

Blacks in Early Oakland: 1852-1870

Many Afro-Americans immigrated to California soon after the gold rush of 1849, having been lured West by the prospect of good jobs and instant wealth. By 1850 approximately 1,000 blacks lived in California. Some worked in the gold fields of the Mother Lode, while others settled in the urban centers of Northern California. The immigration of blacks to San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton and Marysville has been documented, but it is not generally known that there was also settlement in Oakland during the decade of the 1850's.

Black pioneers moved to Oakland soon after the town was founded in 1852. William Walker Rich, originally from New York, arrived in Oakland in the early 1850's and opened a restaurant on Main Street (now Broadway) near the estuary. The restaurant served clam chowder and, according to one account, when a customer ordered the house specialty, Rich would quickly step outside with a shovel, dig in the mudflats, and return shortly with clams for the soup. Also notable were John and Hettie Peterson, originally from Georgia, who arrived in Oakland during the mid-1850's. John Peterson worked as a whitewasher for several years and in 1862 opened a catering business located at the corner of Franklin and Seventh Streets. His wife, Hettie Peterson, was one of the founders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the first black church established in Oakland. Other black pioneers also settled in the area west of what is now Lake Merritt, and, according to the U.S. census, by 1860 there were 23 blacks living in Oakland Township.

Blacks also settled on the eastern side of Lake Merritt in the then separate town of Brooklyn. Prince A. Williams, a native



Isacc Flood, black pioneer, was one of the first Americans to settle in Brooklyn Township. (Photo courtesy East Bay Negro Historical Society)

of New York, and his wife Cordelia moved to Brooklyn in 1852. He first worked as a laborer and later bought a small farm. Isaac Flood and his wife Elizabeth arrived in Brooklyn in 1853. Over a period of years Isaac Flood worked at several occupations, including paper hanger, laborer, whitewasher and carpet layer. Other black families moved into the township, and by 1860 there were 18 blacks living in Brooklyn.

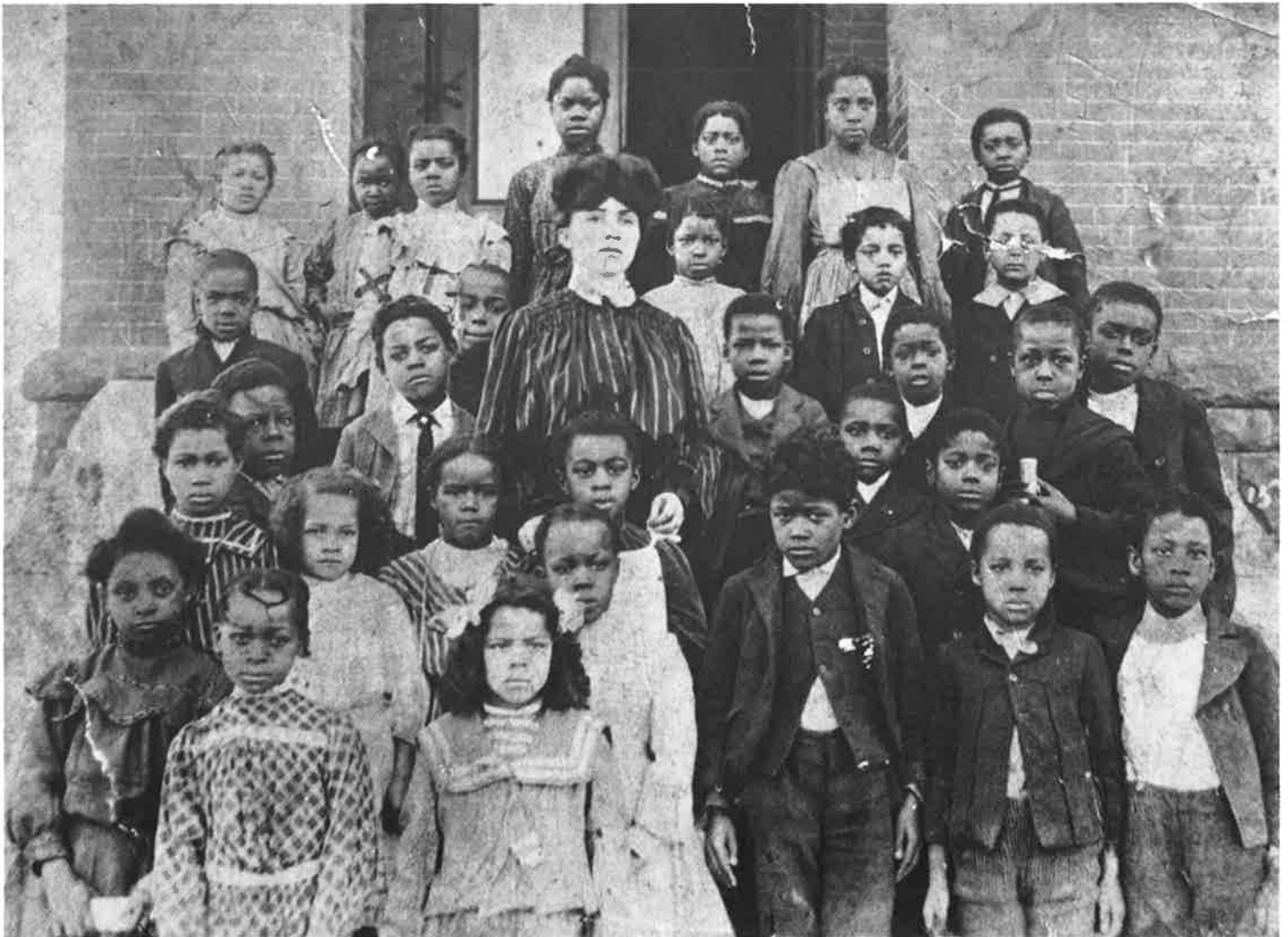
The community soon recognized the need to educate its children. Between 1853 and 1872 black students were excluded from the



public schools of Oakland and Brooklyn because of a state law that prohibited black, Chinese, and Indian children from attending white public schools. Elizabeth Flood, who had previously taught at a private school in Sacramento, was a prime mover among those concerned about the black children in Oakland and Brooklyn who were unable to attend school. In about 1857, she started a private school for black children which was located in her home. The school later (about 1863) operated under the auspices of the AME Church, and the class moved into their chapel. Mrs. Flood continued to run the school until it closed in 1866.

In January of 1867 the town of Brooklyn opened a public school for black children, located near the corner of what is now 10th Avenue and East 11th Street. This one-class school was taught by Mary Sanderson, a young black woman who soon earned a reputation as a competent teacher. The dilapidated building, originally a private residence, measured only 35 by 38 feet. The Brooklyn School allowed black children from Oakland to attend and for two years functioned as the only publicly supported black school in Alameda County.

The black children of Oakland found it difficult to get to the Brooklyn School



First black public school in Alameda County. Mary Sanderson and class, Brooklyn, ca. 1870. (Photo courtesy East Bay Negro Historical Society)



House believed to have been built by Isaac Flood, located at 1334 East 15th Street.

because of its remote location, and in January of 1869, the Oakland Board of Education voted to open an evening school that admitted both black children and adults. The black community rented the building, located on Jefferson Street, and the Board of Education contributed twenty-five dollars a month toward the support of the school. D. Clinton Taylor, a white teacher, taught in the one-room school. The school closed in July of 1869 after operating for only six months. The Brooklyn School closed in 1871. Finally, the public schools of Oakland and Brooklyn were integrated in 1872, the same year that Oakland annexed the town of Brooklyn.

The churches of the black community have an equally early history as its schools. The first black church established in Alameda County was the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, organized by a group of early settlers from Oakland and Brooklyn in 1858. An account of the origin of the AME Church, written by church member Eleonora Amos, has survived. "This church had a humble

origin when Oakland numbered few houses and little over a thousand inhabitants. During the spring of 1858 a mission was organized in a small house on 5th Street (near the 'Point') by Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Flood, Mrs. John Peterson and others." (Hinkel, Edgar J., ed., Oakland, 1852-1938, Vol. I, p. 418.) For several years the Oakland AME Church met in private homes. During this early period the church, having no pastor or chapel, held the status of an AME "mission."

In 1863, the Oakland AME Mission was formally organized into a church and named the Shiloh AME Church. That same year the church purchased a building from a white Methodist Church which had at one time served as Oakland's first schoolhouse. The one-room schoolhouse measured 20 by 30 feet. The redwood building had a "twelve foot ceiling, shingled roof and clapboard sides...It stood on mud sills and was about two and one-half feet from the ground...A belfrey sheltered a small bell. A small covered porch about 4 x 5 feet stood over the front door." (Hinkel, Edgar J. ed., Oakland, 1852-1938, Vol. II., p. 458.) The schoolhouse-chapel was moved from the corner of Washington and Sixth Streets to the southeast corner of Market and Seventh Streets where it served as the Shiloh AME Chapel for more than twenty years. In 1884 the church built a new chapel on 15th Street, and the name of the church was changed from Shiloh AME Church to the First AME Church.

The Shiloh AME Church soon became the social and educational center for black Oakland. With the takeover of Elizabeth Flood's private school in 1863, the AME Church assumed responsibility for educating the black children of Oakland and Brooklyn. The Shiloh Church also sponsored political clubs, social events and activities, picnics, lectures, and cultural affairs that enhanced the social and intellectual life of black Oakland. The Shiloh AME Church held this preeminent position for several decades and remained the only black church in Oakland until 1889 when Beth Eden Baptist Church was organized.▶



William Humphreys Scott opened a grocery store on 7th Street between Broadway and Washington Street in the late 1860's.
(Photo courtesy Royal Towns)

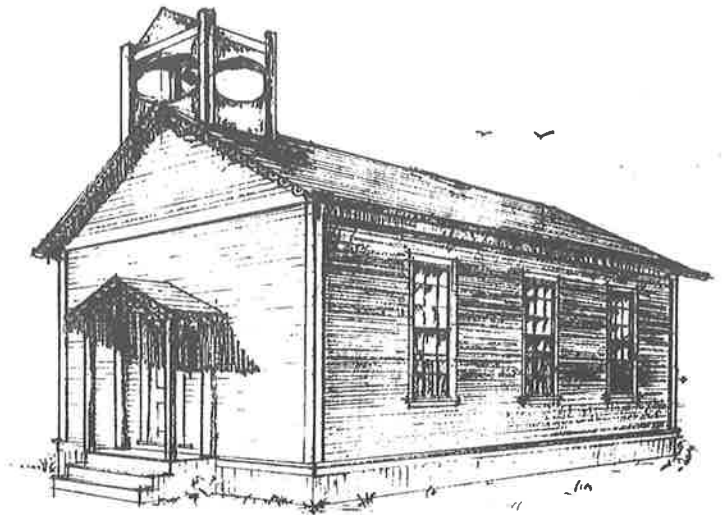
During the 1860's, camp meetings sponsored by the San Francisco AME Church were held in Oakland in a rural area west of Market Street called Hardy's Woods. Black Christians from all denominations were invited to attend these revival meetings, which lasted several days. The campers stayed in tents erected for the event. Some foraged off the land, while others dined at the Depot Restaurant, a black-owned establishment which provided campground customers with stagecoach shuttle service to its location on Broadway between Fifth and Sixth Streets.

In 1866 the Oakland Daily News reported the activities of an AME sponsored union camp meeting in the following article:

The camp-meeting in Hardy's field beyond Market street is in full blast. The attendance during the day is not as large as at night. Some go there recognizing the worshipers as their fellow christians, some through curiosity and others to make sport. There has thus far been but little of that display of rowdyism which used to be so common at camp-meetings. Though the colored folks here are small in numbers they are all sincerely earnest in their work and often become intensely enthusiastic.

Oakland Daily News, Sept. 20, 1866, p. 3.

One man who attended this meeting tried to return to Oakland after dark, became lost in the woods, and spent the night under a tree, an incident which reminds us of the rural character of early West Oakland.

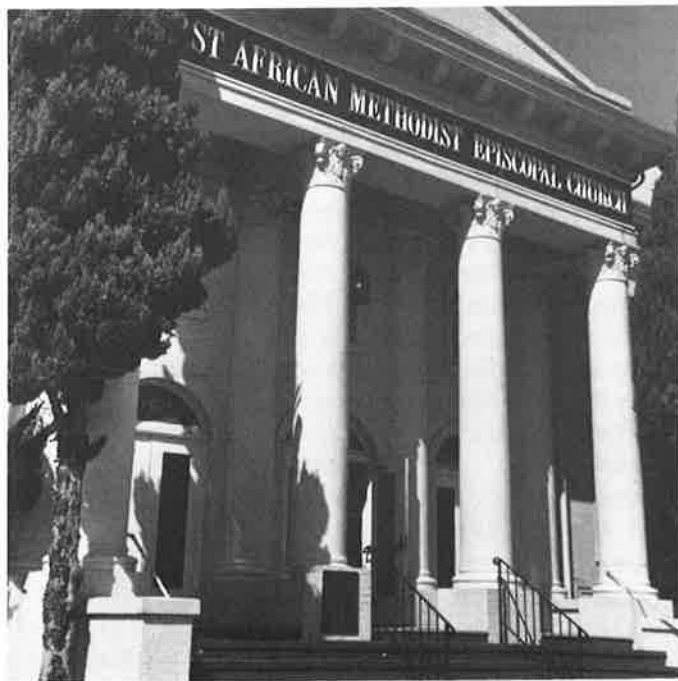


The old Carpentier schoolhouse served as the Shiloh AME chapel for over 20 years.
(Photo courtesy Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the black population of Oakland increased dramatically. The Central Pacific and the Pullman Company became major employers of

black workers who were hired as porters, cooks and waiters. Many black railroad workers moved to West Oakland in order to live near the railroad yards. As a result, many black businesses also relocated to West Oakland, and the West Oakland black community was firmly established.

The pioneer period of early Oakland (1852-1870) was an era of segregation and discrimination. State law established a system of segregated schools that operated for over a quarter century. Blacks could not testify in court until 1863. They were unable to vote until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869. Many trades and professions were closed to them because of restrictions imposed by white unions. However, by the turn of the century, the more blatant forms of segregation and discrimination had disappeared, partly due to the efforts of black Oakland activists who fought for political and social equality.



The first AME Church in Oakland still exists. The name was changed from Shiloh AME Church to the First AME Church in 1884, and the present church building is located at 530 37th Street.

The black population of Oakland continued to increase during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, and life in the black community entered a new era. The pioneer period came to an end, and the role of the once dominant AME Church diminished. From 1870 to 1900 Oakland's black community organized numerous political clubs, social clubs, lodges, societies and churches. The simple, one-church, rustic society of the 1860's was replaced by a progressive, sophisticated urban black subculture that became a leading force in the black community of California. □

--Don Haus er

BLACK SOCIAL LIFE IN EARLY OAKLAND

During Black History Month, February, 1985, the Oakland Main Library will feature a display entitled "Black Social Life in Early Oakland." This exhibit will be the third in an annual series focusing on Black history of Oakland.

OCHS Survey Completes Central District

The Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey is now completing its four-year comprehensive inventory of the Central District. In this survey area, bounded roughly by Lake Merritt, the Estuary, the Grove-Shafter Freeway, and 27th Street, research files have been created for over 1200 properties and detailed State Inventory forms prepared for some 600 properties, most located within 15 areas identified as potential National Register historic districts. Central District survey results, as well as those of the earlier neighborhoods survey, are available to the public at the Survey office, City Planning Department, 6th Floor, City Hall.



The Survey always welcomes volunteers -- upcoming projects include a work party for the final packaging of Central District forms in October, and in November groundbreaking research for the next survey area, the Adams Point neighborhood. Phone Gary Knecht, survey coordinator, at 273-3941, to volunteer. The OCHS, begun in 1979, is a project of the Oakland City Planning Department in cooperation with Oakland Heritage Alliance and is partially funded by the State Office of Historic Preservation.

The accompanying article is excerpted from the survey form for the central Downtown district, where major redevelopment and adaptive reuse projects involving Nick & Gus', Liberty House, Latham Square, Roos Bros., and the Roxie give more than academic interest to an understanding of the area's historic growth. □

--Betty Marvin, OCHS Staff

The Downtown District

For National Register purposes, the Downtown District is a roughly L-shaped area of 17 city blocks centering on the intersection of 14th Street and Broadway, City Hall and its plaza, and a series of early 20th century skyscrapers along Broadway between 11th and 17th Streets. The district includes 97 buildings, of which about 30 have been identified as being individually eligible for the National Register. Downtown's buildings present a strong, well-preserved sample of commercial architecture from about 1900 to 1929, spanning two boom periods for Oakland; the population growth following the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, and the intense real estate and financial growth of the 1920's. These urbane, mostly Beaux Arts-inspired buildings display a general unity of style and scale, and among them are the works of many of the better-known Bay Area architects of the period. Seven to twenty-one story "skyscrapers" punctuating surrounding lower construction, combine to form an urban design termed "ideal" by City Beautiful planner Werner Hegemann in 1915, and give Oakland a distinctive and much-photographed skyline.

The development of the Downtown district was one stage in the movement of Oakland's commercial center northward along Broadway, from its original waterfront location in the 1850's, to Uptown around 20th Street in the 1930's. Fourteenth and Broadway developed as Oakland's office and financial center, in contrast to the real estate and hotel concentration in the Old Oakland district, and the movie palaces and department stores Uptown.

The original 1853 Kellersberger map of Oakland shows the city extending east and west for about seven blocks on either side of Broadway, and north from the waterfront to 14th Street. In the 1850's and early 60's, Oakland's commercial center was mostly south of 4th Street. Completion of the Oakland and San Francisco Railroad along 7th Street drew commerce northward,



Oakland's first skyscraper, Union Savings Bank, 1300 Broadway, as it appeared in about 1915. The remaining half of the Oregon Block, now DeLauer's News Agency, is visible to its left. (Photo: Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

as did residential Oakland's growth (population 1,543 in 1860, 10,500 in 1870, 67,000 by 1900). As early as 1893 the Board of Trade reported that "for many years Broadway, a magnificent street extending from the harbor line on the south to the foothills on the north, has been the main business artery of the city. Business houses have grown up along the thoroughfare until now some thirty blocks are quite solid...The mercantile district may be said to occupy the area between Seventh, Fourteenth, Washington, and Franklin Streets." Part of this mercantile section survives as the Old Oakland district, and gives some idea of the setting into which the early skyscrapers were placed.

Beyond 14th Street the land "remained for many years in an agricultural state, and its streets were later developed with reference to the purely accidental lines of the two country roads (San Pablo and



Broadway north from the 1000 block in the late 1920's. View of Oakland's characteristic skyline, created by the "ideally spaced" skyscrapers on southwest corners: 1100 Broadway, 1200 Broadway (with addition), 1330 Broadway, 1400 Broadway, and the Tribune tower. (Postcard: Betty Marvin Collection)



The "magic" of the Cathedral Building, viewed from City Hall. In the foreground is the rotunda of Liberty House.

Telegraph) leading to the town" (Hegemann); in time this accident made 14th and Broadway the transportation hub of Oakland and the site of two handsome flatiron buildings. In 1904-5 the Union Savings Bank erected "Oakland's only skyscraper, the largest office building in Alameda County, an ornament to the city, ahead of any other edifice in Oakland" (Herald, 12/22/04) at 1300 Broadway. The 11-story steel-frame building, designed by Walter Mathews, became the first of the series of skyscrapers along Broadway which were to define the skyline of downtown Oakland. It replaced one half of a Victorian building whose north half remains, much altered, as DeLauer's News Agency.

Almost half the district's contributing buildings date from 1906-1915, the boom period following the San Francisco fire and earthquake. The Oakland Observer of April 8, 1916, reviewed the milestones of "Ten Years of Progress in Oakland, 1906-1915":

Ten years ago the tallest and most imposing buildings in the business ►



center were churches..one beheld the lone bulk of the Union Savings Bank Building in the midst of half a dozen spires and frame structures mostly of the vintage of the seventies or earlier....The Oakland Bank of Savings three-story quarters were badly damaged by the earthquake; a new six-story steel and brick building (1220 Broadway, by C.W. Dickey) was started immediately...The First National Bank Building (1401 Broadway, Llewellyn B. Dutton) commenced in September, 1907 ...Nineteen-nine saw the beginning of the concentration of the retail district in the vicinity of Fourteenth and Clay. In this year Taft and Pennoyer moved into the first modern merchandising establishment in Oakland...In the two years 1912 and 1913 Oakland's building permits amounted to 18 millions of dollars, and this is a record that has never been approached either right after the fire or in recent years.

By 1916 retail gentrification had driven the Produce Market from 11th and Washington to its present waterfront site. The new retail district of three story brick loft-style buildings, southwest of 14th and Broadway, has now been replaced by the City Center Project.



Aerial view of Downtown District in the late 1920's. Skyscrapers are spaced along Broadway, Franklin Street, and San Pablo; retail district in the foreground. (Postcard: Betty Marvin Collection)

Only the Taft & Pennoyer store remains, radically remodeled, as City Hall West, 1401 Clay Street.

Outside the retail quadrant, most of the 1906-1915 construction consisted of hotels, built in anticipation of the 1915 World's Fair, banks and office buildings. Construction of the new Oakland City Hall between 1911 and 1914 drew development to the Fourteenth and Broadway vicinity. The buildings of this period are predominantly tall (6 to 14 stories), on choice corner lots, and share a general Beaux Arts style. Characteristic materials are brick, stone, and reinforced concrete, with metal and terra cotta classical ornament. The white granite and terracotta clad City Hall (Palmer & Hornbostel of New York, 1911-1914) and the two white terra cotta flatiron buildings (1401 Broadway (1907) and the Cathedral Building, B.G. McDougall (1913-1914)) are all from this period.

Werner Hegemann's 1915 Report on a City Plan for the Municipalities of Oakland and Berkeley portrays a downtown Oakland that is still recognizable today. Hegemann was particularly impressed with the "almost ideal spacing between skyscrapers" -- the series of banks and office buildings on southwest-facing corners from 1100 to 1601 Broadway, the exemplary setback of the City Hall tower, and the design of tall buildings "architecturally developed on all four sides." The "canyon" of skyscrapers formed around 16th Street by completion of the Cathedral Building had its own magic ("'Canyon' Now Complete; May Be on City Seal," Tribune, 8/30/14), but Hegemann warned that Oakland should guard its distinctively punctuated skyline: "If nothing is done to make this state of things permanent the building of new skyscrapers will produce unsatisfactory conditions in regard to light and air, as bad as in San Francisco, if not New York."

The second wave of downtown construction, between 1922 and 1929, consciously or unconsciously maintained the "ideal spacing" by using contrasting infill. In a sort of leapfrog effect as the definition of skyscrapers changed,



tower additions of 21 and 18 stories were made to the Tribune building and 1200 Broadway in 1922-1923; also from the 20's are the two clusters of smaller 2 and 3 story buildings in the district, on the 400 block of 15th Street and on the gore block behind the Cathedral Building. These small-scale speculative buildings include some fine examples of two-part store and loft composition, terra cotta and brick above a high glass base.

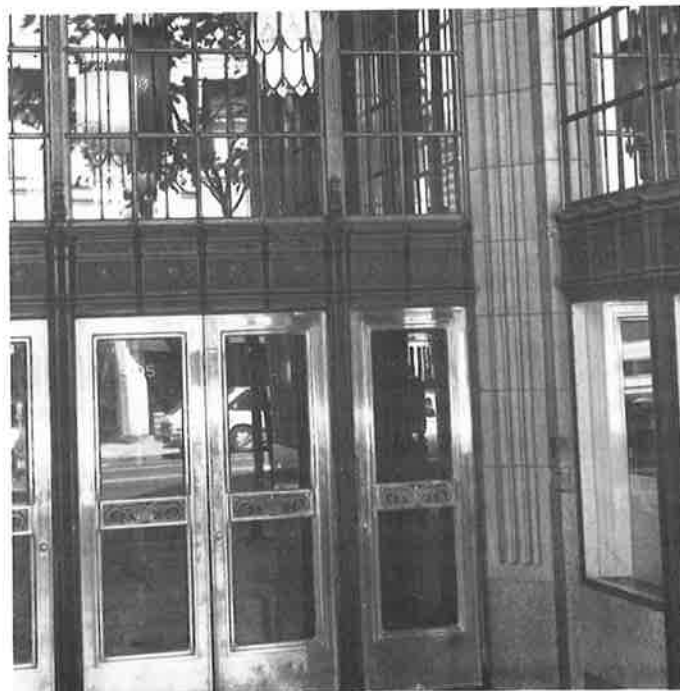
The style of the 20's buildings in the district remained mainly historicist; variations from the classicism of 1906-1913 include the narrow corbeled cornices of 380-98 14th Street (Charles McCall, 1923-24) and 1400 Broadway (George Kelham and Walter Mathews, 1926-26), and Gothic motifs in terra cotta (William Knowles' East Bay Water building (1919) at 512 16th Street, and the Roos Brothers buildings (1922) at 1500 Broadway). By far the most prolific architects in the district between 1921 and 1929 were the firm of Walter Reed and William Corlett (10 buildings); others of importance were Maury Diggs, Edward T. Foulkes, and Schirmer & Bugbee.

A group of Art Deco buildings from 1928-29 concludes the period of active development of downtown Oakland, as well as setting the style for the small amount of remodeling and new construction that took place in the next 20 years. This group includes Reed & Corlett's Financial Center skyscraper (401-15 14th Street), a striking brick and terra cotta ziggurat type transition between the historicist and Deco styles; F.H. Reimers' proto-WPA Income Securities Building at 360 14th Street; the small bank by W.E. Schirmer at 369 13th Street; and the tile resurfacing of the 1902 Elks Hall at 412-20 14th Street.

The Crash of 1929 coincides with the end of historic downtown Oakland's physical growth, although contemporary observers saw it slowing earlier: the 1928 Mayor's Message noted a slacking of new construction, and Ann Orr (Observer, 8/13/32) attributed Uptown's recent success as a luxury shopping and

entertainment district to "ten years and more" of downtown lethargy. Another trend of the 1930's that ensured Downtown's remaining in its 1900-1929 form was the shift of civic center development to the lakeside area - the main post office in 1930 and Alameda County Courthouse in 1935-36. Ambitious civic center plans of the 1940's and 1950's were laid there, not around City Hall. In recent years the downtown district has lost most of its department and furniture stores to redevelopment, theaters have closed, and banks have moved uptown to large new computer-oriented buildings. Downtown has become predominantly an office and office-worker district, and office conversion of rehabilitated older buildings an important trend. National Register listing of the Downtown district, were it to take place, could increase tax incentives for such rehabilitation projects. □

--Betty Marvin, OCHS Staff



Detail of the entryway to Reed and Corlett's Financial Center Building (1928-29) at 401-405 14th Street, one of the small group of Art Deco buildings constructed in the financial district of downtown.

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, 644 Longridge Rd., Oakland, CA 94610, 832-5355, or Annalee Allen, 654-6791. The deadline for the January-April Calendar is December 1st.

Upcoming Activities

Continuing through Tuesday 30 Oct

The Grand Hotels of Oakland: 1852-1912. Exhibit at the Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library (2nd Floor), 14th and Oak Streets. Free. Hours: TuTh Noon-8:30pm, WF 10am-5:30pm. Contact Oakland History Room, 273-3222...

Continuing through Sunday 18 Nov

Views of a Vanishing Frontier exhibit. M.J. De Young Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. \$2.00/Adult, 50¢/Youth or Senior. Hours: W-Sun 10am-5pm. For special lectures in conjunction with exhibit, Contact DeYoung Museum, 750-3624.

Continuing through Sunday 30 Dec

Jewish Life in America: Fulfilling the American Dream. Photographic exhibit on a national tour. See article for more details. Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley. Free. Hours: Sun-Fri 10am-4pm. Pre-arranged group docent tours available. Contact Magnes Museum, 849-2710.

Continuing through Sunday 30 Dec

Jewish Life in Northern California: Pacific Pioneers. An exhibit of photographs, documents, and artifacts developed by the Western Jewish History Center, Magnes Museum, from its collection. Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley. Free. Hours: Sun-Fri 10am-4pm. Contact Magnes Museum, 849-2710.

Wed 17 Oct Evening

Oakland Heritage Alliance Annual Election meeting and Dinner. The evening includes the election of new OHA Board Members, a program, dinner and music. Redwood Inn. \$13.00 per person. Contact Ed Phillips, 465-9829.

Sat 20 Oct & Sun 21 Oct

Remembrances of Palaces Past: The History and Architecture of the Palace of Fine Arts and the 1915 PPIE. Exploratorium. A weekend event of lectures (Gray Brechin, Burton Benedict, etc.), films, exhibits, and walking tours celebrating the start of roof renovation on the Palace. Exploratorium, 3601 Lyon St., San Francisco. \$3.00 Exploratorium admission. Contact the Exploratorium, 563-7337.

Sat 20 Oct 1:30 pm

South Berkeley on the 1890's Trolley Line Walking Tour. Trish Hawthorne, Historian. Friends of the Berkeley Public Library, Grove & Russell Sts, Berkeley. Reservations required. Free. Contact South Branch Library, 644-6860.

Tue 23 Oct 7:30 pm

The First Picture Show. California Historical Society. Documentary filmmaker Geoffrey Bell will present his short film on 19th century attempts at animation and motion photography through the use

of "new" technology. Bell will also be available to autograph copies of his book, The Golden Gate and the Silver Screen. CHS, Whittier Mansion Ballroom, 2090 Jackson St., San Francisco. Reservations required. Free/CHS members, \$3.00/General Public. Contact CHS, 567-1848.

Tue 23 Oct & Wed 24 Oct 8:00-10:00 pm

Understanding Cities Film Series. Council on Architecture, Oakland Museum Association, and Northern California Chapter/American Society of Landscape Architects. This 2-night series of four films explores the design and development of great European and American cities. James Moore Theatre, Oakland Museum, Oak and 10th Sts, Oakland. \$6.00/OMA members, \$8.00/General Public. Contact OMA, 893-4257.

Wed 24 Oct - Sun 28 Oct

National Trust Annual Preservation Conference

Fri 26 Oct 7:30 pm

Benefit and premiere film showing of Unfinished Business: The Japanese American Internment Cases. A film by Steven Okazaki. Asian Law Caucus and Committee to Reverse the Wartime Internment Cases. Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon St., San Francisco. \$15/Person. Contact 835-1474.

Sat 27 Oct 1:30 pm

Benvenue/Hillegass Berkeley. Walking tour. Trish Hawthorne, Historian. Friends of the Berkeley Public Library. Meet at Claremont Branch Library, 2940 Benvenue Ave. at Ashby Ave., Berkeley. Reservations required. Free. Contact Claremont Branch Library, 644-6880.

Sun 28 Oct 10am-noon & 1:30-3:30pm

Downtown Berkeley Art Deco Walking Tours. Michael F. Crowe, Architectural Historian. Art Deco Society of California and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Discover the little known Art Deco buildings of Berkeley's thriving central district. Meet in front of the UA Theatre, 2274 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Reservations required by Oct 26th. \$4.00/person. Contact BAHA, 845-6591.

Sat 3 Nov 1:30pm

Northbrae as Berkeley spreads north in post earthquake boom times. Walking Tour. Trish Hawthorne, Historian. Friends of the Berkeley Public Library. Meet at the North Berkeley Branch Library, The Alameda & Hopkins, Berkeley. Reservations required. Contact North Berkeley Branch library, 644-6850.

Sun 4 Nov 11:00am-1:00pm

San Francisco Cafe Walks. Judith Kahn, Author. These walking tours of North Beach/Russian Hill & Outer Richmond District cover neighborhood histories, distinctive landmarks, and stops at two cafes. Reservations required. \$7.00/person. For reservations and meeting places contact Judith Kahn, 751-4686. Tours are repeated throughout the month.

Fri 9 Nov 8:00am-3:00pm

Concrete Conservation Conference. Western Chapter/Association for Preservation Technology. Fort Mason Conference Center, Building A, San Francisco. Pre-registration required Contact Sven Thomosen, Conference Chair, P.O. Box 42458, San Francisco, 94142. 428-2907.

Fri 9 Nov & Sat 10 Nov

California: The Place, The People, The Dream.





Symposium. Oakland Museum. The California experience will be explored in a symposium held in conjunction with the re-opening of the museum's history and natural sciences galleries. Featured speakers include James Rowles, James Houston, Charles Wollenberg, and Kevin Starr. James Moore Theatre, Oakland Museum, Oak & 10th Streets, Oakland. \$5.00/OMA member, \$7.50/general public. Contact History Department, 273-3842.

Sat 10 Nov Evening

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association 10th Anniversary Celebration. BAHA Lectures, tours, music, and refreshments. Julia Morgan Center, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley. Cost TBA. Contact BAHA, 845-6591 weekday afternoons.

Sun 11 Nov 1:30-3:30pm

Uptown Oakland Art Deco Terra Cotta Walking Tour. Dean Yabuki, Architectural Programmer & Sharon Moore, Architectural Guide. Art Deco Society of California and Friends of Terra Cotta. Oakland's distinctive 1920's-1930's retail/entertainment district has one of the finest collections of art deco and terra cotta on the West Coast. An update on recent development issues will be included. Meet in front of the Mary A. Bowles Building, 1718 Telegraph Ave., Oakland near 19th Street BART station. No reservations required. \$1.00/ADSC or FOTC member, \$3.00/general public. In case of rain, tour is cancelled. Contact ADSC, 552-DECO.

Fri 16 Nov 6:00pm

Art by Architects Party and Silent Auction. Council on Architecture, Oakland Museum Association. A silent auction of artwork by local architects to benefit the Council. East Bay Chapter/AIA office, 315 14th St., Oakland. Free. The donated works will be on display at 315 14th St., 22 Oct-16 Nov, 9am-4:30pm. Contact OMA, 893-4257.

Sat 17 Nov 10:00am-1:00pm

Mills College Architectural Walking Tours. OHA. Walking tour led by Dean Yabuki and Aaron Gallup. Meet inside the Mills College campus gate at MacArthur Blvd. & Richard Road. See related article for full description of tour. No reservations are required. \$4.00/general public, \$3.00/OHA member, general public senior or youth, \$2.00/OHA senior or youth. In case of rain, tour will be cancelled. For further information contact Dean Yabuki, OHA Tour Coordinator, 832-5355.

Sun 18 Nov 7:00-11:00pm

Art Deco Preservation Ball. Art Deco Society of California. This event is to benefit the ADSC Preservation Fund, which is focusing efforts on the Orinda Theatre and the Oakland Floral Depot. It will take place in the landmark art deco Paramount Theatre and will include 1920's-1930's dance music by the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra. Period dress or black tie recommended. No host bar. Reservations required. \$25.00/person. Contact ADSC, 552-DECO.

Sun 25 Nov 1:30-3:30pm

Uptown Oakland Art Deco Terra Cotta Walking Tour. See Sun 11 Nov for details.

Early December

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Holiday Party and Auction. Location and cost

TBA. Contact BAHA, 845-6951 weekday afternoons.

Regularly Scheduled Tours

Oakland Tours Program. These regularly scheduled free walking tours include Old Oakland, City Center, Uptown to the Lake, Preservation Park, Chinatown, and Port of Oakland, and are offered from April through October. For further information, contact Tricia Freitas, Oakland Tours, 273-3234.

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-Noon. 2025 Broadway at 21st Street, Oakland. \$1.00. Meet promptly at the box office entrance on 21st St, 893-2300.

Dunsmuir House. Regularly scheduled Sunday house tours are on winter break and will recommence in the spring. 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. \$3.00. 562-7588.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Oakland Heritage Alliance. OHA Board of Directors meets on the 1st Monday of the month, 7:30pm. For agenda and location, please contact Jon Good, President, 531-5086. OHA Preservation Action Committee meets on the 3rd Monday of the month, 7:30pm. For location and agenda, please contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370. Meetings are open to all interested persons.

Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. The board usually meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, 3:30pm, City Hall, Room 221, Washington & 14th Sts, Oakland. For agenda and dates, contact Oakland City Planning Department, 273-3941.

Oakland City Planning Commission. The commission usually meets every other Wednesday, 3:30pm, City Hall, Room 115, Washington & 14th Sts, Oakland. For agenda and dates, contact Oakland City Planning Dept, 273-3941.

Oakland City Council. The council meets every Tuesday evening, 7:30pm, City Hall, Council Chambers, Washington & 14th Sts, Oakland. For agenda and dates, contact Oakland City Clerk, 273-3611.

Oakland Design Advocates. ODA meets on the 2nd Wednesday morning of the month, 7:30am, Lake Merritt Coffee Shop (formerly Tom Lovely's Restaurant), 336 Grand Avenue, Oakland. For agenda and dates, contact ODA, 893-6834.

New OHA Members

The Officers and Board of Directors of Oakland Heritage Alliance wish to welcome and thank all those concerned citizens who have shown their interest in Oakland's history and preservation by joining OHA. OHA's new members (June 25 - September 11, 1984) are as follows:

Thelma Lawrence, Dee Coppola, Joolia Harper, Richard and Marylou Fox, Harre DeMoro, Elsie Hansen, Bill Boyd, Sr., Naomi Schiff, Roberta Green, Rod Branson, Kent Yabuki, Ron Borden, Anne Rutledge, Michele Stone, Malcolm McQuarrie, Grover Carter, Barbara French. □



Oakland Briefing . . .

The Oakland Briefings column is prepared by the OHA Preservation Action Committee. If you would like to help monitor preservation issues in Oakland, please call Les Hausrath (428-2820) or Carolyn Douthat (763-5370).

■ HOTEL TWO EIR IN FINAL STAGES

The final EIR/EIS on the proposed hotel and parking garage at 12th and Broadway (See OHA Briefing/Summer) has been completed and will be reviewed by the Planning Commission sometime in October or early November. In final form it will contain a draft memorandum of agreement between the city, the State Office of Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a federal agency.

The agreement calls for approval by the State Office of final design for the new development, and extensive documentation of any National Register eligible properties for which demolition is proposed. The two properties which have been identified in the agreement are the Starlight Ballroom (401-9 12th Street) and the 1100 Broadway Annex which is already listed on the National Register. The memorandum of agreement, which has not yet been signed, anticipates the demolition of both properties, presumably in exchange for an agreement by the city that the new design will conform to the guidelines developed by Kaplan/McLaughlin/Diaz. These guidelines, which are meant to ensure that the new construction will fit in with the design character of the Downtown District, are contained in the final EIR/EIS.

The Office of Economic Development and Employment projects a starting date for construction of the project of early 1985.

■ RICHMOND BOULEVARD PROJECT TO UNDERGO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The City Council, at its September 4th meeting, sent the proposal for a



The Starlight Ballroom (Weber Block) at 12th and Webster, is slated for demolition if the Hotel II project becomes a reality.

condominium development on Richmond Boulevard back to the Planning Department for review of its environmental impact. The Richmond Boulevard Neighborhood Association had appealed Planning Commission approval of the project to the Council, partly on the basis that the development would adversely affect the portion of Glen Echo Creek abutting the property.

■ HUD REJECTS GRANT APPLICATION FOR VICTORIAN ROW PROJECT

Following months of stormy and often vitriolic debate, the Oakland City Council recently approved, by an 8-1 vote, a \$30 million bond financing proposal for the Old Oakland (Victorian Row) project.

However, the Old Oakland project's application for a \$2.4 million federal grant was rejected in late September because the city failed to submit part of the application on time.

The council approved the bonds after imposing a number of last-minute conditions which the developers, Richard and Glenn Storek, must meet to obtain the financing. The future of the project now hinges upon the city's ability to convince the Department of Housing and Urban Development to accept the city's application for the grant.

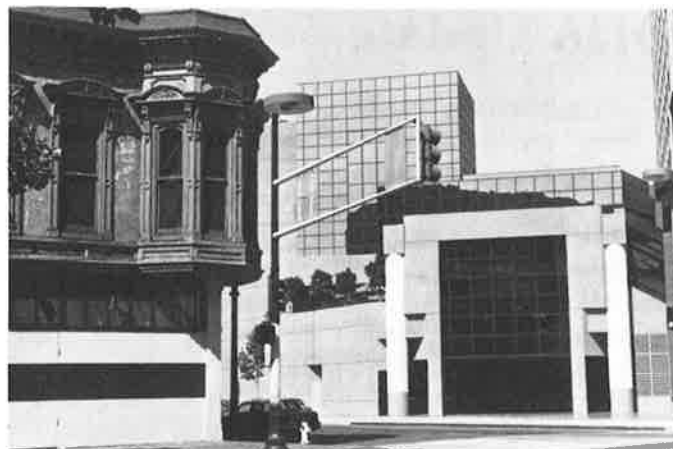
Included as a condition by the City Council in their approval of the financing was a requirement to provide 20% minority investment in Phase II of the project; the Storeks had previously offered to provide 15% minority investment. Following the council vote, the Storeks indicated that they had not determined whether they would accept the city's latest conditions, and were awaiting word from HUD concerning the pending grant application.

Previously the city and the Storeks had agreed to other conditions, including strict construction deadlines, revised marketing plans, and dropping all previous disputes between the city and the developers related to Old Oakland.

Old Oakland is a 13-year old project to renovate two blocks of 19th century Victorian buildings for office and tourist-oriented shops. The two blocks are immediately adjacent to the Hyatt Hotel and Convention Center. The project is viewed by many as a key to Oakland's downtown revitalization plans.

■ PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF ORINDA THEATRE HALTED

A temporary order forbidding the demolition of the landmark Orinda Theatre was issued in Contra Costa Superior Court in late September, and a hearing is scheduled for October 12 to determine whether the order will become permanent. The order was issued in connection with a lawsuit filed by Friends of the Orinda Theatre and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. The suit follows



Victorian Row/Old Oakland, considered to be a key to Oakland's downtown revitalization plans, faces yet more delays in completion. View toward the Convention Center at 10th Street and Broadway.

approval by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors of a \$30 million retail and commercial development on the theatre site. A second suit has been filed by the Orinda Association, seeking to overturn the Supervisors' decision.

The proposed demolition of the theatre has been a rallying point for the unincorporated Orinda community whose land use and development decisions are made at the county level. Since the proposal first emerged, the art deco theatre, called by some the 'sister' of Oakland's Paramount, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register, received an award from the Art Deco Society of America, and been the subject of an Art Notes feature on public television station KQED. In addition the Friends of the Orinda Theatre have received a \$2,500 matching grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in anticipation of the legal challenge which has resulted from the county's approval of the development project.

For further information, contact the Friends of the Orinda Theatre, 120 Village Square #19, Orinda, or call BAHHA 845-6951 weekday afternoons. □



OHA Update

NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING TOURS

Many thanks are due the OHA Guides for developing and leading this year's series of Neighborhood Walking Tours: Joanne Hausler, Marlene Wilson, Dean Yabuki, Deborah Shefler, Carolyn Douthat, Darby Brandli, John Burrows, Barbara Smith, Michael Crowe, Sharon Moore, Ed Phillips, Nona Hamilton, Ed Novak, and Leslie Flint. Special thanks to Nance Webb for scheduling the series, and Dean Yabuki for coordination.

OHA is planning to offer walking tours throughout the year. One of the new tours planned is on the remnants of the F.M. "Borax" Smith Estate, developed by OHA member Gail Solomon. Watch future issues of OHA News for more details.

■ MILLS COLLEGE TOUR - NOVEMBER 17TH

A fall walking tour of Mills College has been scheduled for Saturday, November 17th, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. This extensive and informative tour of the historic Mills College campus was developed for OHA by Aaron Gallup, Architectural Historian for the State Office of Historic Preservation in Sacramento. It will be led by Aaron and architectural programmer Dean Yabuki.

Three distinct architectural phases of the campus' development, the 1870's, post World War I, and the 1960's, will be explored. The tour features a discussion of the 1918 Bernard Maybeck campus master plan and the works of Julia Morgan and Walter Ratcliff, Jr., and will include a number of significant building interiors.

Meet promptly inside the Mills College campus gate at MacArthur Blvd. and Richard Road, Oakland. No reservations are required. This is a long hilly walk so wear comfortable shoes. In case of rain, the tour will be cancelled. \$3.00/OHA adult, general public senior or youth, \$2.00 /OHA senior or youth, \$4.00/General Public. For further information on OHA Tours, watch future issues of OHA News or contact Dean

Yabuki, OHA Tours Coordinator, 832-5355 (leave message).

■ JEWISH LIFE EXHIBITS AT MAGNES MUSEUM

Two exhibits illuminating the diversity and continuity of the Jewish presence in America will be at the Judah L. Magnes Museum from October 1 through December 30, 1984. **JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA: FULFILLING THE AMERICAN DREAM** chronicles the arrival of the first Jews to Nieuw Amsterdam in 1654 through the arrival of today's immigrants from the Soviet Union. A complementary exhibit, **JEWISH LIFE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: PACIFIC PIONEERS**, begins with the influx of Jewish prospectors during the Gold Rush and continues to the close of World War II.

JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA traces the American Jewish experience through five distinct periods: the development of a colonial Sephardic community, composed of Jews whose ancestors had fled the Spanish Inquisition; German immigration in the mid-1800's; the influx of Southern and Eastern European Jews in the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the resulting burgeoning of Yiddish culture in America; Americanization and assimilation between the two World Wars; and acculturation into mainstream American society after World War II. Among the items exhibited are an 1802 portrait by Gilbert Stuart of Isaac Franks, an aide to George Washington;



Chapel of Mills College, designed by Callister & Payne, was built in 1967.



scenes of old Nieuw Amsterdam and colonial Philadelphia; period photos of Ellis Island the Lower East Side of New York, and a portrait of Solomon Carvalho, an artist who crossed the Rockies with John Fremont's expedition in 1863.

JEWISH LIFE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA brings to life the unusual experience of Jews on the western frontier, where for the times, they enjoyed unprecedented freedom and entree into American society. Among the featured items are photographs documenting the six remaining Jewish cemeteries in the Mother Lode; such rare documents as tickets to High Holiday services held in Golden Gate Park after the 1906 earthquake; a 1927 program of a Yiddish theatre performance in San Francisco; and the 1891 citizenship papers of Adolph Sutro, populist mayor of San Francisco and builder of the historic Sutro Baths.

Docent-led tours of the exhibitions and of the Magnes' collection of Jewish art are available to individuals and groups. Tours may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Sundays. The museum is located at 2911 Russell Street in Berkeley. Telephone 849-2710 for further information. □

Statewide Preservation Organization Seeks Support

California Preservation, an educational foundation promoting historic preservation, is seeking support from local preservation organizations and their members.

The Foundation is a statewide counterpart to local organizations like OHA. Through assistance to local preservation efforts, publicity on the economic, as well as aesthetic, benefits of preservation projects, and participation in legislative efforts at the state level, the Foundation works to create a favorable atmosphere for preservation in California.

Most recently the Foundation was involved in the Heritage Task Force,

assisted in drafting legislation to implement that body's recommendations, and led a successful lobbying effort for passage of the legislation. Each year it sponsors the State Preservation Conference, and was co-sponsor with OHA of the conference in Oakland in 1982. In addition, the Foundation conducts workshops to assist local organizations, offers technical assistance on local preservation issues, and publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Membership in California Preservation will assist the Foundation in fostering a successful climate for preservation both locally and statewide. The quarterly newsletter, California Preservation, is the best source of news on the preservation scene in California, highlighting both legislative developments in Sacramento and local preservation issues. We need your support - please make use of the coupon which follows, and send it in with your membership check. Your contributions are tax deductible.

--John Merritt, Executive Director
California Preservation

JOIN THE CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

Send this coupon with your tax-deductible contribution to the California Preservation Foundation, 55 Sutter Street, Suite 593, San Francisco, CA 94104. Need more information? Call (415) 527-7808 daytimes.

Your contribution will help support workshops, research publications, the State Conference, and legislative study and response, as well as new preservation initiatives.

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- Individual/organization *Contributor*: \$50
- Individual/organization *Sponsor*: \$100+



Oakland Heritage Alliance, a California nonprofit corporation since 1980, was formed to bring together community groups and individuals sharing an interest in the history of Oakland, and in the preservation and conservation of the city's archaeological, architectural, cultural, environmental, and historical resources. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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EDITOR

Carolyn Douthat

CONTRIBUTORS

Leslie Flint, Don Hausler, Les Hausrath, Betty Marvin, John Merritt, Brad Niebling, Laura Niebling, William Sturm, Marlene Wilson, and Dean Yabuki.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Phil Bellman

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Larry 'Buck' Holst

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Oakland Landmark Board Actions

Designation of city landmarks is recommended by the Oakland Landmark Advisory Board to the City Planning Commission and City Council. Designated landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in the issuance of a demolition permit and require design review by City Planning staff and the Board for any exterior alterations.



Latham Square Fountain, at Broadway and Telegraph. The fountain, which has not been in operation since the drought in 1977, was recommended as a City Landmark by the Landmarks Advisory Board in July.



LANDMARK RESOLUTIONS

St. James Episcopal Church and Parish Hall, 12th Avenue and Foothill Blvd. (MARCH)
Brooklyn Presbyterian Church and Parish Hall (Grace Temple Baptist Church), 12th Avenue and East 15th Street (APRIL)
Howden Building, 325 17th Street (JULY)
Asian Resources Center Building, 817 Harrison Street (JULY)
Financial Center Building, 401-415 15th Street (JULY)
Latham Square Fountain, Broadway and Telegraph Avenue (JULY)
St. Joseph's Professional Center, 2647 East 14th Street (AUGUST)

OTHER ACTIONS

FEBRUARY
 Adopted a final draft of the Landmarks Board Ten Year Progress Report. Heard a presentation by Sat Nishita of CHNMB and Jerry Serventi, representing the Port of Oakland, on proposed plans for a pedestrian mall and other improvements to the Jack London Square area. Continued review of the Study List.

MARCH
 Approved a sign for the Fremont Hotel, 526 8th Street, an unrestored building in an historic district.

APRIL
 Approved awnings, windows and signs for California Loan and Jewelers, 932 Washington Street.

MAY
 Approved proposed cornice treatment for the Hotel Ray, 10th and Washington.

JUNE
 Added 1717 Myrtle Street to the Study List. Removed 301-305 Broadway from the Study List. Approved Merit Award for the Briggs House, 663-669 11th Street. Re-elected Pattillo as Chair and Spees as Vice-Chair. Adopted revised Study List.

JULY
 Approved repainting of J. Mora Moss Cottage in colors replicating original. Approved changes to the secondary buildings at the King's Daughters Home on Broadway. Delayed for 90 days consideration of Landmark Resolution for the Oakland Iron Works, 552 2nd Street/701-707 Clay Street.

AUGUST
 Approved exterior coloration and renovation for the Grand Lake Theatre, 3200 Grand Avenue, and the Williams Block, 1148-56 East 14th Street.

SEPTEMBER
 Approved reroofing of Golden Gate Branch Library on San Pablo. Approved a Merit Award for 1717 Myrtle St. □

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)
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Oakland History Notes

The Chevrolet Motor Plant

In the halcyon, enterprising era of the Twenties, Oakland became known as the "Detroit of the West", a major manufacturing center for automobiles produced by, among others, Durant and Willys-Overland motor companies. First among the major car manufacturers to locate in Oakland was the Chevrolet Motor Co., which opened its plant in 1916 in the midst of the rural, farm-studded Eastmont district. Located upon seven acres bounded by 69th and 73rd Avenues, Foothill Blvd. and Bancroft Avenue, the factory testified to the City's "ideal climate, adequate supply of skilled labor, and great shipping facilities." As the terminus of all local and overland railroads, Oakland enabled auto producers to ship cars by rail with facility. "Trainloads of Chevrolet cars leave Oakland every day in the year," proclaimed the Oakland Tribune in 1926.

By 1919, the work force at the factory exceeded 1,000 skilled laborers, many of whom lived in the new housing rapidly clustering near the plant. As a soot-free, electrically powered modern manufacturing center, the auto plant complemented, rather than begrimed, the



(Photo: Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

emerging residential area. By 1920, 80 to 100 cars were turned out daily. Spacious, efficient, and suffused with light, the horse-shoe shaped building displayed what one observer called "... a great saga of synchronized human endeavor."

The plant continued operation until 1963, with a respite during World War II when the factory was leased to the army. In 1965 the venerable structure fell to the wrecker's ball, making way for the current Eastmont Mall shopping center.

--William W. Sturm

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