should be clear and understandable.

Geoff Hunter, of the Oakland Fire Department Historic Society, reported that the **Fire Alarm Building** (1310 Oak Street) is very important to the Fire Department. He filed a Notice of Intent to nominate it as a landmark. In 1995, the building received a B rating. The Fire Department plans to use the building as the Oakland Fire Department Museum run by the Department Historic Society, a nonprofit group. Board Member Carpentier asked if they wanted to designate the interior also. Hunter responded affirmatively noting that the circuitry is still in place.

Jeff Chew, CEDA, spoke on behalf of the City, owner of the property, urging the Board not to recommend landmark designation. He noted it is a target for the "10K" Program. Board Member Allen asked if the building is on parkland, and Director Gould said it is zoned for development and is not in the adopted open space zone. Speakers favoring the landmark nomination include: Harlan Kessel, representing Citizen's for Oakland Open Space; and Jane Powell, Pamela Magnuson-Peddle, Helen Lore, Robert Brokl, and Naomi Schiff, all representing **OHA**. Board Member Carpentier moved to accept the Preliminary Eligibility Rating Sheet as it stands. The motion was approved. Board also moved to direct the applicant to prepare the landmark nomination for

Board consideration within the next six months.

Board moved to place 714 Pine Street (the **Bachman-Jackson-Netherland House**), formerly at 1815 Shorey St. (**Collins's House**) formerly at 1817 Shorey St. (the **Stephan-Wood House**) on the preservation study list and that they automatically transfer to Heritage Property status when the City Council establishes zoning regulations for heritage properties.

A representative of CalTrans presented a design for Landscape Treatment of Mandela Pkwy, adjacent to two historic districts (**Peralta Villa Housing Project** and **Oakland Point Historic District**). Aspects of the design and plant selection were discussed. Historic nursery catalogs were used to select plants from the period of the adjoining district. Board members appreciated the design. The Board asked staff to draft a response letter on the CalTrans documents relating to **SF-Oakland Bay Bridge** replacement of the historic East Span. Chair Lythcott reported that he spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony for the **African American Museum and Library** (at the Charles Green Library, an Oakland Landmark) along with many city officials. Board Member Allen said she was present, and is developing a walking tour with AAMLO. Chair Lythcott and Board Members Allen and Gilmartin reported on a seminar on cultural resource management which they attended; the speaker was inspiring and the topic was pertinent to Board activities.

Secretary Prentice reported that she and Betty Marvin participated in a review session on *Pacific Gateway: A History of the Port of Oakland*, a book authored by Woody Minor and Terry Lim. The book is an excellent product generated by Board and Port cooperation in finding "off-sight" magnitude measures for Port expansion.

The meetings schedule for the Board in 2000 was prepared.

## DECEMBER

Planning Director, Leslie Gould reported that the Planning Commission voted 3-3 in a tie vote on developers for four sites; the rental car agency application on 27th Street was approved; the developer will move the houses. The **Oak Center Historic District** is proceeding toward recognition.

In Open Forum, it was announced that Board Member Annalee Allen was recently appointed to the Alameda County Board of Parks and Recreation.

Board Member Allen reported that 106 issues are a concern at the **Oakland Army Base**; she requested that the item be agendized and a representative be requested at a Board meeting.

Board approved an application by Signature Properties for selective demolition, exterior modifications and replacement structures at 10950 International Blvd. (historic name: **Durant Motor Company**; common name: **Durant Square**), a historic URM: Oakland Cultural Heritage



Survey Rating: Front office B+al+; Rear factory C+1+. The matter was taken up with a request for comment on the DEIR for a 20-acre residential and commercial project; Board approval called for reuse of the actual steel sash if possible and for the applicant to work with staff on the rooftop signage. A site visit by the Board was made December 8, 1999.

Jennifer Cooper, Coordinator, gave a presentation for Alex Greenwood, CEDA, on completed Design Guidelines for the **Oakland Downtown National Register Historic District**, including a facade improvement program; only \$200,000 is funded for it.

Board heard a presentation by David Nicholai of the Pardee House Museum on the nomination of **Heinhold's First and Last Chance Saloon**, an Oakland landmark, to the National Register of Historic Places. The integrity of the site was emphasized.

Board Chair, George Lythcott, reported on the **Idaho Street Fire Station** Housing RFP, saying there are four proposals; the Church will demolish the structure, and the Church proposal will be accepted.

Board Members Andrew Carpentier and Una Gilmartin reported on revision to the approved design for seismic reinforcement of chimneys at the **Bellevue-Staten Apartments** where new ideas for reinforcing the existing chimneys are required.

Board Member Allen reported on the unveiling of the **C.L. Dellums Memorial sculpture** at the Amtrak Station, Jack London Square on December 5, 1999.

Board Secretary Helaine Prentice, reported that the **Rotunda Building** nomination will be taken up by the Planning Commission on January 19. The **Waterfront Warehouse District** will also be taken up in January. An application to amend the landmark designation of **Lakeside Park** to include the Lawn Bowling Green will be reintroduced.

## JANUARY

Planning Director Leslie Gould reported on recent Council and Commission actions. In Open Forum, Caryn King, Oakland resident, recommended landmark status for the **Leimert Bridge** and the **Sausal Creek Bridge**.

Reporting on Proposed Amendments to the Oakland Planning Code, materials for public distribution in preparation for public hearings, Chris Buckley summarized the material in the Board agenda packet. One speaker, Marina Carlson, was heard from. Staff recommendation was accepted.

Board discussed the request from the State Historic Preservation Office for comment on eligibility of the **Waterfront Warehouse District** to the National Register of Historic Places. Speakers favoring the nomination included Wilda White, speaking for the Jack London Neighborhood Association, Stephen Lowe and property owners Melanie

Gould, Judy Velardi and Marianne Driesbach. Points raised by the speakers were that (1) designation is important in light of an adopted plan for the rest of Jack London Square and Lower Broadway calling for greater density and taller buildings, (2) other cities with National Register Historic Districts have benefitted economically from designation, and (3) economic benefits in historic districts are greater with design standards in place. Board voted that the District meets Criteria A and C for listing. Board Member Douthat added that the District is eligible under Criterion A, Broad Pattern of History, because it is associated with major milestones in Oakland's development of the port; and the role of Oakland as a center of wholesale distribution. It is eligible under Criterion C, Architecture, because there remain a significant number of well-designed and well-preserved early 20th century industrial buildings and warehouses that embody the functions associated with its historic significance.

Board Secretary Prentice reported on the need for an ad hoc subcommittee for the **Fox Theater** marquis. Board Members Carpentier, Benson and Gilmartin volunteered. Prentice said the **Oak Center S-7** Preservation District nomination is proceeding. She reported that the landmark nomination for the **Rotunda Building** will come before the Planning Commission on January 19, 2000. She reported on an upcoming presentation to the Board on review procedures for historic resources at the **Oakland Army Base**. The Board requested a field trip. Prentice also reported on reconstruction of **St. Mary' Parish Hall**.

## SPECIAL MEETING: January 24, 2000

Chris Buckley, CEDA, summarized material in the Board packet, the revised language of the proposed Zoning Regulations, and a staff report outlining how the proposed text for landmarks and S-7 District properties differ from the current regulations. All owners of landmarks and S-7 properties were notified of the workshop.

Betty Marvin, **Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey** Coordinator, CEDA, explained that the ratings in general circulation are Survey ratings. The Board system departs from the Survey system by allowing more weight to history. As an example, she illustrated that the Survey rating for the **Sleeping Car Porters building** is Da or Db, but it received a B under the Board system.

Marianne Dreisbach, Jack London Neighborhood Association, expressed concern that all landmarks are to be Class 2; demolition provisions are easier than for Class 1. She also expressed concern over a generality permitting demolition when a public benefit outweighs the public benefit of preserving the landmark. She maintained that a public benefit should be defined to include cultural and architectural benefit as well as economic benefit. She questioned the reference to awnings and signage as minor alterations.



Following brief discussion, it was generally agreed that Board Members are comfortable with staff handling minor alterations; however, the Board can ask to review alterations as provided in the Element and the ordinance. Board Member Allen asked who finalizes a Class 1 designation. Buckley replied that it could be by Board resolution. Director Gould said the matter is within Council's purview, since it is zoning. Board Member Douthat stated her understanding that after the Class 2 designation is complete, a request can be made for reclassification as Class 1 or Class 3. She questioned whether, if such a request is made at the time that all of the Class 2's go to Council, if those requests would then go back to the Board and whether the actual adoption of the Element would be delayed.

#### **SPECIAL MEETING: February 7, 2000**

Chris Buckley, CEDA, summarized the material in the Board packet: the revision of the proposed **Zoning Regulations** and the staff **report outlining how the proposed text for Heritage Properties** differs from current regulations for **Preservation Study List properties**. All owners of such properties were notified of the workshop and were sent a copy of the report describing the proposed changes.

Property owners attending were told their property would be affected only if they planned to demolish or move a building. The issuance of such a permit could be postponed for up to 120 days. A property owner complained about the cost of reproducing historic features; Buckley replied that rules covering alterations are under Residential Design Review which covers all properties, not only historical ones. Another owner asked if change of use would be a problem, and was told historic designation does not affect it.

Betty Marvin, Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey Coordinator, CEDA, said most Study List properties are well documented, adding that the State Historic Building Code is available to Study List properties; it allows alternative ways to achieve safety in building construction that differ from the Uniform Building Code in order to save historic features. Another owner was told the designation would not affect painting. The effect on property taxes was questioned; owner was told there would be none.

A Picardy Drive owner asked if she could add a dormer, which would change her roofline and was told Residential Design Review would pertain to such changes whether or not the property is historic. Board Member Carpentier said that historic designation would help to protect the neighborhood from demolition and undesirable infill, adding that if the district is designated, design review fees for Residential Design Review would be waived, and owners would have the benefit of qualified City staff.

Betty Marvin offered to go to the **Picardy Drive** and **Havenscourt** neighborhoods to meet with local property

owners concerned with their historic houses and possible district designation.

#### **FEBRUARY**

Planning Director Leslie Gould reported that the entire **Cox Cadillac** site was affirmed by the Planning Commission, and the matter will move forward to City Council. The State Historic Preservation Office voted unanimously to place the **Jack London Waterfront Warehouse District** on the National Register. Gould recommended a workshop be held with local register property owners.

In Open Forum, Board heard a report from Lenny Marky on the **Train Station in West Oakland**, which is in terrible condition. He recommended the property be renovated and maintained for use as an RV Park, and he suggested a full presentation be made.

Board heard a presentation by Matt Fisher, Sergio Fisher Architects, responding to an application to restore the marquis and main entry at the **Fox Oakland Theater** (1807-29 Telegraph) an Oakland landmark listed on the National Register. The roof of the building (there are 21 separate roofs) has been protected since early January. The marquis is in two parts, one vertical and original and another horizontal; the latter was replaced in 1935, and plans are to restore it to that period. Board voted to approve the application and suggested the applicant check with the State Historic Preservation Office for possible availability of tax credits. Colors for lighting were also approved.

Board discussed comments heard at public workshops of January 24 and February 7. It was agreed that owners often fail to apply for permits when replacing wood windows with aluminum.

Board voted to approve the application by Tony Acosta, Acting Director, Office of Parks and Recreation, to amend the landmark designation of **Lakeside Park** to include the Lawn Bowling Green as a listed feature for protection.

Board Chair George Lythcott, reported on action taken by the City of Alameda on January 10, 2000, designating their **Training Wall** as a historic resource. Their side of the wall was placed on a list of historic tunnels.

Board Chair Lythcott and Board Member Gilmartin reported on revisions to the design to reconstruct an example of the training wall, noting difficulties with the last design approval; they agreed there was nothing like our stone wall. The Port will reuse whatever it can of the materials.

Board Member Douthat spoke on a presentation and a tour by Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy on February 1, 2000, sponsored by the Port of Oakland, in conjunction with mitigation for removal of the historic training wall; she observed that the Port will return with a revised plan.

Board Secretary Prentice reported on a Draft Landmarks Board Report to City Council, CEDA Committee for March 28, saying Board input is wanted. - *Kathy Olson*



## OHA Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to our members. To submit items, contact OHA at (510) 763-9218, or send information to [oaklandheritage@california.com](mailto:oaklandheritage@california.com).

### CURRENT EXHIBITS

**April 15-June 30, "The Rise and Fall of the East Bay Canning Industry."** Oakland History Room, Main Library, 125 14th St. Exhibit celebrates the colorful history of this important industry with historic photographs and artifacts. Sponsored by Oakland Public Library and the Emeryville Historical Society. Info: 510/238-3222.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 14, Mother's Day Tea,** Cohen-Bray House, 1440 29th Ave. Sit-down tea and house tour. Seatings at 2, 3, and 4pm, reservations required. \$20 general; \$15 senior/youth/members. For info call Patty Reidenbach, 510/843-2960.

**May 16, 7:30pm, "West by Northwest: Great Lodges in the Arts & Crafts Tradition"** by Richard Mohr. BAHA Lecture Series. The Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar Street, Berkeley. Tickets \$10, for info call 510/841-2242 or 510/652-0975.

**May 18, 7:30pm, "Bungalow Kitchens"** Jane Powell. OHA Lecture Series. College Avenue Presbyterian Church, 5951 College Ave. \$8 OHA members / \$10 general; series (4 lectures) \$27 members / \$35 general, 510/763-9218.

**May 19-21, "The Making of Americans, Being a History of a Family's Progress,"** an evening of dance, music, text, and projected images celebrating Gertrude Stein. Alice Arts Center, 1428 Alice, Oakland, 510/238-7222.

**May 21, 2pm, The Big Sleep,** Paramount Theatre; 2025 Broadway, Tickets \$5, info: 510/465-6400.

**May 21, 7 pm, Textiles in Your Vintage House: History, Care, Conservation.** Kaethe Kliot, proprietress of Lacin in Berkeley, will be Alameda Architectural Preservation Society guest speaker. Free for AAPS members, \$5 general. First

Congregational Church, Central Avenue at Chestnut Street, Alameda.

**May 25, 7:30pm, "Outside the Bungalow"** Paul Duchscherer. OHA Lecture Series. College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5951 College. \$8 OHA members / \$10 general, 510/763-9218.

**June 1, 7:30pm, "Arts and Crafts Style and Spirit"** Chase Ewald. OHA Lecture Series. College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5951 College. \$8 OHA members / \$10 general, for info call 510/763-9218.

**June 8, 7:30pm, "Arts and Crafts Textiles,"** Ann Wallace. OHA Lecture Series. College Ave. Presbyterian Church, 5951 College. \$8 OHA members / \$10 general, for info call 510/763-9218.

**June 14-17, "Facing West: The Arts & Crafts Movement in America From Boston to Pasadena,"** conference in Pasadena and LA. For info call Programs in the Arts, NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies, 212/998-7130.

**July 8 - Aug. 27, Sat/Sun. Neighborhood Walking Tours.** OHA's annual series of weekend walking tours will focus on neighborhoods surrounding Lake Merritt, but will also include some of our most popular tours -- Mountain View Cemetery and the Borax Smith Cottages.

**Sept. 10, 11am - 5pm, Alameda Legacy Home Tour 2000.** Tour of historic homes hosted by Alameda Architectural Preservation Society and the Alameda Museum. \$18 advance / \$20 day of the tour. Info: Diane Coler-Dark, 523-5907 or [legacytour@netscape.net](mailto:legacytour@netscape.net).

### TOURS & EXHIBITS

**Oakland Tours,** free guided walking tours of Oakland's landmarks. Wed/Sat, 10am (May- Oct). Tours of historic City Hall and Frank Ogawa Plaza, 1st Tues., 10am. Call 510/238-3234 or [www.oaklandnet.com](http://www.oaklandnet.com) (click on the community link)

**Oakland Historical Landmark Tour,** bus tour sponsored by City of Oakland, East Bay Water & Land Tour, and Port of Oakland, Sat., 1-3pm, departs from front of Oakland Museum, 10th & Fallon, 510/835-1306.

**African American Museum & Library at Oakland,** currently located at Oakland Main Library. Info 510/238-4980.

**Black Panther Legacy Tour,** historical tour conducted by Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation, last Sat. noon-2:30. Advance \$20 adult, \$15 student; \$25 day of tour. Departs from West Oakland Library, 1801 Adeline, 510/986-0660.

**Camron-Stanford House,** an 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt, Wed 11-4, Sun 1-5, \$4 / \$2 (free 1st Sun), 1418 Lakeside Dr., 510/836-1976.

**Cohen-Bray House,** an 1884 Stick Eastlake with original interiors, 1440 29th, 4th Sun, 2pm and by appt. \$5. Victorian Preservation Ctr of Oakland, 532-0704.

**Dunsmuir House & Gardens,** Neo-classical Revival mansion, 1st Sun, 1 & 2pm; Wed, 11 & noon; \$5/\$4; grounds open Tu-Fri, 10-4, free, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, 510/615-5555 or [www.dunsmuir.org](http://www.dunsmuir.org).

**Mountain View Cemetery,** free docent tours, 2nd Sat, 10am, 5000 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, 510/658-2588.

**Paramount Theatre,** Art Deco movie palace, tour includes areas not usually open to the public, 1st & 3rd Sat., 10am, 2025 Broadway, \$1, 510/893-2300.

**Pardee Home Museum,** an 1868 Italianate villa, home to two mayors and one California governor. Fri/Sat, noon, reservations recommended; \$5 adult, 12 and under free. 672 11th St, Oakland. 510/444-2187 or [www.pardeehome.org](http://www.pardeehome.org).

### MEETINGS OF INTEREST

**OHA Board of Directors,** 1st Mon, 7pm; for agenda/location, 510/763-9218.

**OHA Preservation Action Committee,** monthly; for agenda, time and location, call (510) 763-9218.

**Friends of the Oakland Fox (FOOF),** 2nd and 4th Thurs, 5:30-7pm, Camron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Dr., Oakland. For info, call (510) 763-9218.

**Neighborhoods, Schools, and Program Committees:** call (510) 763-9218.

**Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board** 2nd Mon, 4-8pm (Open Forum, 4pm), City Hall, Hearing Rm 1. Call 510/ 238-3941 for agenda.

**City Planning Commission,** alternate Weds., time varies, City Hall. Call (510) 238-3941 for agenda.

**City Council,** every Tues, 7:30pm, City Hall, Council Chambers. Call 238-3941.



## OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE

PO. Box 12425 ♦ Oakland CA 94604 ♦ (510) 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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**OHA NEWS** welcomes contributions -- research projects large or small, historic photos, and reports on preservation issues or events. Submissions on disk should be in Wordperfect or Word for PC. Submissions by e-mail may be sent to oaklandheritage@california.com.

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## OAKLAND HISTORY NOTES: The Defender's Recreation Club

An Oakland building with a long and varied life, the Defender's Recreation Club was situated on the southeast corner of 13th and Harrison, opposite the Hotel Oakland. The Club began life as a dance hall, dubbed Reed Hall, in 1896. After the century's turn, the Hall was rented to sundry organizations, including the Ebell Society, a women's cultural and philanthropic organization, and the Reliance Club, an athletic club. From 1911 to 1915, the hall was home to the Oakland Chamber of Commerce. With the advent of World War I, a local entertainment center was sought for visiting soldiers and sailors. The War Camp Community Service, an association of local women eager to assist the war effort, secured Reed Hall, and after staunch

clean-up efforts, the Club was opened on Feb. 18, 1918. "Several thousand men tasted of its hospitality for the first time on this occasion," wrote one observer, "and each one voluntarily constituted himself a committee of one to spread the tidings of this new soldiers' and sailors' community home far and wide to comrades in the service." The Club became the proverbial home away from home. "If one of our boys needs the club he should find a welcome awaiting him. It has therefore never been closed since its opening, furnishing for all men in uniform lounging rooms with easy chairs and couches, writing desks and club stationery, billiard and pool tables, pianos, Victrola and other musical instruments, information and check facilities—all free—while the canteen and shop sold simple meals, smokes and chocolates at cost prices." Sleeping facilities were also available.

The Defender's Recreation Club located at 13th and Harrison in Oakland is shown in a photo from 1918. ( *Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library* )



The immense popularity of the Club prompted expansion efforts. Vacant land behind the Club on 12th Street was donated and, with free labor provided by local labor unions, an addition was built in four days. The new facility offered a dance room and sun porch. In 1919, following the end of the war, the building was purchased by the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, an order of Freemasons, and the structure was henceforth known as the Aahmes Temple. When the Nobles found a new home in 1960, the building was demolished and replaced by a gas station. A place which was once home to doughboys, a philanthropic club, an athletic group, and the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, is now the site of the Frank G. Mar Community Housing. - *William W. Sturm*

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