

Black Diamond Mines: Preserving California's Mining History

One of California's most intriguing historic preservation projects is taking place underground. Beneath the quiet northern foothills of Mt. Diablo, an underground mining museum is slowly taking form at the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. With great care, the East Bay Regional Park District is restoring for interpretive purposes an 1860's coal mine and a 1940's sand mine. The mines and their adjacent townsites will preserve an important period of the state's mining and industrial history.

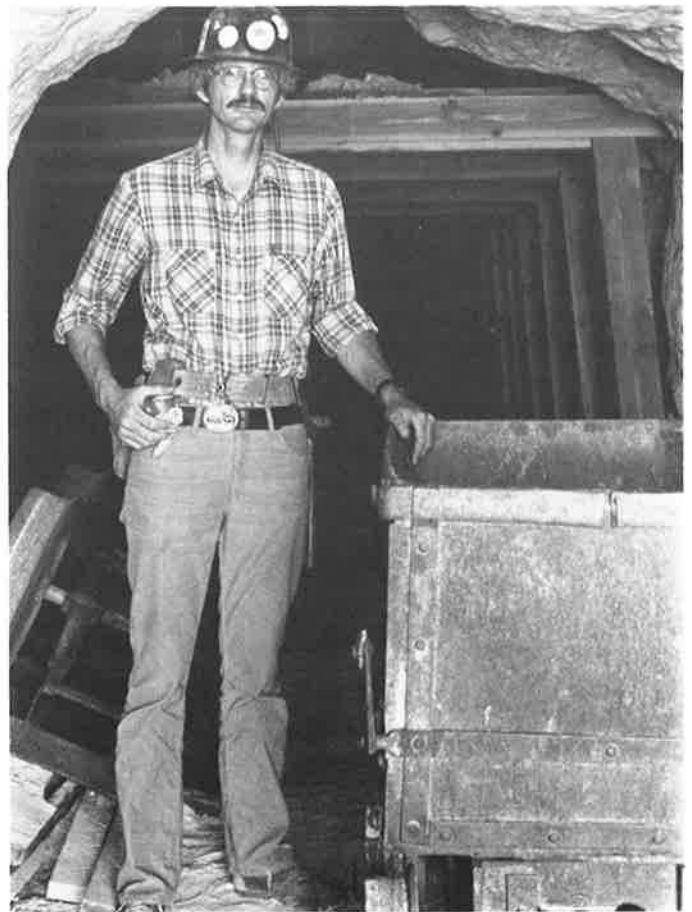
"You are now in beautiful downtown Somersville" enthusiastically shouts John Waters, the preserve's director. "This was once one of the two largest towns in Contra Costa County." As you scan the small grassy valley studded with large oaks and buckeye trees, it is difficult to imagine the mining community that flourished there 125 years ago. Not a single structure remains. Only a small cemetery with cypress trees located on a distant hillside provides a clue to the region's past.

Located today near Pittsburg and Antioch, the preserve was the site of California's largest coal mining development, the Mt. Diablo Coalfield. Following the gold rush, the state was critically short of cheap fuel. Imported coal was shipped from as far away as England, Chile and Argentina. At the time gold was discovered, a noted mining engineer declared he would trade all the gold in California for one good coal mine.

Discovery of coal at Black Diamond in 1855 quickly resulted in the development

of 6 towns, more than a dozen mines and 3 railroads. The low-quality, industrial lignite was shipped to the Bay area and Stockton and was used primarily to power mills, factories and river steamers. Black Diamond coal fueled California's early industrial development, spurring economic growth 40 years before major discoveries of oil. Without coal, the state's economy might have remained agrarian-based for several more decades.

Lack of cooperation between the coal mines and competition from Washington ►



John Waters - geologist, mining instructor, preservationist and park director - guides the development of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.



Territory coal in the late 1880's, led to the coalfield's demise. The last coal mine closed in 1906, and the towns soon slowed and began to fade. An attempt was made in 1924 to reopen the Nortonville mines for an on-site electrical generating plant. But the scheme proved uncompetitive when the first natural gas pipeline to the Bay Area was built from the Kettleman Gas Field. Mining of high-quality silica sand began near the abandoned Nortonville and Somersville townsites in 1922. More than a million tons of sand were removed for glass making and casting before the operations ceased in 1949.



Miners and their families gather before the coal bunker in Stewartville, c. 1880. (Photo: Dan O. McKellips Collection)

Today in its first stages, the underground mining museum has reopened the mines' deep tunnels. The park district began acquisition of the Black Diamond Mines site in 1973 to create a botanical, wildlife, geological and historical preserve. To insure public safety, \$1 million was spent to close more than 150 hazardous mine openings. John Waters was assigned this task and asked to evaluate the preserve's potential for historical interpretation. With bold vision, John proposed restoration of a portion of the

mines, creation of a working, underground mining museum, and reconstruction of part of historic Somersville. The vision is well on its way.

John brings an unusual background to his role as preservationist and park administrator. "Both of my granddads were miners" he notes, adding that he spent 5 years of his youth in a Colorado mining town. He has a keen interest in mining and geology and refers to the mines as his "geological classroom." John is a Federally-certified mining instructor and has studied everything from mine rescue techniques to underground transportation.

On a tour of the sand mine, John leads visitors down the tracks of the reconstructed "mainline" and points out sites of the "miners' dry," "lamphouse," "shifter's office," "tool bay," and "capping station." Wearing helmets and miner's lamps, excited museumgoers learn about "adits," "stopes," "air raises," "draw points," and "slusher buckets." John shows off an enormously heavy drill called a "wigggle-tail stoper."



When completed, Black Diamond Mines' underground mining museum will feature a restored 1860's coal mine and 1940's sand mine. A view of the "mainline." (Photo: Ed Rossman)

John wants the museum to exhibit the entire mining process. "Instead of viewing things in cases in a building, you will be in the exhibit." He notes that the basic timbering and utilities construction is almost complete. Soon they will begin restoring work areas, putting operational equipment and artifacts in place, and creating interpretive displays. Even the handicapped will be able to view the underground works via mine cars.

Determining details for the accurate restoration of the mines has required careful research of period mining techniques. Because little written material exists, living informants who worked in mines have helped to guide development. Information about 1860's Welsh coal mining methods is extremely scarce and John plans to visit Wales next year as part of his investigation. The museum project is also seeking period equipment. Sought objects range from 1930's carbide lamps, clothing lockers and telephone cable to mining cars and ore bunkers. The objects have to be real and right. The park wants the visitor to experience and learn about real historic mines, not fictitious creations.

Future visitors will be able to experience two separate eras of mining technology and history. After passing through the sand mine, they will descend 60 feet below to the reconstructed coal mine. The two mines will provide striking contrasts. The sand mine with its 1930's and 40's equipment and steel rails, has large, open rooms and tunnels with little timbering. It will utilize milled lumber, piped ventilation, and electric trains with metal rail cars. The coal mine will have cramped, low tunnels, heavily timbered with hand-hewn, fitted logs. Wooden mine cars will travel on "strap rail," made of redwood 3x4's with thin, metal strips on top. The coal mine will even include an underground stable for the ponies that pulled the cars.

Many challenges confront the restoration and interpretation of the mines. Safety is one of the biggest. The museum is closely supervised by the Mining Safety and Health



Four historic structures, long ago moved from the abandoned mining towns, have been located and returned for use in the park's interpretive center.

Administration and the State Division of Mining and Tunneling. Normal mine safety standards must be greatly exceeded. For example, rock loosened by accumulated moisture must be knocked, or "scaled," from the mine walls each month to insure it does not fall randomly. Derailing of mine cars is common in normal mines, but the museum cannot permit such real incidents and must greatly overbuild its tracks.

Funding has also been restrictive. Although research for the project began in 1974, Proposition 13 slashed park district funds and delayed the initial museum development until 1981. Progress has been made with minimal funds, equipment donations from mining companies, and the assistance of many dedicated volunteers.

This past winter, the integrity of the preserve was seriously threatened by the dislocation and rupture of a Southern Pacific fuel pipeline. The pipeline passes directly through the preserve's historic townsites and was broken by massive slides resulting from heavy rains. Once before, a year prior to the park district's purchase of the property in 1973, the pipeline had broken, spilling 40,000 gallons of gasoline. SP responded to this year's ►



crisis by digging deep trenches through the preserve to expose and stabilize the line. The "preserve" was gravely disfigured and the pipeline posed a monumental threat to visitor safety. After 5 months of futile negotiations between the park district and SP, an overwhelming display of public concern persuaded SP to agree in late July to remove the pipeline totally from the preserve and to restore damaged areas.

The restoration and interpretation of the historic Black Diamond Mines region have many components in addition to the mines. For several years, the Somersville townsite has undergone archeological investigation, a project sponsored by the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. Directed by Dr. James Deetz, the project plans eventually to reconstruct many Somersville structures.

The park district has also identified historic structures in the Pittsburg/Antioch area which originated from the Black Diamond townsites. Four have already been moved back to the park for use at the park's headquarters. Other programs include the collection of oral histories and regional folklore, and restoration of the historic Rosehill Cemetery. The park also plans to establish a 1900's living farm at the preserve's Lougher Ranch and to rebuild one of the standard-gauge railroads, complete with 60-ton locomotive.

John Waters firmly believes that Black Diamond Mines will prove to be of national historical significance if it can be patiently and carefully restored. The Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is already a State Registered Landmark and will soon be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It would have been easy to forget the immigrants - Welsh, Irish, Italian and Chinese - who worked the Mt. Diablo Coalfield and lived in these long-abandoned towns. But the unique and invaluable preservation effort at Black

Diamond Mines has brought them back to life and their contributions will always be remembered.

*Photos and Text
by Phil Bellman*

OHA Lecture & Tour to Feature Black Diamond Mines

Thursday, 29 September 7:30 pm
Preserving the East Bay's Mining History: the Black Diamond Mines.
OHA's evening program will feature park director John Waters and naturalist Traci Gibbons and will focus on the unique restoration and interpretation the historic mines and townsites of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. St. Paul's Recreation Center Auditorium, 116 Montecito Ave., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3/general public.

Sunday, 2 October 10 am - 2 pm
Preservation Tour of Black Diamond Mines and Townsites. A special OHA tour will visit the underground mining museum under development, the historic Somersville townsite, and the Roseville Cemetery. Limited to 50. Reservations required. Details will be announced in a September flyer to OHA members.

For further information regarding either of these OHA programs, contact Ed Phillips, OHA Program Chair, 465-9829.

The East Bay Regional Parks will also celebrate Black Diamond Days, September 24-25. The event features mine tours, presentations of oral history, traditional music, history exhibits and food. For additional information contact EBRPD at 757-2620 or 531-9300.



Survey to Continue Despite Loss of State Grant

After four years of helping to fund Oakland's Cultural Heritage Survey, the State Office of Historic Preservation has decided to offer its very limited grant monies to communities which have not received previous survey grants.

In a June 8th letter to City Manager Henry Gardner, Dr. Knox Mellon informed the City that it would not receive a grant during fiscal year 1983-84. Noting that Oakland "has demonstrated a proven ability to identify comprehensively and record historical resources in both commercial and residential areas," Dr. Mellon encouraged the City to continue its survey with local funding. In the same letter, he commended the City for its "impressive collection of data identifying historically and culturally important resources... (which) has strong application

potential for land use planning, zoning requirements, historic preservation activities, and other city-related programs."

Because of this unexpected loss of state funding, the City took another look at the survey and decided it should be continued, at least for a while. With an allocation of \$25,000 in tax increment funds plus part-time City Planning Department staff support, the survey of Oakland's Central District is now scheduled to be completed by the end of 1983. And, if a recommendation by the Chinatown/Central District Community Development Board is approved, the Adams Point neighborhood will be surveyed during the following 6 months. After that, additional funds must be found to continue the survey.

If you would like to see the survey continue, perhaps in your neighborhood, and if you can help find funding sources, contact Assistant Director of City Planning, Marc Herbert at 273-3941. ■

Survey Goals & Objectives

The purpose of Oakland's Cultural Heritage Survey is to identify the City's historical foundations and its architectural heritage. Much of the City's past is manifest in existing buildings and districts, which stand as evidence of the City's growth and development since the mid-19th century.

The process of identifying historically, architecturally, and culturally significant buildings and districts involves thorough observation, research, and evaluation (generally following criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places), of all properties within each year's survey areas.

The product of the survey includes data files for every property researched, State Historic Resources Inventory forms for properties meeting criteria for listing on the National Register, and various maps, reports, and lists summarizing findings of each year's survey. Survey records provide data for the following:

- preparing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, thus making properties eligible for certain tax

benefits or grant programs;

- preparing nominations for City Landmark and Preservation District status, and identifying properties to include on a list of possible landmarks;
- drafting historic preservation policies for the City's Comprehensive Plan;
- aiding City Planning staff review of development proposals which relate to the City's historic and visual resources;
- aiding all government agencies in environmental review required under state and national environmental and preservation policy acts (CEQA and NEPA);
- fostering public interest in local history, architecture, and historic preservation;
- preparing an architectural history of the City, including activities of its builders, designers, and planners; and
- uniting written efforts with tangible resources, through walking tours and lectures, thereby increasing public awareness of urban dynamics.

For access to survey data, or for more information on current activities of the survey, contact Survey Coordinator, Gary Knecht at 273-3941. ■

Congratulations to Survey Volunteers!

On June 17th, the fourth year of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey came to a successful conclusion with the delivery of 46 State Historic Resources Inventory forms, documenting 177 buildings, to the State Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento. Of the 5,556 hours spent on the survey during the past year, 2,118 hours were contributed by volunteers. Without the efforts of more than 30 dedicated volunteers assisting equally dedicated city staff, the project could never have been completed on schedule.

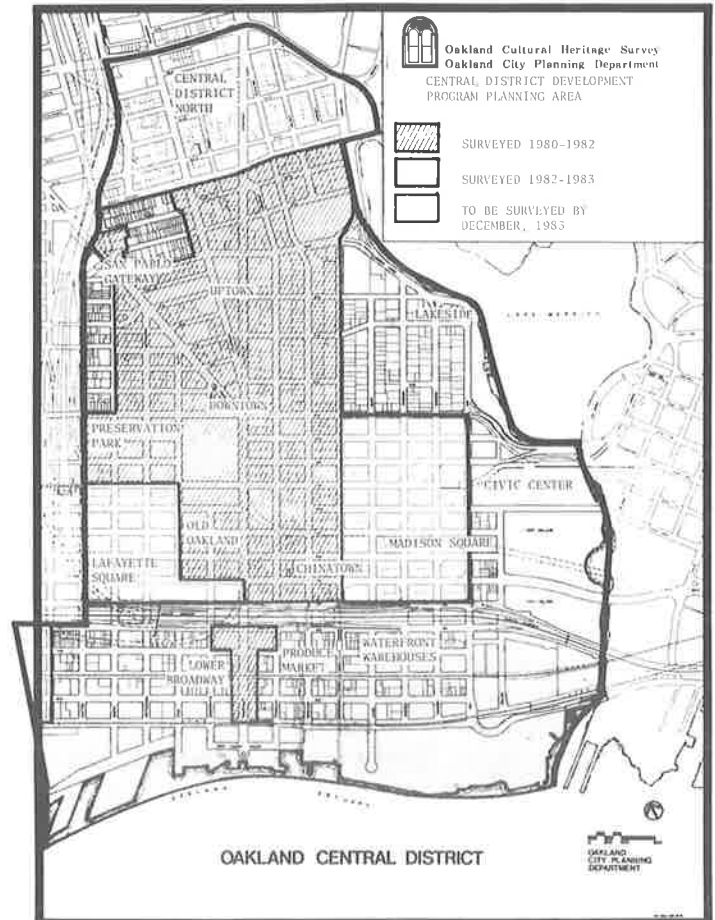
Volunteers deserving special recognition for hours they devoted to research in the Oakland History Room and to production in City Hall include OHA members SUE TIPLER and DEAN YABUKI. Mills College urban design student BLYTHE FLEET worked many hours in City Hall reviewing blueprints, preparing maps, and proofreading. Preservation professionals and OHA members BETTY MARVIN, WOODY MINOR, and SUE TIPLER wrote many of the architectural descriptions and statements of significance which can be found on this year's Historic Resources Inventory forms.

Other volunteers who gave their time and talents to the project during the past year include ALISON ANSON, ANNE BARNES, PAMELA BARNETT, AMY BERG, DOUG BROOKES, CHARLIE BRYANT, CHRIS BUCKLEY, CLIFFORD BUNN, DOLORES BERMAK, CHRIS CARLSTAD, ANN CASTIMORE, VERA DAHLE, CAROLYN DOUTHAT, RON EMERICH, ANNE FREJ, ESTHER GOLDE, GARY KNECHT, STUART MACDONALD, MARYANNE MCGURN, SHERRY MCLEOD, BONNIE MUIR, KATHY OLSON, DAVID PAN, RICHARD PATENAUDE, ED PHILLIPS, DEBBIE RUGH, BARRY SCHNOLL, BARBARA SKELLEY, MAUREEN STEINER, SISTER ETHEL MARY TINNEMANN, KATHY TURNER, and KRISTI WESSENBERG. A special party to honor and thank all volunteers will be given at the end of August.

Work on the Central District survey will continue through December. If you can volunteer some of your time and talents to this worthwhile endeavor, contact Survey Coordinator, Gary Knecht at 273-3941. ■

Volunteers Needed

To become a volunteer on the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, you only need a willingness to offer your time and talents in pursuit of historical data in the Oakland History Room or in production of State Forms in the survey office in City Hall. For more information, contact Survey Coordinator Gary Knecht at 273-3941.



During the next five months, survey staff and volunteers will complete the Oakland Central District survey and prepare a final report on those buildings, districts, and other resources in the downtown area which appear to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The City will make this data available to the consultant team which will be preparing the Central District Development Program during 1984 and 1985. ■

Briefing...

The "Briefing" column summarizes recent developments monitored by the OHA Preservation Action Committee, which meets the third Monday of each month. The Committee needs help in responding to these developments effectively. If you are interested in assisting the Committee, please call Gary Knecht, OHA Vice President for Preservation Action, at 865-6382.

● NEW DOWNTOWN PLAN

The city is preparing to update its existing Central District Plan with a new plan to be called the Central District Development Program (CDDP). The CDDP will cover the area bounded by the Estuary, Lake Merritt, the Grove-Shafter Freeway and 27th Street and could become the most important city action affecting older buildings since the creation of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board in 1974.

The existing Central District Plan, prepared in 1966, needs updating in part because it did not anticipate the major redevelopment projects now being built below 14th Street, including the 15-block City Center project and the 4-block TransPacific Centre. The existing plan may also be inadequate in addressing many current issues, such as whether expanded or more stringent design review areas should be established to protect buildings from inappropriate remodelings and how new development can be accommodated while preserving important older buildings.

One district where preservation may soon be challenged by new development is that bounded by 14th Street, Broadway, 20th Street and Alice Street, which contains many significant, small, low-use, commercial buildings, and within which new high-rise office buildings are being constructed or are proposed. The CDDP's proposals for addressing these and other issues may ultimately be reflected in changes to the city's Zoning Regulations, including the S-7 Preservation (historic



CDDP Issue: How can significant smaller commercial buildings survive high-rise development pressures? (Howden Building at 17th and Webster Sts. is a few blocks from Raymond/Kaiser Engineers' new office tower.)

district) Zone, landmark protection procedures and the various design review zones. The recently rejected remodeling of the old Roos Brothers building is a good example of how the city's Design Review procedure was instrumental in protecting an existing building from inappropriate alterations.

Other possible CDDP results might be major new redevelopment projects which could totally change the character of Central District neighborhoods. Affected areas might include the Victorian residential neighborhood around the Lake Merritt BART Station (8th & Oak Streets), ▶



CDDP Issue: Where and how can new development be accommodated so that architecturally, historically, and culturally significant districts are not obliterated? (The Oakland Produce Market District is on Franklin St. between Embarcadero West and 5th St.)

the so-called San Pablo Avenue Quadrangle bounded by Broadway, 21st Street, the Grove-Shafter Freeway and 14th Street, and the Produce Market area along lower Franklin Street. All of these areas contain large numbers of historically or architecturally significant buildings. Some of the contemplated redevelopment projects propose large-scale clearance.

The CDDP will cost \$500,000 and be prepared by consultants who will report directly to the City Council. The project will be administered by the City Planning Department, which, along with the Offices of Economic Development and Employment, Community Development and Public Works will be represented on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) along with representatives of other public agencies. The TAC and a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) of community representatives will provide input to both the consultants and the City Council.

The City Council will soon select the consultant and has already appointed CAC members, including a representative from Oakland Design Advocates. Once the consultants are selected, the CDDP is expected to take 18 months to complete.

OHA is monitoring the study closely and will provide further updates in OHA News.

● COGENERATION FACILITY PROPOSED FOR LAFAYETTE SQUARE

At a July 12 workshop, the City Council heard a proposal for an energy cogeneration facility for heating and cooling new buildings in downtown Oakland. It would be located underneath Lafayette Square (bounded by 10th, 11th, Grove and Jefferson Streets), one of four surviving squares of the original seven laid out in the 1853 Kellersberger Map, Oakland's first town plot. Lafayette is among the better preserved of the squares and still retains the traditional 19th century landscaping scheme of grass planted with trees. Some of the trees are very old and include an oak that may predate the City's 1852 founding. Lafayette Square also serves as an attractive foreground for the 19th and early 20th century buildings bordering the square. These buildings comprise one of the last surviving 19th century residential neighborhoods adjacent to downtown Oakland.

The cogeneration facility would conserve energy and reduce costs to the buildings it would serve. The facility would be developed by the Oakland Cogen Group, composed of Kaiser Engineers and other



Lafayette Square, located in a designated Preservation District, may be totally rebuilt over an underground power station with two 25' cooling towers and a 40' stack.

OHA Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to OHA members. To submit items for listing, contact Dean M. Yabuki, 842 Grosvenor Place, Oakland, California 94610, (415) 893-1278, or Annalee Allen, (415) 654-6791. The deadline for the November-January 1984 Calendar is Monday, October 3rd.

Upcoming Activities

Continuing through 21 August

Buffalo Bill and the Wild West. Oakland Museum history exhibit. Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak St. at 10th St., Oakland. \$2/general public, \$1/student or senior, free/OMA member. Contact Oakland Museum, 273-3842.

Continuing through Friday 26 August

Good Old Summertime. Exhibit on turn-of-the-century Oakland. Storefront Museum, 9th & Washington Sts., Oakland. Free. Hours: M-F 11am-4pm. Contact Storefront Museum, 835-0355.

Continuing through Thursday 15 September

Oakland Postcards: 1900-1920. Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library, 125 14th St at Oak St., Oakland. Free. Hours: TuTh Noon-8:30pm, WF 10am-5:30pm. Contact Oakland History Room, 273-3222.

Continuing through Thursday 1 December

The Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. Lowie Museum exhibit on the anthropological history of world's fairs, highlighting the 1915 fair in San Francisco. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, Kroeber Hall, UC Berkeley. \$1/adult, 25¢/child or senior. Hours: MTuThF 10:00am-4:30pm, SatSun Noon-4:30pm. Contact Lowie Museum. 642-3681

Sat 13 August all day

Historic Pipe Organ Tour. California Historical Society. \$29/CHS member, \$34/general public. Includes lunch, reservations required. Contact CHS, 567-1848.

Sat 13 August 1:00-5:00pm

Tour of Art Deco Stores. Michael F. Crowe. Art Deco Society of California. A guided bus tour of 6 stores specializing in art deco merchandise ending at Harlow's Bar and Restaurant for complimentary wine. \$7.50/ADSC members, \$9/general public. Space limited, reservations required. Contact Deborah Keresztury 383-3008 (evenings).

Sat 13 August 1:30-3:30pm

Lakeside Walking Tour. Leslie Flint, OHA President. OHA. Meet in front of the Camron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Dr. at 14th St., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Sun 14 August 1:30-3:30pm

Mountain View Cemetery Walking Tour. Barbara Smith, history guide. Meet in front of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Wed 17 August 7:30 pm

Art Deco Landscape Design. Phillip Cohen and Debora Dale, landscape architects. Art Deco Society of California. Roosevelt Middle School, 460 Arguello Blvd. at Geary, San Francisco.

Free/ADSC member, \$2/general public. Contact Michael Crowe 477-3843 or Deborah Keresztury 383-3008.

Sat 20 August 11:00am-1:30pm

Tours of the Orinda Theatre. Save the Orinda Theatre and Art Deco Society of California. Tours every 30 mins. Free. Contact Diane Bowie, 254-1430.

Sat 20 August 1:30-3:30pm

Waterfront Walking Tour. Doug Brookes, Curator. OHA. Meet at the Jack London Square Visitors Information Kiosk at the foot of Broadway, Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Sun 21 August Noon-2:00pm

San Francisco Marina District Art Deco Walking Tour. Michael F. Crowe, architectural historian. Art Deco Society of California. Meet at the corner of Chestnut & Fillmore Sts., San Francisco. Free/ADSC member, \$2/general public. Contact Michael Crowe, ADSC Co-President, 477-3843 or Deborah Keresztury, 383-3008.

Sun 21 August 1:30-3:30pm

Richmond Boulevard Walking Tour. Pat Carlton, neighborhood activist, and George Dedekian, architect. OHA. Meet at Kempton near Fairmount, Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Late August

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Benefit Garage Sale. Golden Bear Site, University Ave. at Milvia, Berkeley. Donation of goods gladly accepted. Contact BAHA, 845-6591 weekday afternoons.

Sat 27 August all day

Half Moon Bay's "Spanish Town" Tour. California Historical Society. \$18/CHS member, \$23/general public. Includes lunch, reservations required. Contact CHS, 367-1848.

Sat 27 August 1:30-3:30pm

Mills College Walking Tour. Aaron Gallup, architectural historian, and Dean Yabuki, architectural programmer. OHA. Meet inside of the Mills College entrance, MacArthur Blvd. & Richards Rd., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Sun 28 August 1:30-3:30pm

Adams Point Walking Tour. Jill Theille, neighborhood activist. OHA & Adams Point Preservation Society. Meet in front of the Bellevue-Staten Apartments, Staten & Bellevue Aves., Oakland. \$2/OHA or APPS member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Sat 3 September 1:30-3:30pm

Golden Gate Walking Tour. Ed Phillips, city planner. Meet in front of the Golden Gate Branch Library, 5606 San Pablo Ave. at 56th St., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Opening Wed 7 September

Paper as Art - Art on Paper. Exhibit featuring the work of Oakland's Magnolia Press. Storefront Museum, 9th & Washington Sts., Oakland. Free. Hours: M-F 11am-4pm. Contact Storefront Museum. 835-0355.

Sun 11 September 1:30-3:30pm

Uptown Oakland Art Deco Walking Tour. Dean Yabuki,



architectural programmer. Uptown Friends. Meet in front of the Mary A. Bowles Building, 1718 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. Near the 19th St. BART Station. \$2.00/ UF, OHA, or ADSC member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, 893-1278.

Tues 13 September 7:30pm

Victorian Color. Kerry Kensinger, color consultant. Heritage Monthly Program. Haas-Lilienthal House ballroom, 2007 Franklin St., San Francisco. \$2/Heritage member, \$3/general public. Contact Heritage, 441-3000.

Sat 17 September 1:30-3:30pm

Oakland Civic Center Walking Tour Training. Dean Yabuki, architectural programmer. OHA. Guide training for OHA tours offered at Preservation Fair, 9/25. \$4.00 syllabus charge. Pre-register by 9/12. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Wed 21 September 7:30pm

Art Deco Society of California Membership Meeting and Social. Update on ADSC activities. Iron Duke (upstairs), 132 Bush St. near Market St., San Francisco. Contact Michael F. Crowe, 477-3843.

Sun 25 September 10:00am-Noon & 4:00-6:00pm

Oakland Civic Center Walking Tour. Dean Yabuki, Sharon Moore, & Hyska Stross. OHA. This special walking tour is held in conjunction with the Oakland Preservation Fair (see OHA Update) and is offered twice. Meet in front of the Camron-Stanford House, 1418 Lakeside Dr. at 14th St., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. Contact Dean Yabuki, Tours Coordinator, 893-1278.

Sun 25 September Noon-5:00pm

Oakland Preservation Fair. Camron-Stanford House Preservation Association and Volunteers for Oakland. OHA will again be participating in this annual event with an exhibit table and special Civic Center walking tours (see above). Camron-Stanford House and grounds, 1418 Lakeside Dr. at 14th St., Oakland. To help with the OHA table, contact Ed Phillips, OHA Program Chair, 465-9829.

Thurs 29 September 7:30pm

Preserving the East Bay's Mining History: the Black Diamond Mines. East Bay Regional Parks speakers: John Waters, park director & Traci Gibbons, naturalist. OHA. St. Paul's Recreation Center Auditorium (2nd floor), 116 Montecito Ave., Oakland. \$2/OHA member, \$3/general public. Refreshments served. Contact Ed Phillips, OHA Program Chair, 465-9829.

Sun 2 October 10:00am-2:00pm

Preservation Tour of Black Diamond Mines & Townsites. John Waters, Park Director. OHA. Space limited to 50. Reservations required. Cost TBA. Contact Ed Phillips, OHA Program Chair, 465-9829.

Sun 2 October all day

George Plowman /John Hudson Thomas House Tour. Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Cost TBA. Reservations required. Contact BAHA, 845-6591, weekday afternoon.

Sun 9 October 1:00-3:00pm

Art Deco Field Survey Training. Michael F. Crowe, Dean Yabuki, & Sharon Moore. Art Deco Society of California. Field research survey training focusing on a small area of South of Market. Meet at the corner of South Van Ness and Mission St.,

San Francisco. \$4.00 syllabus charge. Pre-register by 10/3. Contact Dean Yabuki, 893-1278.

Tues 11 October 7:30pm

Victorian Gardens. Thomas Brown, landscape architect. Heritage Monthly Program. Haas-Lilienthal House ballroom, 2007 Franklin St., San Francisco. \$2/Heritage member, \$3/general public. Contact Heritage, 441-3000.

Wed 19 October 7:30pm

A Closer Look at Art Deco. Michael F. Crowe, architectural historian. Art Deco Society of California. Lecture & display of art deco books. Committee Room, San Francisco Main Library, Civic Center, San Francisco. Free/ADSC member, \$2/general public. Contact Michael Crowe, ADSC Co-President, 477-3843.

Thurs 20 October evening

OHA Annual Election Meeting and Dinner. This year's annual meeting will be held at an historic Italian men's club. Fratellanza Club, 1140 60th St., Oakland. Time and cost TBA. Watch for a special mailing. Contact Leslie Flint, OHA President, 658-4915.



Regularly Scheduled Tours

Oakland Tours Program. These regularly scheduled free tours meet at the following locations. For dates, contact Oakland Tours 273-3234.

*Old Oakland - Meets at 1pm in front of Ratto's, Washington & 9th Sts.

*City Center - Meets at 1pm in City Hall lobby, Washington & 14th Sts.

*Uptown to the Lake - Meets at 1pm in front of the Paramount Theatre, Broadway & 21st St.

*Preservation Park - Meets at 1pm in front of the First Unitarian Church, 14th & Castro Sts.

*Chinatown - Meets at 1pm in front of the Asian Branch Library, 9th St. & Broadway.

Camron-Stanford House. Free tours are offered

Wednesdays 11am-4pm and Sundays 1-4pm. 1418 Lakeside Drive at 14th Street, Oakland, 836-1976.

Paramount Theatre. Tours are offered the 1st & 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am. 2025 Broadway at 21st Street, Oakland. \$1.00. Meet promptly at the box office entrance on 21st Street, 893-2300.

Dunsmuir House. Tours are offered Sundays at 1, 2, and 3pm. 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. \$2.00. 562-7588.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Oakland Heritage Alliance Board. Meets the 1st Monday of the month, 7:30pm. For location and agenda, please contact Leslie Flint, President, 658-4915.

Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. Meets the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 3:30pm, City Hall, Room 221, Washington & 14th Streets, Oakland. 273-3941.

Oakland Design Advocates. Meets the 2nd Wednesday morning of the month, 7:30am, Tom Lovely's Restaurant, 336 Grand Avenue, Oakland. 893-6834.

Oakland City Planning Commission. Meeting schedule may change in August. Contact the Oakland City Planning Department for revised schedule. 273-3941.

Oakland City Council. Meets every Tuesday, 7:30pm. City Hall, Washington & 14th Sts., Oakland. 273-3266.

firms. Much of the plant will be located underground and will require excavation that will remove many trees. Two 25' cooling towers and a 40' stack will be located above ground. Although the consultants claim that the plant will "improve" the appearance of the square, the potential damage or loss of mature trees and the visual conflicts make this assertion questionable. The proposal is still in a preliminary stage and requires environmental impact review, design review and referral to the Landmarks Board before final approval.

● INVESTIGATION OF DETERIORATED ORNAMENTATION ON BANK OF AMERICA TOWER CONTINUES

The engineering investigation of deteriorated and potentially hazardous terra cotta ornamentation on the Bank of America Tower at 1212 Broadway (at 12th Street) has resumed. The 18-story tower, designed by the important Oakland architectural firm of Reed and Corlett, was built in 1922-23 as an addition to the 8-story 1907/1909 bank building. The complex was originally the headquarters of the Oakland Bank of Savings, Oakland's largest locally based bank, until the bank was absorbed by the Bank of America in 1929. The tower is one of Oakland's best Beaux Arts derivative skyscrapers and was rated "A" (of highest importance) by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, cosponsored by the City and OHA. Most of the deterioration is concentrated on the building's richly sculpted top, composed of giant Corinthian columns and pilasters below an entablature with an elaborate frieze of alternating window grilles and panels.

Engineers are evaluating the condition of the ornament and recommending treatments for the deteriorated pieces. Elements in immediate danger of falling off are being removed. The project's initial phase last summer resulted in the removal of cresting along the top of the cornice and the frieze window grilles. A construction platform has since been built through the top floor windows and the

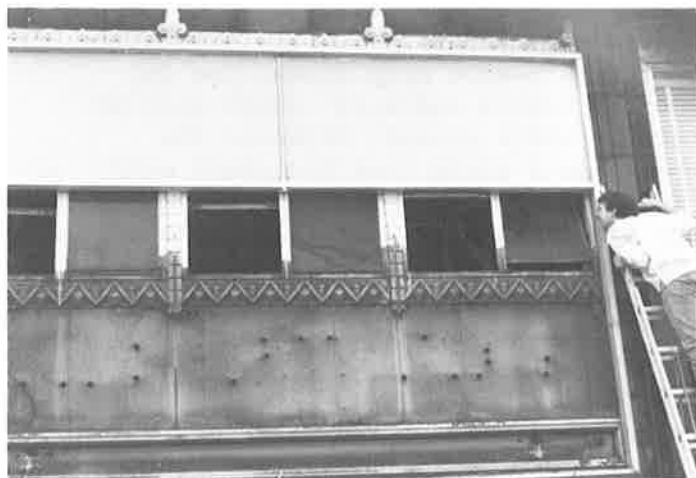


Deteriorating architectural terra cotta on the Bank of America Tower at 1212 Broadway may be replaced later this year.

entablature area has been enclosed with plywood.

The investigation is being performed by the engineering firm of Wiss, Janney Elstner, which has had considerable experience in terra cotta repair and restoration, and by architects Whisler-Patri. The project was expected to be completed by mid-July. A design proposal will then be prepared for repairing or removing deteriorated elements, including replacement treatments for the removed portions.

The design proposal will require approval by the City Planning Department under the city's Design Review procedures. Submittal of the Design Review application ►



OHA members Phil Bellman, Anne Castimore, George Dedekian, Gary Knecht, and Peter Patton help Cookie Magoo's owner Rich Martin uncover an original transom window at his new store in the Oakland Floral Depot Building.

is expected about September. OHA has advised that it opposes any substantial exterior alterations to the building and has urged the Lurie Company to take into consideration the architectural quality of the existing exterior and to repair or replace the materials that have been or will be removed with materials of similar style and texture.

● COOKIE MAGOO UNCOVERS FLORAL DEPOT TRANSOM WINDOWS

The City Planning Department has approved a Design Review application submitted by the Cookie Magoo cookie take-out operation for remodeling a

storefront at 1910 Telegraph Avenue in the Oakland Floral Depot Building. The remodeling will re-establish a continuous transom line along much of the Telegraph Avenue side and greatly improve the overall appearance of that elevation. The Floral Depot, one of the best of Oakland's rich collection of Art Deco buildings, is distinguished by its striking combination of blue and silver glazed terra cotta surfaces and unusual corner tower. It was recently determined eligible for inclusion in the National Registrar of Historic Places (see Spring 1983 *OHA News*). Some of the storefronts, including the proposed Cookie Magoo space, have experienced major



remodelings over the years, although in most cases original elements were still intact under newer surfaces. The Cookie Magoo proposal re-exposes the previously covered-over silver-framed transom windows and redesigns the rest of the storefront in a combination of glass and anodized aluminum. Although the proposed design below the transoms is different from the original, it is more sympathetic with the character of the rest of the building than the previous storefront treatment. The transom coverings have already been removed. OHA members had encouraged the owner to restore the transom and assisted him in removing the coverings.

● **VICTORIAN ROW BEAUTIFIED FOR HYATT AND CONVENTION CENTER OPENING**

The nine mostly vacant nineteenth century commercial buildings awaiting rehabilitation as part of the Victorian Row project have had their former ground floor storefronts gutted, covered over and painted in order to look suitably presentable to the crowds attending the newly opened George P. Scotlan Convention Center and Hyatt Regency Hotel. The Victorian Row Project, occupying most of the two blocks bounded by Broadway, Washington Street, 9th Street and 10th



The Nicholl Block (Arlington Hotel), built in 1876-77 at 9th and Washington Sts., has been "beautified" for conventioners and Hyatt Hotel guests. However streets and sidewalks in Old Oakland are still awaiting their "beautification."

Street, is sponsored by the City's Redevelopment Agency and is being developed by Storek & Storek. The removed storefronts were mostly early to mid-twentieth century remodelings of the originals, which the Storeks are proposing to restore. The new storefront coverings are decorated with old photographs showing how the buildings looked originally and brief histories of each structure. Some of the historical information was obtained through the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, co-sponsored by the City and OHA.

● **PLANNING COMMISSION REJECTION OF ROOS BROTHERS REMODELING NOT APPEALED**

As reported in the Spring 1983 OHA News, on May 4, the Oakland City Planning Commission, at the strong urging of OHA and other organizations, denied a Design Review application by developer John Toothman to remodel the exterior of the former Roos Brothers Store at the northeast corner of 15th and Broadway. The developer had the option of appealing the Commission decision to the City Council, but chose not to do so. Present development plans are unknown. The building remains vacant.

● **OLD MAIN LIBRARY AND OAKLAND IRON WORKS NOMINATED TO NATIONAL REGISTER**

At its May meeting, held in Oakland City Hall, the State Historic Resources Commission recommended approval for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the former Oakland Main Library (later Charles S. Greene Branch Library) at 659 14th Street and the former Oakland Iron Works and Remillard Brick Co. complex occupying the work site of 2nd Street between Clay and Jefferson Streets.

The library, designed by the important architectural firm of Bliss and Faville in 1900, has an especially handsome interior with a coffered, barrel-vaulted ceiling supported by Corinthian columns. The Oakland Iron Works and the Remillard Brick Co. were among Oakland's leading 19th century industrial operations. The brick company's virtual monopoly on Bay Area brick production allowed it to claim that ▶



The Oakland Iron Works/Remillard Brick Co. complex on 2nd St. between Clay and Jefferson Sts. will soon be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The owners may now take advantage of the 25% investment tax credit available for certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures.

most masonry buildings in the Bay Area were built of Remillard bricks. Most of the buildings within the complex probably date from the 1890's and together constitute one of Oakland's best preserved and most attractive concentrations of early industrial structures. The Oakland Iron Works became the United Iron Works during the early 20th century and took over the brick company's portion of the complex. ■



A new Oakland Landmark is the c. 1871-72 Cattaneo Block at 5004-10 Telegraph Ave.

Oakland Landmarks Board Actions

At its April, May and June meetings, the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board took the following actions:

APRIL

Approved landmark designation resolutions for Holland-Canning House at 954 16th Street, Reed-Henshaw House at 974 16th Street, Campbell House at 1014 16th Street, and Gladding-Chickering House at 970 10th Street (the City Council gave final approval to these nominations on June 28). The four houses are among the best surviving Victorians in the Oak Center Neighborhood of West Oakland. Discussed changes to Landmarks Program to make it more attractive to property owners; asked Director of City Planning, Norman J. Lind, to eliminate Design Review application fees for exterior changes to landmarks.

MAY

Approved landmark designation resolution for the Cattaneo Block at 5004-10 Telegraph Avenue in the Temescal Neighborhood of North Oakland; the building was built about 1871-2 by Italian immigrant Giuseppe Cattaneo as a restaurant and beer garden and is one of the neighborhood's oldest surviving commercial buildings. Heard presentation by City Planning Commission Chairman Bruce Black on landmark designation policies; scheduled joint meeting with City Planning Commission in lieu of Board's regular June meeting.

JUNE (SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WITH CITY PLANNING COMMISSION)

Heard presentation by City Planning Department staffmember Helaine Kaplan Prentice on options for curtain wall design for high-rise buildings. Discussed with City Planning Commission



effectiveness of landmark designation as preservation vehicle and reviewed other alternatives, including stronger city preservation policies and guidelines. Meeting concluded with Commission Chairman Bruce Black asking City Planning staff to prepare report to Commission and Board on the possibility and advantages of adding an Historic Preservation Element to the Oakland Comprehensive Plan and of setting up a workshop with developers to explain historic preservation goals. ■



Oakland Heritage Alliance 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.

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OHA was incorporated in 1980 as a California non-profit corporation. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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Oakland Heritage Alliance News

Editor: Phil Bellman

Contributors: Doug Brookes, Vera Dahle, Gary Knecht, William Sturm and Dean Yabuki.

Production: Kati Johnson

OHA News is funded in part by a grant from the California Tamarack Foundation.



The Holland-Canning House at 954 16th Street is one of four West Oakland Victorian houses designated as City Landmarks on June 28, 1983.



OHA Update

● This year's Annual Oakland Preservation Fair will be held Sunday, September 25th, from 12 noon - 5 p.m. at the Camron-Stanford House in Lakeside Park. Admission is free. The Preservation Fair is sponsored by the Camron-Stanford House Preservation Association and Volunteers for Oakland. This popular event will feature over 70 exhibits on preservation projects, resources and concerns. There will also be craftspeople, entertainment, an ice cream parlor, ethnic foods, walking tours and media shows. OHA will again be participating in the fair with an exhibit table and special walking tours of the Civic Center. The 2-hour tours will meet in front of Camron-Stanford House and depart at 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (see OHA Calendar). Cost is \$2/OHA member, \$3.50/general public. For further information, contact Dean Yabuki, 893-1278.

● OHA participated in the Oakland Convention Center opening celebration, "Showcase Oakland," held June 4-5, by staffing a booth for local history and preservation groups. The booth attracted many visitors and was distinguished by the marvelous Oakland Heritage Quilt on loan from the Oakland Museum. OHA's new membership brochure debuted at the booth in its first major publicity role.

● The second of this year's OHA evening programs was held May 13th. Entitled, "Preservation is Housing Oakland: Experiences and Prospects," the program featured panelists Lillian Love of the Oak Center Neighborhood Association, Roy Schweyer of the Office of Community Development, Peter Carlson of the Brooklyn Building Corporation, and Dick Neault, local preservation project developer. Ms. Love eloquently presented the viewpoint of a grassroots neighborhood preservation group, while Mr. Schweyer described the City's experiences in the Acorn redevelopment project. Mr. Carlson related the triumphs and defeats of moving threatened houses to new locations, and Mr. Neault recapped the financial aspect of rehabilitating housing.

● On June 5th, OHA sponsored a successful benefit for the Alfred H. Cohen House restoration fund. The historic house was built in 1883-84 and is the first project of OHA's Landmarks Assistance Program. It is located in East Oakland on 29th Ave. and retains its original wallpapers, carpeting, and furnishings. More than 60 people attended the event, during which volunteers provided interpretive tours of this Oakland Landmark which is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Refreshments were served in the gardens adjoining Sausal Creek. (See article on the recent Cohen House fund drive and grant application.)

● OHA board member Bruce Judd, a member of the State Historic Resources Commission, has been elected commission chair. The commission makes recommendations to the State Historic Preservation Officer on National Register of Historic Places nominations and also reviews proposed California Registered Landmarks and State Points of Historical Interest. The commission also advises the State Historic Preservation Office on other preservation related matters, including review of grant applications submitted under programs administered by the office.■

New OHA Members

The Officers and Board of Directors of OHA wish to welcome and thank all those concerned citizens who have shown their interest in Oakland's history and preservation by joining OHA. Between April 12 and July 9, OHA's new members are as follows:

L. Patrick and Jane W. Anders, Terri Barbour, Beulah Belling, Suzaan Boettger, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Callos, George Converse, Michael J. Damer, William D. and Kay F. Gilliland, M. Kathleen Hanson, Virginia B. Harvey, Richard Lowell, Joseph Martel, Susan Dinkelspiel Stern, Barbara Sutherland, Carlton L. Tanner, Tom Vitek/Ron Rowell, Elizabeth Webb, Nance Webb.■



Successful Start for Cohen House Fund



We did it! More than \$20,000 was raised within 2 weeks during July to support restoration of the historic Alfred H. Cohen House.

The contributions from over 90 people enabled Oakland Heritage Alliance and the Cohen family to apply jointly for matching funds through the federal Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid Program administered by the State Office of Historic Preservation. As part of the application process, architect Kirk Peterson was selected to prepare an Historic Structures Report on the house, and plans and specifications for its

restoration. Results of the application should be known by mid-October. Oakland Heritage Alliance will continue its Cohen House fund raising efforts until a goal of \$50,000 has been reached.

Oakland Heritage Alliance sincerely thanks the many individuals who have supported this fine Oakland Landmark. All contributors will be invited to a special celebration honoring the Cohen House's 100th birthday in 1984. If you have not given and would like to help, your check or pledge can be sent to Oakland Heritage Alliance, Cohen House Committee, 5569 Lawton Ave., Oakland, CA 94618. ■

Oakland Heritage Alliance, 5569 Lawton Avenue, Oakland, California 94618

JOIN OHA TODAY! Your annual tax-deductible membership dues include the **OHA News** and announcements of all OHA activities. Additional contributions and your active participation will make OHA a more effective organization.

Name _____ New Renewal
 Address _____ Change of Address only
 City, Zip _____ \$5 Senior/student/limited income (1 vote)
 Phone Numbers (H) _____ (W) _____ \$10 Individual (1 vote)
 I would like to serve on the following committee(s): Membership , Programs , \$15 Family (2 votes)
 OHA News , Publicity , Landmark Nominations , Landmark Assistance , \$25 Organization (1 vote)
 Preservation Action , Summer Tours , Development, Fund Raising , other \$100 Sponsor (1 vote)
 \$ _____ Additional contribution



Oakland History Notes



*Photo courtesy of Oakland
Public Library, Oakland
History Room*

The Dietz Opera House at the northeast corner of 12th and Webster was Oakland's first theater. Originally a lecture hall of the University of California, the building was purchased by A.C. Dietz in 1873 when the college moved to the more rural climes of Berkeley.

The theater, in spite of its name, never showed opera. Rather, the 950-seat hall featured the blood and thunder melodramas and bathetic tear-jerkers of the Gilded Age. Travelling companies treated Oaklanders to such gripping thrillers as "The Crime of the Century", "The Queen's Courier", and "Down the Slopes", a depiction of rugged mining life.

The founder of Oakland's first theater was a California pioneer, a member of San Francisco's early vigilance committees, a real estate entrepreneur, and a lover and collector of fine horses - "a splendid judge of equine flesh". Unfortunately, Mr. Dietz's loves extended beyond "equine flesh", for, in 1889, the "Oakland Enquirer" accused the worthy gentleman of conducting "slaughter houses of female virtue" throughout the city.

The Dietz Opera House ended its days as a vaudeville house. In 1911, this now somewhat shabby reminder of Oakland's pioneer days, burned to the ground.

--William Sturm

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