



*Oakland History Room*

Oaklanders celebrate the arrival of Western Pacific Railway Company's first passenger train. Southern Pacific Railroad's waterfront monopoly had limited the expansion of wholesale district businesses for 40 years. This monopoly ended in 1909 when Western Pacific won a court battle affirming the city of Oakland's right to grant Western Pacific a franchise and to control docks and other tideland improvements.

## Celebrating Oakland's historic Waterfront Warehouse District

On July 11, the Oakland City Council adopted a resolution that will put signs on Interstate 880 directing motorists to the National Register Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District.

Constructed and installed by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), the signs are one of the many benefits of earning a place on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the resolution authorizing the highway signs describes the district's architecture as "Oakland's best and largest collection of utilitarian buildings of the first half of the 20th century," the district is more than just a pretty place.

Oakland's Waterfront Warehouse District played a pivotal role in our city's industrial development from World War I

to shortly after World War II and today the area best conveys through its physical features the close connections between the Port of Oakland, the railroads, and the city's rise to prominence as an industrial and shipping center in the 20th century.

Before the district's development—in an area west of the district—a produce exchange and a number of wholesalers and jobbers set up shop in a neighborhood known at the time as the "wholesale district."

Most occupants of this early "wholesale district" were branches of San Francisco enterprises. According to an *Oakland Tribune* report at the time, these concerns primarily supplied the local retail market. The expansion of these "wholesale district" businesses had been

limited for 40 years by Southern Pacific's waterfront monopoly.

This monopoly ended in 1909 when Western Pacific Railroad Company won a court battle affirming the City of Oakland's right to grant Western Pacific a "wharfing out" franchise and to control docks and other tideland improvements.

In 1909, Western Pacific completed its track and built a freight depot in the heart of the area known today as the Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District. Western Pacific's Oakland arrival was a major milestone in Oakland's development because the railroad made it possible for Oakland to recover control of and reap the benefits of its waterfront.

*see DISTRICT on page 3*



*Leal Charonnat*

Once off the foundation and on the street, it is generally smooth sailing. Traveling at just 2–3 miles-per-hour, a house moves at quite a clip across a city.

## How to move a house

### Or, how I had fun being a nervous wreck one Saturday

So, how does one move a house?

This is a question that is heard more and more, particularly in inner cities like Oakland that have an abundance of older homes. With the year 2000 Bay Area building boom reaching into older neighborhoods, projects are being proposed on land already occupied with building. If

the building is a house, rather than demolish it to make way for modernity, the option is there to move it.

The answer to how move a house is, in short, very carefully, and ideally all in one piece!

Although just the concept of moving something as big as a house may seem daunting, houses are, by their very nature, quite easy to move. Typical western construction—called “platform,” which means the walls of each story sit on the floor joists below—makes for a very tough structure. Once a couple of very large beams are slipped underneath a house, the building itself can hang together quite well for the move.

In the city of Oakland, for most projects that involve demolition of a building, the building owner is required to make a “good-faith effort” in finding a new home for the home. This means putting the structure up for sale for the customary price of one dollar. Other steps an owner needs to take include having the house surveyed for hazardous materials, typically asbestos used in and around

## A message from the president

When people ask me what it’s like to be president of OHA, I often describe it as “my full-time unpaid job.” Until now, I managed to juggle it along with my other jobs: fixing up houses, being a writer, and doing restoration consulting.

Now I am staring at a deadline (Jan. 1, 2001) for my second book, *Bungalow Bathrooms*. I began to realize that something would have to give if I was ever to finish the book. I have asked the board of directors to grant me a leave of absence for a few months, so that I can concentrate on the book without distractions.

OHA Vice-President Pamela Magnuson-Peddle will be assuming my duties until I return, and I am sure she will do a fine job. And Jo Ann Coleman, our administrative director, will assure that everything continues to run smoothly.

Many battles lie ahead of us, and I hope that all our members will pitch in to help Pamela and the other board members in the months ahead, to fight for the preservation of the wonderful historic buildings that make Oakland such a special place to live.

— Jane Powell

heating ducts is the worst offender. Cost of such removal is generally minimal. The new owner generally takes possession from the floor joists up on moving day. Everything below stays as part of the original property. The new owner of the building should not be held responsible for removing any part of the foundation, etc., but

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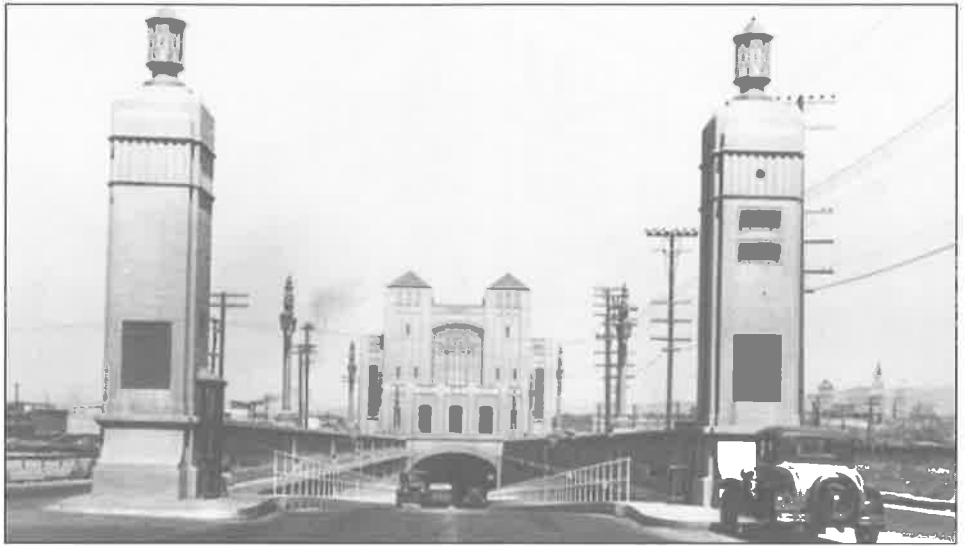
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#### Oakland History Room

Named for Alameda County's engineer, George A. Posey, the Posey Tube was constructed in 1928. The tube facilitated the expansion of Oakland's shipping facilities and ushered in the automobile age.

It replaced two swing-span bridges that crossed the estuary. The bridges had drawn the ire of both large vessels whose movement was delayed and motorists who were subjected to long and frequent waits whenever the bridge had to close to automobile traffic for ship passage.



## District

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In 1914, one "wholesale district" occupant struck out to expand its market. W. P. Fuller Paint Co., at the time the largest and oldest paint company on the Pacific Coast, constructed the district's first warehouse at 201 Third St., thus beginning the district's period of significance. From this location, W. P. Fuller began to distribute paint and painting supplies throughout the western United States via the Western Pacific railroad.

Three years later, in 1917, the American Bag & Union Hide Co. re-located from the "wholesale district" to 299 Third St., across the street from the Western Pacific freight depot. At its inception, The American Bag & Union Hide Co. dealt in hides and wool and processed used bags for resale to local feed mills and farmers in nearby communities.

After moving into the district, the company developed an innovative process for vacuum cleaning and mending used burlap and cotton bags.

The American Bag & Union Hide Co. eventually came to offer a complete line of new and used textile bags to, among others, rail and water shippers.

Between 1920 and 1923, six firms erected warehouses in the district. Two

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# The ins and outs of the National Register

With its April 24, 2000 listing, the Waterfront Warehouse District became the third district in Oakland to be listed on the National Register of Historical Places. Prepared by the Jack London Neighborhood Association (JLNA).

The nomination cleared its final hurdle Feb. 10, when the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously recommended the district receive official recognition for both its architectural significance "as a distinctive, unified, and well-preserved collection of utilitarian buildings of the first half of the 20th century" and its historical importance "for its association with Oakland's industrial development from World War I to shortly after World War II."

Once the Commission approves a nomination, the property is submitted to the National Park Service by the State Historic Preservation Officer; signed and dated by the Keeper of the National Register.

The property is formally listed on the National Register when the Keeper's action is published in the Federal Register. The post-Commission process was completed April 24, 2000.

**The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.**

The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The state of California maintains two similar lists: State Registered Landmarks and the California Register of Historical Resources.

And the city of Oakland has its own list of Oakland Landmarks and Preservation Districts. Each of these programs recognizes historic resources that are deemed worthy of preservation by that level of government.

see **REGISTER** on page 7



*Jack London Neighborhood Association*

In 1928, Safeway Stores broke ground at 201 Fourth St. on a warehouse adjoining the Western States Grocery Co. warehouse. Safeway employed both warehouses to receive and distribute canned goods and foodstuffs to its 2,400 retail branches and support facilities on three continents. Safeway also housed its executive offices at the Fourth Street address.

## District

*Continued from page 3*

of the six firms: Saroni Wholesale Sugar and Rice, 318 Harrison St. and Tyre Bros. Glass, 300-10 Webster St. relocated to the district from the "wholesale district."

### Leading the way

Business publications of the day reported that Western Pacific's presence drew the businesses to the district. Each built spurs off Western Pacific's tracks and became major railroad customers.

For example, Tyre Bros. Glass, one of California's largest glass corporations, distributed its plate, window, and building glass products by rail throughout the western United States.

C. L. Greeno Company, 255 Fourth St., a Cincinnati-based firm, located its Pacific Coast headquarters in the district to receive upholstery and bedding supplies via rail from its Ohio factory for distribution throughout the area west of Denver.

Favorable rail rates made it more economical for firms that wished to reach western markets to establish a distribution outlet on the Pacific Coast rather than build manufacturing plants in western cities not on the coast.

While the early district warehouses distributed a wide variety of products,

after 1923 most new warehouses were built for wholesale grocery purposes. And while the early warehouses solidified Western Pacific's triumph, it is these later warehouses that, through the tonnage they shipped by water, directly contributed to the port's expansion and Oakland's industrial development.

Before 1926, Oakland was purely a local port. The cargo passing over its piers consisted largely of low-grade bulk commodities such as sand, coal, sulphur, ores, and lumber. No foreign steamship lines were calling on a regular schedule.

The district's businesses, particularly the ones arriving in the mid '20s through the end of the '30s, upgraded the port's cargo mix, introducing high valued packaged goods such as canned fruits and vegetables, and manufactured articles.

In 1926, Western States Grocery Co. built a four-story warehouse, 247 Fourth St. in the district. Western States Grocery served retail grocers from Klamath Falls, Oregon to Bakersfield, California and east into Nebraska. At the time it settled in the district, it was the largest grocery wholesaler on the Pacific Coast.

Safeway Stores, which is often credited with introducing an innovative warehouse distribution system, subsequently purchased Western States Grocery Co.

### Safeway breaks ground

In 1928, Safeway Stores, 201 Fourth St., broke ground on a warehouse adjoining the Western States Grocery Co. warehouse. Safeway Stores employed both warehouses to receive and distribute canned goods and foodstuffs to its 2,400 retail branches and support facilities on three continents. Safeway Stores also housed its executive offices in its 201 Fourth St. warehouse.

The mutual relationship between the Port and the district's wholesale grocers continued unabated through the 1930s. In 1926, the predecessor to S&W Fine Foods, Inc. moved into a three-story concrete warehouse at 255 Third St. In 1928, Oakland Wholesale Grocery built a three-story concrete warehouse at 283 Fourth St. and the Makins Produce Co. completed a two-story brick warehouse at 278 Fourth St.

Two years later, in 1929, Poultry Producers of Central California built a two-story, concrete warehouse at 229 Harrison St. Although built in 1931 for Pacific Freight Lines, the one-story concrete warehouse at 426 Alice St. was leased and occupied by United Grocers Ltd. From this location, United Grocers received and distributed canned goods

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*Jack London Neighborhood Association*

A modern-day view of the Posey Tube and the American Bag Company—both part of Oakland's newest National Landmark.

## In Memoriam

JoAnne Hausler

December 8, 1937  
– October 22, 2000

## District

*Continued from page 4*

and groceries to its 800 retail branches. By the mid-1930s, nearly all the district's warehouses were converted to wholesale groceries.

### Breaking the mold

The one building built during this period that did not serve a wholesale grocery purpose was the 1929 Oakland Plumbing Supply Company warehouse, 309 Fourth St. Oakland Plumbing Supply Company was one of the largest distributors of plumbing, heating, and engineering supplies on the Pacific Coast.

Although not a grocer, the company was a significant port customer. A 1936 Port of Oakland publication noted that the Oakland Plumbing Company "in the course of each year accounts for a goodly share of the total tonnage handled through the Port of Oakland's terminals."

The Posey Tube, constructed beneath the district in 1928, facilitated the expansion of Oakland's shipping facilities and also ushered in the automobile age. The Posey Tube replaced two swing-span bridges that crossed Oakland's estuary.

The bridges drew the ire of both large vessels whose movement was delayed and motorists subjected to long and frequent delays when the bridge closed for ship passage. The architect of the Posey Tube's portals set a decorative automobile wheel in the portal's concrete facade to underscore the Tube's connection with the automobile age.

### Car, truck and rail

The district's businesses also supported the development of Oakland's car and truck transportation infrastructure. Saroni Sugar & Rice, which had located to the district in 1922 and, among other things, imported sugar cane from China, noted in a 1936 Port of Oakland publication that its business now required spur track access as well as two Autocar trucks.

In 1937, S&W Fine Foods, Inc. built its own warehouse at 200 Fourth St., leaving its leased location at 255 Third St. S&W built the warehouse to accommodate rail and truck shipping and receiving.

Mirroring a general economic downturn in the 1930s, new construction in the district slowed until after World War II. During the economic revival that followed the end of the war, six one-story, Moderne brick warehouses were added

to the district. Built with truck openings rather than rail car loading docks, these buildings also contributed to the development and rise of Oakland's road transportation network and the new economic development it supported.

### Scale and proportion

In their scale, aesthetics, and functionality, the district's warehouses embody the elements of Albert Kahn-inspired, early 20th century utilitarian architecture. The warehouses have a unifying sense of scale and proportion.

With the exception of the four story Western States Grocery warehouse and the five-story Safeway Stores warehouse, the district's warehouses are one to three stories. All are an eighth to one-half block in size (100' x 75' to 100' x 300').

The district's warehouses are substantial in construction and efficient in the concentration of space. Most are constructed of steel and/or concrete.

Many incorporate pilaster and bay construction such as the Tower Lofts at 255 Third St.; C. L. Greeno at 255 Fourth St. and the Poultry Producers at 229 Harrison St. Large expanses of industrial sash predominate at Saroni Sugar &

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*Oakland History Room*

This birds-eye view of Oakland shows the shore of the estuary that would later become a busy warehouse district.

## District

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Rice, 318 Harrison, Oakland Plumbing, 309 Fourth St. and Allied Paper at 283 Fourth St.

Ornamentation is achieved with an economy of means and materials and can be found in nearly every building: some examples of decorative detailing:

- the pilaster of C. L. Greeno, 255 Fourth St.
- the Art Deco elements of the S&W Warehouse, 200 Fourth St.
- the stepped parapet of the W. P. Fuller Company Annex, 225 Third St.
- the polychrome brick of Saroni Rice & Sugar, 318 Harrison St.
- the American Bag Building, 299 Third St.
- the blue, diamond-shaped tile of the Allied Paper warehouse.

Most of the district's buildings and structures were state-of-the-art when constructed.

For example, in 1917, the American Bag Building was embellished with the decorative brickwork just then becoming popular in industrial architecture.

The Posey Tube Oakland Portal (415 Harrison St.) incorporated the Art Deco

style in the early years of the style's popularity. Commenting in 1996, California historian Frank Lortie called the portal, "a monumental, though restrained, statement about America's architectural trends in the 1920s."

### Architects of note

Unlike most early 20th-century utilitarian architecture, notable architects designed most of the district's warehouses. Couchot, Rosenwald & Roeth designed the four-story Western States Grocery Co. warehouse, 247 Fourth St., and the five-story Safeway Stores Corporate Headquarters, 201 Fourth St., the district's most imposing buildings. Maurice Couchot (c. 1871–1933) was an internationally prominent structural engineer and reinforced concrete expert.

Walter Reed, who as a member of the Oakland firm Reed & Corlett, designed many of Oakland's institutional buildings, designed the district's first warehouse (201 Third St.).

San Francisco architect H. C. Baumann (1890–1960), who specialized in elaborate apartment buildings, designed the Poultry Producers warehouse (229 Harrison St.). Before turning to industrial design, Baumann reportedly designed over 500 San Francisco apartment buildings between 1925 and 1931.

Noted Moderne architects Francis Harvey Slocombe (417 Harrison St. and 432 Harrison St.) and John B. Anthony (425 Harrison St.) designed three of the district's post-World War II Moderne warehouses.

The much sought-after architect Henry Meyers (1867–1943), in his capacity as Alameda County architect, designed the monumental Posey Tube Oakland Portal. Meyers is credited with overseeing the completion of the Kohl Building, reputedly San Francisco's first steel-frame office building and a model for San Francisco's subsequent steel-frame construction. During his 40-year career, he designed mostly commercial buildings and public structures, including ten Veterans Memorial Buildings.

The prolific Oakland architect A. W. Smith (1864–1933) designed three district buildings: 300 Webster St.; 267 Fourth St.; and 401 Alice St. Smith was known for his design of highly individual buildings, most notably mannered and exuberant Craftsman and Shingle houses and decorative brick commercial buildings, the latter of which describes his three district contributions.

The district's period of significance ends in 1954 after a few wholesale grocers began to leave the district and those that remained became collectively less significant factors in the port and Oakland's economic development.

The year 1954 also marks the completion of the elevated downtown section of Interstate 880 constructed at the district's northern edge. The freeway's construction opened up outlying areas for development and rendered it less necessary for industry to locate near the waterfront for rail and water access.

While some of the district's warehouses have been converted to offices and residences housing Internet companies, professional service firms, and live-work loft dwellers, the district still maintains its connection to the grocery business. The Internet grocery retailer, Webvan, makes frequent deliveries to district denizens.

— Wilda White

## Register

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Each program has its own set of criteria that properties must meet in order to be listed, and each approaches preservation in a different way. The Federal program, for example, offers income tax incentives for preservation but has no direct control over land use (including alterations and demolitions).

Oakland's program, like most city-level programs, offers no tax incentives, but is directly involved in land use decisions through regulations that require design review for alterations and demolitions of locally listed properties.

Throughout the country, only a small percentage of properties eligible for listing in these (or similar) programs have actually been nominated. In Oakland, for example, more than 2,500 properties are eligible for listing on the National Register, according to City Planning Department staff, but only 120 have actually been through the process. That number is less than 5 percent of the eligible properties in Oakland. Why so few? Looking at the nomination process for the three National Register Districts in Oakland may shed some light.

Although 43 properties in Oakland have been individually listed on the National Register since its inception in 1966, the first district was not listed until 1996. That nomination, for the Harrison and 15th Streets Historic District, covered eight buildings (7 contributors and one non-contributor) including

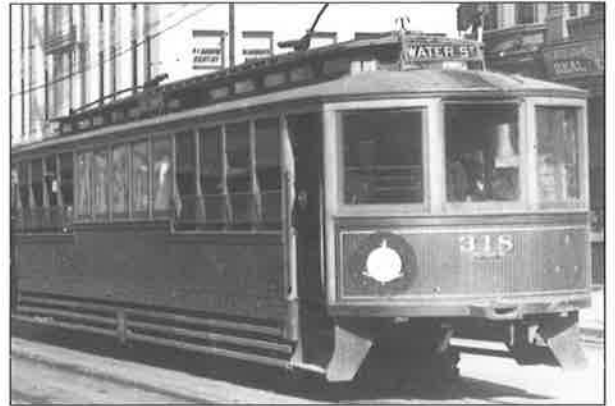
- the Hotel Harrison (1914, Olver and Thomas, architects) located at 14th and Harrison streets

- the Hotel Coit (1924, Leonard Ford, architect) at 15th and Harrison

- the White Building (1924, Clay Burrell, architect) at 15th and Webster.

A private property owner, interested in the historic preservation tax credit program and the State Historic Building Code, initiated the application process. The property owner hired a professional architectural historian to prepare the nomination at a cost of several thousand

*Oakland History Room*  
Still tucked along the waterfront next to Jack London Square, Water Street was the end station for this streetcar plying its way along Broadway.



dollars. The 18-page nomination form (plus maps and photographs) was submitted May 3, 1996; the district was officially listed Nov. 7, 1996.

Two years later the Downtown Oakland Historic District became the second district listed on the National Register. This district contains 58 properties (45 contributors and 13 non-contributors) including

- the Key System building (1911-12, Frederick Meyer, architect) at 1100 Broadway, Oakland's first skyscraper (1904-06, Walter Mathews, architect) at 13th and Broadway

- the Oakland Tribune Tower (1922-23, Edward Foulkes, architect)

- Oakland City Hall (1911-14, Palmer & Hornbostel, architects)

- the Plaza Building (1913, O'Brien and Werner, architects) at 15th and Frank Ogawa Plaza

- the Broadway Building (1907-08, Llewellyn Dutton Co., architect) at 14th, Broadway, and San Pablo gore

- the Cathedral Building (1913-14, B.G. McDougall, architect) at the gore at Broadway and Telegraph.

The city of Oakland initiated the application process as part of a program to mitigate its demolition of the Dalziel and the Pardee Buildings in order to construct two new city office buildings at 150 and 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza. Professional staff of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey prepared the nomination with assistance of several volunteers. The 50-page nomination form (plus maps and

photographs) was submitted January 23, 1998; the district was officially listed July 1, 1998.

The Waterfront Warehouse District is the third district in Oakland to be listed on the National Register. This district comprises 30 properties (25 contributors and five non-contributors) including

- the Oakland Portal of the Posey Tube (1928, Henry Meyers, architect) at Fourth and Harrison streets

- the American Bag Building (1923, Leonard Thomas, designer) at Third and Harrison streets

- the C.L. Greeno Building (1923, W.K. Owen, architect) at Fourth and Alice streets

- the former Safeway Corporate Headquarters (1929-30, Cochot, Rosenwald & Roeth, architects) at Fourth and Jackson streets.

The National Register nomination process is a serious undertaking that can take six to 12 months. A property owner, the city, a neighborhood organization, or anyone with the motivation to bring official recognition to the importance of a property or group of properties can initiate it. Minimum expenses are for photography and maps.

Additional resources can be spent for experienced professionals to write the text. Or, as JLNA has demonstrated, dedicated volunteers can successfully draft an application at minimum cost and ultimately get their neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

— Gary Knecht



*Leal Charonnat*

Moving the house also involved the police department (and other paid assistance on moving day) who helped determine an appropriate route. Since house moves do require some traffic control—like making sure the house safely negotiates obstacles like freeway underpasses—moves are generally done early in the morning on weekends.



## House

*Continued from page 2*

should be allowed to alter the lot including regrading to make moving the house easier. The moving company can advise you on what you need to do in order to facilitate the move.

The economics are such that for the cost of a move, a new foundation, some repair work to the inevitable cracks in the walls, and maybe some remodeling work, the new owner gets a complete building of a style and character not normally found in a modern building.

Total budget for a moved house may be between 25 to 50 percent of a new house, depending on the level of finish and modernity imposed on the old building.

### Find a home for the home

The actual process of moving a house can be broken down into three episodes. First, getting ready for moving day; second, moving day; and third, settling in.

The first obvious step is to find a place to move a house. Being close is not a requirement, although that may make

things easier. However, once a house is on the move, moving across the street or across town isn't that different. Even out of town shouldn't be overlooked. It's not that far fetched to move a house down to the docks and lift it on a barge bound for some other bay side community!

### Check with the city

The very next step is to check with the city's building department in charge of coordinating/permitting building moves. For Oakland, that would be David Rashe. Call him at 238-3389.

Generally, besides a moving permit, a foundation permit is required. (California State law exempts moved buildings from having to conform to the Title-24 State energy code.) If the building is to be remodeled at its new location, then a more extensive remodeling permit will be required.

A route needs to be selected. Coordinating the route to take will be done with the advice and consent of the city and utility companies. Some lines can be easily moved if need be (telephone, TV-cable), and others not so easily moved if at all (fiber-optic cables, power lines, etc.) The utilities will all

need to be consulted, including the railroad if crossing any tracks—the route checked line-by-line, block-by-block.

Once a route is selected, agreements with each utility company will be made to be on hand moving day to move or raise any utility lines that will be in the way. A detailed survey before the move is imperative.

Don't be surprised when the mover stops in the middle of the street for an offending-what-looks-like-a-telephone-line only to be told by the telephone crew that "that's cable. We don't touch cable!"

### Rules to move by

The three rules of checking out a route are: survey, survey, survey. This can also be done with the guidance of a house moving company.

The permitting process will also involve the police department (another paid assistance on moving day) who will also help determine what route is appropriate. Since house moves do require some traffic control, house moves are generally done early in the morning on weekends.

*see HOUSE on page 10*



# Cox Cadillac development plans

Avalon Bay LLC, a developer of rental residential property, is now working on plans for a substantial development on the recently-purchased Cox Cadillac site at the prominent corner of Bay Place and Harrison Street. Avalon Bay's spokesperson Tim Stanley has attended various meetings to discuss the project with neighborhood people and some Oakland Heritage Alliance members.

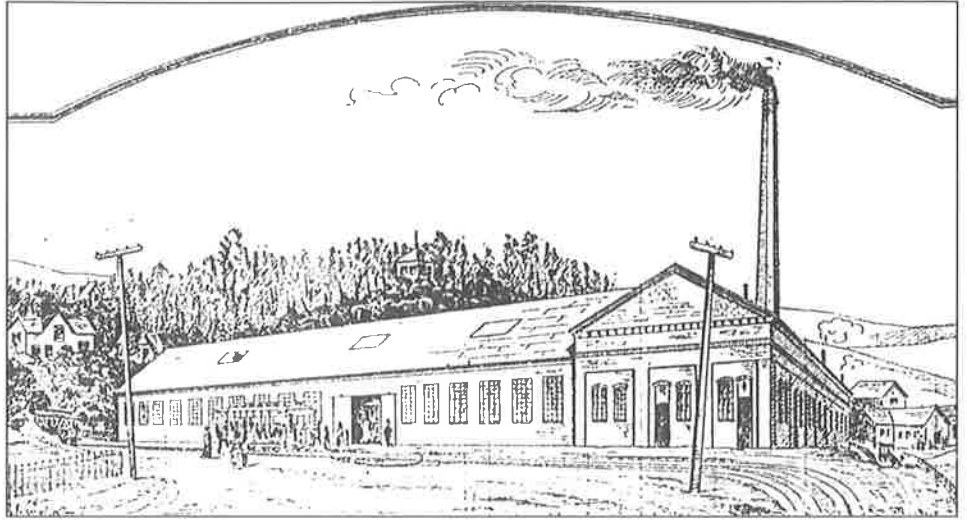
The preliminary plans include 176 apartment units, and the demolition of the old warehouse and shop buildings on the site. The new building would come to about the same place on Harrison Street; that is, just along the sidewalk, but the entire structure aside from the showroom would be supplanted by new construction.

Most of the lot would be built upon, with a two-story parking structure supporting a five-story apartment building. Along the Harrison Street side, there would be some common-use areas at street level.

At meetings, the developers have declared their intention to preserve the former auto showroom component of the historic complex. They have hired Rosemary Muller of Muller & Caulfield Architects, a local firm, to work on this aspect of the project.

A number of issues are under discussion with regard to the rehabilitation of this historic structure, including whether the attractive tile floor can be preserved, whether interior demising walls can be avoided, and what kind of tenant could be found for the 11,000-square-foot space.

While community people have generally been receptive to Stanley's preliminary plans, a number of questions have been raised about the project's height and the effects of its density. Some also question whether the project really needs to demolish so much of the historic site in order to build anew. Several people pointed out the historic importance of the site as an early transit hub, home to a



*Oakland History Room*

In what is likely the earliest rendering of today's "Cox Cadillac" building, this 1893 *Oakland Tribune* sketch shows the building's original use as the Piedmont Cable Company's car barn.

cable car barn and long associated with transportation uses in one way or another.

In particular, neighbors are questioning Avalon Bay's plan for five-story frame construction, when uniform building code standards are for a maximum of four stories. Moreover they question in general whether the project is too dense for the site, for the adjoining neighborhood, and for the sensitive treatment of the historic building which will remain.

No project of this type—five stories above a two-story garage—has been built in Oakland, and so it brings up numerous engineering, quality, safety and design questions in addition to the usual environmental review issues.

Several years ago, Adams Point preservationists proposed the entire site for city landmarking; this was eventually approved by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and by the Planning Commission. Now it is due to be sent to the city council. In addition to the city's staff report concerning a full landmarking, the city manager has produced a second staff report recommending landmark status

for the showroom only, rather than the whole property. To allow time for further discussions among historic groups, neighborhood people and the developer, Councilperson Nancy Nadel has requested a delay in hearing the application, but it will probably move forward fairly soon.

Some more minor issues seem easier to work out. The developer appears willing to consider working with the city and neighborhood to improve the long stair-and walkway behind the property, which runs between Harrison Street and Vernon Terrace, which connects to one of the historic streetcar stops in the neighborhood, and which provides a convenient pedestrian accessway.

And Avalon Bay seems willing to work with the neighborhood on various smaller issues concerning management and maintenance of the property. OHA members who are concerned about this important site may want to consult the OHA office for updated status information, and to let their city council representatives know how they feel.

—Naomi Schiff



## OUR APOLOGIES

In our last newsletter we extended a thank you to all of our many volunteers. Unfortunately, as often happens, we unintentionally left someone out.

Suzanna Villarreal was another one of our generous tour leaders. We would like to thank Suzanna and all of the members who give of their time. We truly would not be able to function as an organization without them.

## House

*Continued from page 8*

The height of a house needs to be measured—from the bottom of the floor joist. That distance, plus the house-mover's carriage height, is the moving height. It's not unusual to have to give a house a "haircut" prior to the move to keep its height below a certain level. Do this with the guidance of your architect or engineer to keep the structural integrity of the building during the move. Any brick chimneys will need to be carefully removed. The original firebox and mantel can stay, with suitable support.

The route is approved, the (experienced) moving contractor hired, the permits issued, the utilities lined up—you're almost ready for move day. Your plumber will cut and remove gas and water lines.

Your electrician will remove the electrical connection (the utility company removes the drop.) The mover will now raise the house on blocks—"lift and hold weight"—and put it on wheels prior to moving day. Your contractor carpenter will remove that part of the offending roof, if need be.

Your house is now ready to make its move. On move day you will want to be in touch with all the utilities. Getting their bosses weekend cell phone numbers is a must. A crew from one of the utilities may not show up, and you will need them! When the mover first tries the move the house, the building will shake and groan at first. After all, it may have

## EXTENDING A WARM WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS (AUGUST–SEPTEMBER)

Eleanor Alperton  
Mary Becker & Robert Klingler  
Joan Berler  
Andrea Bishop  
John Dalal  
Dakota Eckard/Dakota Art  
Adrienne DeBisschop  
Joadiah S. Eckman  
Susan Ehrens & Leland Rice  
Marilyn Hesser  
Bob Howell  
Norma Keck  
Allan Mann & Shinji Morikawa  
Thomas Murray  
Victoria Richardson  
Dennis K. Rothhaar  
Elizabeth A. Sibley  
Jerry Thomas  
Richard L. Thorne  
Steve & Heather Walker  
Hale Zukas

sat here for a hundred years! The forces on a house may be similar to a strong earthquake!

### Smooth sailing

Once off the foundation and on the street, it is generally smooth sailing. Traveling at just 2–3 miles-per-hour, a house move travels at quite a clip across a city!

Finally, you arrive at the new site. Most likely, the mover will back the house in onto the lot. This may take sometime. Afterwards, the mover will again lift the house and set it on blocks—cribbing. Now the foundation contractor will build a foundation directly underneath the house.

When the foundation is ready, the house mover will return to drop the house down on its new foundation. The finishing interior work will commence. The house will be better than new, ready to serve another 100 years.

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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.

One afterthought: For those homes that started out as only one story, typically they can easily end up as two.

The moved house will be raised about a foot higher than the finished first story. A new first level will be built, then the house lowered. Thus, the size of a house can be doubled.

Obviously, this requires some sensitivity to the original design, as well as how and where to locate a staircase, etc.

It's something to think about.

—Leal Charonnat



# The politics of preservation

When Jack London Neighborhood Association first embarked on the nomination process, I looked ahead to the day when a group of JLNA members would climb into one of our cars for a road trip to Sacramento to attend the meeting where our nomination would be considered.

But when JLNA finally received the state's information packet and meeting notice, it became clear that we would not be taking that trip to Sacramento.

My first clue was the map included in the packet with the heading "Getting to China Lake from Your Airport Arrival." Reading further, I learned that the State Historic Resources Commission would consider the Waterfront Warehouse District's National Register eligibility at its quarterly meeting at the Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, California, a three-hour drive north of Los Angeles in the Indian Wells valley. My road trip fantasy turned out to be just that.

Because of the meeting's remote location, just two JLNA members attended. Our journey began at 5:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, when a JLNA member drove Peter Birkholz and me to the Oakland Airport to catch a 6:55 a.m. flight to Ontario, California. At the state's instruction, days earlier Peter and I had sent a visit request to China Lake's Commanding Officer asking for a security pass to enter the Naval Air Warfare Center.

Upon our arrival, we picked up a rental car and headed to China Lake. The trip was uneventful except for a few minutes in the Cajon Pass where we hit a patch of fog so thick that we could not see an inch in front of us. A week later we heard that the same fog-shrouded stretch of highway had caused a major, multiple-car pileup with several fatalities.

I grew up on Army bases and as soon as we arrived at the front gate of the Naval Air Warfare Center, everything I loved and hated about military bases came back to me. Although not as lush

and picturesque as the Army bases I grew up on, the desert-based Warfare Center possessed the same stillness and orderliness that I have come to associate with military bases.

Despite the Warfare Center's catchy slogan, "Weapons that Work!" it was impossible to tell exactly what went on around this arid expanse. Peter and I circled the base several times before actual-

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**I was braced for a barrage of questions challenging the nomination, but the commissioners were very enthusiastic about JLNA's nomination.**

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ly finding the meeting room. The state had given us a building number but we soon discovered that there was no rhyme or reason to the numbers the military had assigned to each building.

The solemnity of the occasion did not dawn on me until Peter and I strode into the meeting room and saw the assembled commissioners, the multiple slide projectors, the row of state staffers, and a gallery full of citizen-preservation experts, all flanked by the California and United States flags. For the first time, I worried that the commissioners would not honor the district I held so dear with National Register status.

The meeting began promptly at 1 p.m. with a call to order and the pledge of allegiance. Two state historians presented a slide show of all nine nominated properties on the commission's agenda. Although properties in Los Angeles County dominated the agenda, I beamed with pride when slides of the Waterfront Warehouse District flashed on the screen.

My enthusiasm faded when one Commissioner, joined by several others, belittled the nomination of Santa Barbara's Virginia Hotel, complaining that the "junk" being nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places dismayed him. I glanced at Peter, asking with my eyes whether the Commission would view our nomination as "junk." After a rancorous debate, the Commission voted by a narrow margin to recommend the hotel's listing on the National Register.

When it came time to consider the Waterfront Warehouse District nomination, the state historian assigned to our nomination summarized the reasons for the District's National Register eligibility and reported that the state had received three letters opposing the nomination (out of 166 property owners), several letters in support, and a letter from the city of Oakland saying that it could not support the nomination.

In spite of the three notarized letters opposing the nomination, no opponents of the nomination attended the hearing. Both Peter and I spoke in favor of the nomination.

I was braced for a barrage of questions challenging the nomination, but the commissioners were actually very enthusiastic about JLNA's nomination.

Commissioner Herbert H. Brin, who holds the commission's ethnic historian seat, made the motion to recommend placing the District on the National Register of Historic Places. "Anyone who knows anything about literature and Jack London's role in California history would be proud, as I am, to follow Jack London Neighborhood Association's request, and recommend placing the Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District on the National Register of Historic Places," Commissioner Brin said.

see **POLITICS** page 12



## Politics

*continued from page 11*

The motion was quickly seconded, practically in unison.

Commissioner Stephen L. Taber, a San Francisco attorney who serves as the commission's historian, kicked off the discussion.

Referring to a letter received from the city of Oakland, Commissioner Taber said "this letter is similar to the one we received when we were considering the nomination of the Montgomery Ward building."

"It is indicative of a fundamental misunderstanding of the National Register of Historic Places and this commission's process. Someone should take these city officials aside and educate them ... It is kind of annoying seeing the same thing coming back," Taber continued.

### Noting a conflict

Before Peter and I arrived that day, no JLNA member had seen or heard about a city of Oakland letter. Signed by City Council President Ignacio de la Fuente acting for Mayor Jerry Brown who as a District property owner had a conflict of interest, the city's letter said in part:

"... the City does not expect the Waterfront Warehouse District to remain static. The City has adopted policies in the Estuary Policy Plan that encourage infill development and recognize the likelihood of some demolition, to achieve a greater density (100 dwelling units/acre) than currently exists.

Because of these competing policies, and the fact that the zoning has not been concluded, we cannot endorse the nomination at this time ..."

Taber observed that the city incorrectly wanted first to draft its zoning regulations and demolition policies before considering historic preservation issues.

Calling the city's process "backward," and "disadvantageous for historic preservation and city planning," Taber observed that the city's "backward" process could invalidate its own general plan and re-zoning efforts.

Taber stressed that the correct process was for the city first to determine eligibility of properties for preservation and the National Register and then to enact zoning and planning documents to support that determination. He said the city should not change its zoning to imperil properties found worthy for preservation and eligible for the National Register.

"The city of Oakland should allow the process to work as it was intended to work," Taber concluded. Several commissioners echoed Commissioner Taber's remarks.

Then by a vote of 9 to 0, the State Historic Resources Commission recommended placing the Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District on the National Register of Historic Places.

With that Peter and I smiled, packed up our materials, and walked over to thank state historian Cynthia Howse for seeing our nomination through the process. As I turned to leave, she gave me copies of all correspondence she had received about the nomination.

The correspondence revealed that the Director of the State Department of Parks and Recreation who supervises the Office of Historic Preservation had made an unprecedented inquiry about the nomination and asked for a written report. The last two paragraphs of the report read:

"Edmund G. Brown, Jr. is the owner of one of the buildings in the proposed District, 281 3rd St., American Bag Co. Annex. This building is identified as #4 on the attached district map.

"Mayor Brown's current home is just outside the district. An interview with Mayor Brown was shown on 60 Minutes on Sunday, January 2, 2000. During this interview Mayor Brown stated he believed development was preferable to preservation in Oakland."

As Peter and I were returning home, we learned that the commission had held its quarterly meeting in China Lake because the commissioners had wanted to tour the petroglyphs on the Naval Air Weapons Station.

Notwithstanding the lure of the petroglyphs, the Naval Air Weapons Station

## We need your e-mail address

On the yearly renewal form as well as on the new membership application, there is a space for submitting your e-mail address to us.

We would like to encourage anyone who would like to be placed on our e-mail list to fill in that blank.

To date we have only sent out one e-mail to our membership. The City of Oakland and FOOF (Friends of the Oakland Fox) sponsored a public forum for comment on the future of the Fox Oakland Theater.

Because they had no money in their budget to send out a mailing we attempted to alert our members through e-mail.

If you didn't receive that notice we probably don't have your address in our files. As a mainly volunteer organization it is sometimes difficult to get mailings out in a timely fashion.

E-mail will give us the ability to alert members of events before the mailer arrives at the door. To deliver your address to us before your next renewal, please e-mail the office at [oaklandheritage@california.com](mailto:oaklandheritage@california.com).

was a fitting location to consider JLNA's Waterfront Warehouse District National Register nomination.

With opposition from all corners—Oakland Planning Director Leslie Gould, Mayor Jerry Brown, and the Oakland City Council—whether we knew it or not, JLNA was engaged in a battle.

But this time, JLNA had the "weapons that work!"—hard work, determination, and good fortune.

—Wilda White



## 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, call 763-9218, or e-mail oaklandheritage@california.com. All phone numbers in 510 area code unless indicated

### Current exhibits

**Through Dec. 30,** "The McClymonds High; Story of an Oakland School." The Oakland History Room, Main Library, 125 14th St., 238-3222.

### Upcoming events

**Nov. 26, 1-4 p.m.,** The Pardee Home Museum Annual Holiday Reception, 672-11th St., Oakland. Old-time radio broadcasts on our 1938 Philco Radio, homemade holiday refreshments, a holiday exhibit, and decorating featuring seasonal offerings from the Pardee Home yard and traditions from the turn of the century. \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under, free to Friends of the Pardee Home.

**Nov. 27.** Call for Entries. Deadline for the California Preservation Foundation's Preservation Design awards. 763-0972

**Nov. 30, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.,** Dunsmuir's Holiday Soiree. Dunsmuir's annual formal fundraising event: wine, hors d'oeuvres and a sneak preview of the mansion's holiday décor. Star light carriage ride, dancing and a buffet dinner; advance reservation only; Dunsmuir House & Gardens, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. 615-5555 or www.dunsmuir.org.

**Nov. 30, 7:30 p.m.,** "Breakfast at Tiffany's," Paramount; 2025 Broadway, 465-6400

**Friday, Dec. 1, 2-4 p.m.,** Camron-Stanford House Membership Party, non-members welcome. Be the first to see the 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt decorated for the Christmas Holiday. Camron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Drive. Admission \$10. 444-1876

**Dec. 1-30,** Cameron-Stanford house. Wednesdays 11a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays 1-5 p.m., tour the 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt decorated for the holidays. Admission \$4/\$2 (free Sunday, Dec. 3), 1418 Lakeside Dr., 836-1976

**Dec. 7, 7 p.m.,** OHA's Holiday Party at the Cameron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Dr. Admission \$7, 763-9218.

**Dec. 9, 3-5 p.m.,** "American Victorian Holiday Tea," Camron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Dr., Oakland. Experience the pace, tastes, and ambiance of turn-of-the century Oakland. Each child will find a Victorian keepsake with her/his name under the tree. Reservations required. Tickets \$25 for adults and \$15 for children. 444-1876.

**Dec. 28, 7:30 p.m.,** "Seven Year Itch," Paramount; 2025 Broadway, 465-6400

**Dec. 30, seating at 1, 2, and 3 p.m.** Christmas Tea, Cohen-Bray House, 1440 29th Ave., Oakland. Includes a sit-down tea and tour of the house. Reservations required. Tickets are \$20 for general, \$15 for seniors, youths, and members. Call Patty Reidenbach, 843-2906.

**Jan. 6,** Twelfth Night Dinner, Cohen-Bray House, 1440 29th Ave., Oakland. The evening includes a six-course sit down dinner and tour of the house. Vintage clothing encouraged. Reservations required. Tickets \$100. Call Barbara Donald, 524-5780.

### Tours and exhibits

**First Tuesday tour** sponsored by the Oakland Tours Program. Free guided tours of City Hall, Frank H. Ogawa Plaza and the Administration buildings the first Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. Meet at City Hall front entrance. 238-3234 or www.oakland net.com and click on the community link.

**Oakland Historical Landmark Tour,** bus tour sponsored by City of Oakland, East Bay Water and Land Tour, and Port of Oakland, Saturdays, departs from front of Oakland Museum at 10th and Fallon, 1-3 p.m., 835-1306.

**Black Panther Legacy Tour,** historical tour conducted by the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation of 18 sites significant in the history of the Black Panther Party, last Saturday of each month, noon to 2:30 p.m., advance tickets, \$20 adults, \$15 students; \$25 day of tour. Departs from West Oakland Library, 1801 Adeline Ave., 986-0660.

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

**Cohen-Bray House,** an 1884 Stick Eastlake with original interiors, 1440 29th Ave., 4th Sunday, 2 p.m. or by appointment. Cost \$5; Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland, 532-0704

**Dunsmuir House & Gardens,** Neo-classical Revival mansion; grounds are open Tues.-Fri., 10 a.m.-4 p.m., free, 2960 Peralta Oaks Ct., Oakland. 615-5555 or www.dunsmuir.org.

**Mountain View Cemetery,** free docent tours, 2nd Sat., 10 a.m., 5000 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 658-2588

**Paramount Theatre,** Art Deco movie palace, tour includes areas not usually open to the public and theater's history, first and third Saturdays, 10 a.m., 2025 Broadway, \$1, 893-2300.

**Pardee Home Museum,** an 1868 Italianate villa home to two Oakland mayors and one California governor, Fri. and Sat., noon, reservations recommended; schools and private groups (six or more) by reservation. \$5 adults, children 12 and under free. 672-11th St., 444-2187 or www.pardeehome.org.

### Meetings of interest

**OHA Board of Directors,** 4th Mon., 7 p.m.; for agenda/location, 763-9218.

**OHA Preservation Action Committee,** 4th Wednesday, noon; 763-9218.

**Friends of the Oakland Fox (FOOF),** second Thursday of the month, 6p.m.; for agenda/location, 763-9218.

**Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board,** 2nd Monday. 4-8 p.m. (Open Forum 4 p.m.), City Hall, Hearing Room. Call 238-3941 for agenda.

**City Planning Commission,** alternate Wednesdays, times vary, City Hall. Call 238-3941 for agenda.

**City Council,** every Tues., 7:30 p.m., City Hall, Council Chambers. 238-3941.



## Oakland's first produce market

*Oakland History Room*

A busy crowd, interspersed with horses and automobiles, creates a scene at 11th and Harrison streets around 1904. The camera is looking east up 11th Street. This area marked the scene of the city's original produce market. Then, as the Roaring Twenties dawned and a residential area blossomed in the neighborhood, the odoriferous market had to go. About 1923, the market moved to a less populated area eight blocks down Harrison toward the estuary where it remains to the present day. A close look at the gentleman in the far right of the photo with his hands on his hips reveals his sense of humor. He has taken a moment from his busy day to place a flower between his teeth and pose for posterity.

## OHA NEWS

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**EDITOR-PRODUCTION:** Dennis Evanosky

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](mailto:oaklandheritage@california.com).

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 of the city's archaeological, architectural, cultural, environmental and historical resources. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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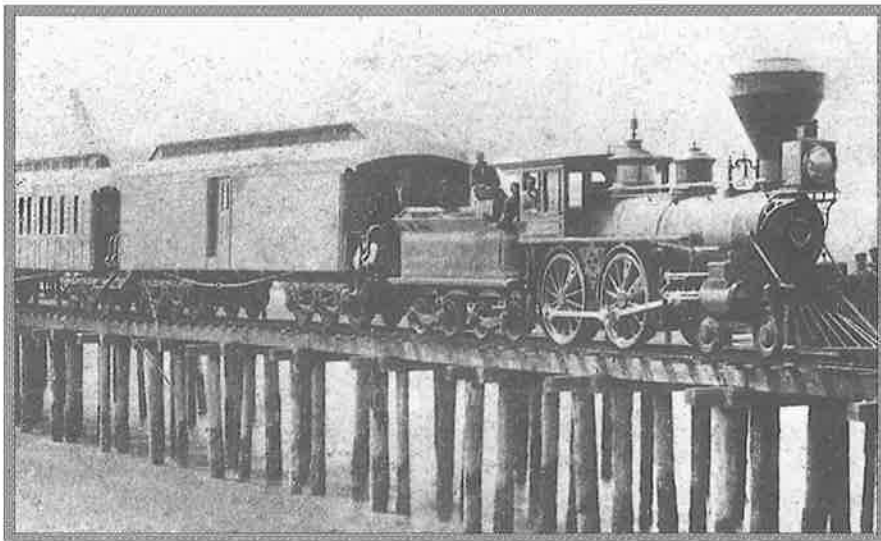
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## Oakland History Notes: Castlemont High School

Opening in September 1929 at 85th Avenue and present-day MacArthur Boulevard, East Oakland High (later dubbed Castlemont) was a welcome addition to the neighborhood.

From 1920 to 1928, the Oakland school population had risen by 10,000 students, accounted in large part by the growth of East Oakland neighborhoods in the 1920s. Commencing with the opening of the Chevrolet Motor Plant in 1916 on the site of the present Eastmont Town Center, housing and industry grew apace in the area.

In 1925, voters passed a school bond measure that provided for the construction of 21 new school buildings, including a much needed high school in East Oakland.

Architects Miller and Warnecke, prolific designers of many Bay Area buildings, including the present Oakland Main Library (1951), planned the new structure.

"Tudor architecture has been selected for the building," announced the *Oakland Times*, "a new departure in school buildings ... the main entrance suggests an old English castle with stone towers on either side of the doorway." The high

school would contain 67 rooms, including regular classrooms, a music room, library, a home economics room and laboratories for biology, chemistry and physics. A gymnasium, adjoined by a large athletic field, accommodated 100 pupils.

Shortly after its opening, the school was selected by the Common Brick Manufacturers Association of America as the most beautiful brick school in America. Among its quasi-Medieval features was a sunken garden, which ran the entire length of the shop building.

"Castlemont" soon became the name befitting the Tudor school, and the students took seriously the Elizabethan quality of their place of learning.

The school's 1931 year book was dedicated to "knightly ideals and standards of all who have attended Castlemont High School. The year book featured sections entitled "Quests," "Tournaments" and "Donjon."



*Oakland History Room*

Castlemont High School

The castle school survived until 1960, when it was demolished as an earthquake-safety measure to make way for the present building.

An original two-story crenellated building, now being used for classes and offices, remains on the east end of the campus, a reminder of the days of knighthood.

— *William W. Sturm*

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