

The Fannie Wall Children's Home

The Fannie Wall Children's Home, the first black children's home in Northern California, is now over 70 years old. One of Oakland's most important, successful, and long lived black institutions, it is also a significant legacy of the women's club movement of the early 20th century.

In 1913 Mrs. Elizabeth Brown, later President of the Beulah Heights home for the aged (see Spring 1985 OHA News), held the office of Vice President of the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. That year she organized a new Northern Federation of Colored Women's



The Fannie Wall Home is now situated at 647 55th Street.

(East Bay Negro Historical Society)



Elizabeth Brown, prominent club-woman, organized the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in 1913.

(East Bay Negro Historical Society)

Clubs, an association of Bay Area black women's clubs that were affiliated with the state body. The following Oakland clubs joined the Northern Federation (their names are worthy of note): the Imperial Art Club, Fannie Jackson Coppin Club, Mothers' Charity Club, Art and Industrial Club, and the Self-Improvement Club. Many other Bay Area black women's clubs became members of the Northern Federation, including the Josephine Silone Yates Club of Vallejo, the Garden City Club of San Jose, the San Joaquin Club of Stockton, and the Ladies Monday Club and Mothers Club of Sacramento. Elizabeth Brown was elected the first president of this far-flung organization.

Soon after its inception, the Northern Federation devised an ambitious plan to establish an Oakland-based children's home for the region. The need for such a home existed because local charities and orphanages, whether due to prejudice or apathy, had no programs to assist neglected black children. The decision to build a black orphanage in Northern California seems to have been influenced by the success of the Sojourner Truth Home in Los Angeles, a home for working girls that also served as a day care center.

On April 30, 1914, representatives from



The original Fannie Wall Home (1918-28), at 1215 Peralta Street.

(East Bay Negro Historical Society)

the Northern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs met at the A.M.E. Church in Oakland to initiate the project, with the blessing of the state group. Mrs. Elizabeth Brown presided over the meeting. Incorporation papers--necessary for the purchase of property--were submitted to the delegates and approved. At this meeting Mrs. Fannie Wall succeeded Mrs. Brown as President of the Northern Federation.

After four years of fundraising activities, the Northern Federation purchased for \$1,200 a building located at 1215 Peralta Street in West Oakland. The institution opened on November 20, 1918, just days after the end of World War I. Originally named the Northern Federation Home and Day Nursery, it later became known as the Fannie Wall Children's Home in honor of the founding President.

The purpose of the Home was "to care for homeless, dependent, neglected children from broken homes, and to provide day care for children of working parents." Thus, the Home functioned both as an orphanage and day care center. Residents of the Home were placed by Alameda, San Francisco, and Solano County agencies including public wel-

fare, probation departments, and the juvenile courts. Admission was determined by need and space availability. The orphanage program admitted "children of both sexes between the ages of 5 and 14." The day care center accepted children above the age of 3.

The club women of the Northern Federation controlled the Fannie Wall Home for almost 30 years. According to the constitution, all of the officers and 15 of the 21 directors had to be members of the Northern Federation. In 1941 the Home was incorporated as an independent organization, and an advisory committee of 25 men and women was created in order to insure community representation. In addition the Board appointed an Executive Director to hire the staff and manage the Home. The corporation eventually asserted its independence and severed all ties with the Northern Federation.



Chlora Hayes Sledge, President of the Board of Directors from 1943 to 1955.

(photo: Roy Blackburn/Oakland History Room)



Director Ira Ross and his charges at the Linden Street facility, November 1947: a lively group portrait by photographer E.F. Joseph (East Bay Negro Historical Society)

The Home staff consisted of an Executive Director, Dietician, Recreation Leader, Kindergarten Teacher, Housekeeper, Boys' House Mother, Girls' House Mother, Cook, Secretary, and Janitor. To operate the Home in a professional manner, the Board early adopted a policy of hiring trained personnel whenever possible, including trained social workers. Other professionals volunteered their services, among them in the 1950s psychiatrist Dr. Joseph Davis and registered nurse Mrs. Nettie Modest.

The Fannie Wall Home received funds from various sources over the years, paralleling the evolution from club charity to

corporation. In 1919 Mrs. Josephine Hutton of Stockton, who at one time served on the Board of Directors, donated a 16-room home to the Northern Federation. For several years the rent receipts from this large house, located at 1515 Fairview in Berkeley, were used to support the Fannie Wall Home. In 1923 the Home became a member of the Community Chest, and received a large percentage of its yearly operating expenses from this charitable organization until 1958. In 1959 the Home became a beneficiary of the Dreiser Trust, a fund established by the famous writer Theodore Dreiser, which provided an income of



\$3,000 a year. On one occasion this fund reportedly saved the Home from bankruptcy.

The Home also sponsored fundraising events in the black community. Benefits, charity balls, dinners, musicals, and rummage sales were held in order to raise money. The sale of one dollar memberships in the corporation became another major source of income. Local clubs and organizations supported the Home with donations of gifts and money.

Ironically some members of the black community refused to support the Home because of the misconception that it only admitted black children and operated as a segregated institution. The Fannie Wall Home has always pursued a policy of non-discrimination in the selection of staff and the admission of children. However, over the years most of the residents have been black because of the institution's

origins in and firm commitment to the black community.

The two-story Victorian structure at 1215 Peralta served as the Fannie Wall Children's Home for 10 years. In 1928 a larger facility at 815 Linden Street was purchased, for \$5,000. This building could accommodate 20 resident children as well as from 8 to 15 day care children.

The Linden Street house suffered from numerous defects and as early as 1946 the Board planned to construct a new building at an estimated cost of \$150,000. They set up a building fund for this purpose, but the project never materialized. The Linden Street Home remained in operation for 34 years. In 1962 the Oakland Redevelopment Agency purchased the property for \$33,730 and razed the building in order to make way for the Acorn Project.

By 1964 the Board regrouped and purchased a two-story residence at 647 55th Street for \$19,000, but found that times had changed. The Home had trouble obtaining a license because the building did not conform to code and the Social Welfare Department no longer approved of institutionalized living for children. The Home reopened in 1967 with a program for children placed by the Alameda County Welfare Department, but by 1970 it was again closed for remodeling. The organization remained committed to its mission, however, and in 1978 the Home reopened as a child care center. Under an unusual arrangement the City of Oakland agreed to lease the building and operate the nursery. The Board continues to control the property and assists in the planning of the programs. This joint effort, if continued, would seem to insure the survival of the Home. Roy Blackburn is currently President of the Board, a position he has held intermittently since 1964.

The original Fannie Wall Home at 1215 Peralta Street, having reverted to a private residence, still stands, a reminder of the active social welfare movements in the Oakland black community, though it has no plaque to mark its significance.

--Donald Hausler



The orphanage was located at 815 Linden Street from 1928 to 1962.

(photo: Roy Blackburn/Oakland History Room)

East Bay Negro Historical Society

Eugene and Ruth Lasartemay have operated the museum of the East Bay Negro Historical Society from the time it first opened in 1971 until their recent retirement. They have made an immense contribution to local black history which deserves recounting, as the museum moves into a new era under new curator Linda Jolivet.

On July 2, 1965, a group of seven people met at the Oakland home of Dr. Marcella Ford, a retired educator: the Lasartemays, Jesse Ford, Madison Harvey, Harold Mason, and Morrie Turner. This became the nucleus of the East Bay Negro Historical Society.

Mrs. Ford had previously taught a class in Black History at the Berkeley Adult School, and that subject was her special interest. The group expressed a concern that too many people were ignorant of the achievements of blacks, and decided to form an educational society which would address this problem. The fledgling organization soon became known as the East Bay Negro Historical Society.

The Society incorporated on June 16, 1970, the year a museum was opened. The original group formed the first Executive Board. An advisory Board of Directors was later added to the administrative struc-



Seven Fannie Wall girls all dressed up-- 1940s photo from the East Bay Negro Historical Society's extensive collection.



Ruth and Eugene Lasartemay, founders of the East Bay Negro Historical Society Museum (courtesy of the Lasartemays)

ture. Eugene Lasartemay has held the office of President for all but one of the 21 years of the Society's existence. Ruth Lasartemay has held the position of Curator since the museum first opened.

In the beginning, members met at each others homes. This worked well until people started donating material to the Society. Within a short time so many artifacts had accumulated that the decision was made to open a museum and display them. The Society rented a storefront at 3651 Grove Street in 1970 for this purpose, and later moved to a one-room building at 4519 Grove. The Lasartemays volunteered to operate the museum and for several years even paid the rent for the building. They soon filled the space from floor to ceiling with photos and artifacts, and then began to store objects in their home. According to Mr. Lasartemay, "We had history under the bed. We had the whole history of Beth Eden Baptist Church under the bed." Besides, the former bakery building was infested with mice, the roof leaked, and poor security allowed numerous break-ins.

The Society began to search for a more suitable facility. The Director of the Oakland Public Library, Lee White, recognized the importance of the collection, and she arranged for the Society to occupy the north wing of the Golden Gate Branch Library at 5606 San Pablo Avenue. The Society has been there since 1982, sharing

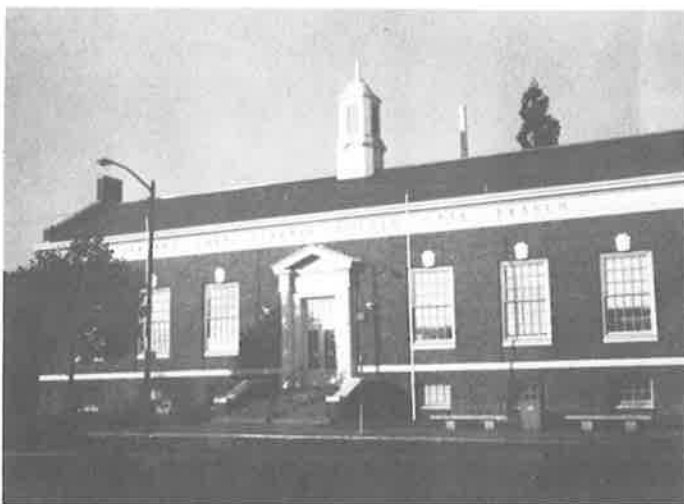


the building with the library.

The East Bay Negro Historical Society museum displays all types of material relating to black history. There are artifacts used by blacks who lived in old California. There are cooking utensils that came from slave cabins. There is an unusual collection of African curios. There are photographs of churches, pastors, businessmen, politicians, club women, secret orders, soldiers, cowboys, old houses, and buildings. In addition there is a small library of books encompassing all aspects of the black experience.

Since the Lasartemays worked at the museum on a voluntary basis, their retirement presented a staffing problem. But now, in response to a grant proposal, the Skaggs Foundation of Oakland has awarded the Society \$30,000 to be used for staff over a three-year period. The Society also received \$5,000 from the San Francisco Foundation. With this money the Society has been able to hire a new curator, Linda Jolivet, a former school teacher and Master of Library Science from U.C. Berkeley.

The East Bay Negro Historical Society museum is open Tuesdays 12:30-7 and Wednesdays through Fridays 12:30-5:30. This month, through August 15, the EBNHS also has an exhibit and slide show, "Oakland in Ebony, 1840-1950," at the Oakland Main Library, 125 14th Street. For information, call 658-3158. --Donald Hausler



The Golden Gate Library at 5606 San Pablo Avenue, a brick Carnegie building, is home of the East Bay Negro Historical Society.

Oakland Briefing . . .

The "Oakland Briefing" column is prepared by the OHA Preservation Action Committee. If you would like to help monitor preservation issues in Oakland, please call Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370.

■ WEST OAKLAND SURVEY DELAYED

An in-depth survey of architecture and history in West Oakland, originally scheduled to begin in August, has been postponed until new funding can be found. City Planning director Alvin James recently informed OHA that the City's application for a survey grant (\$15,000) from the State Office of Historic Preservation was not approved.

Using volunteers and part-time staff, the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey has been quietly researching and evaluating Oakland buildings since 1979. In-depth survey work on more than 1,200 buildings in downtown Oakland was completed over a year ago, and work on more than 500 buildings in the Adams Point neighborhood will be completed July 31st.

Due to the lack of grant funding for the West Oakland survey, 2 of the 3 part-time survey staff were laid off on July 1st. Coordinator Gary Knecht remains at work finishing the Adams Point survey, but writers Betty Marvin and Anne Bloomfield may now be counted among the ranks of the un(der)-employed. If funding can be found soon enough, this trio may be able to reassemble for the West Oakland survey.

OHA has established a fund to help support the Cultural Heritage Survey. Contributions in any amount may be sent to OHA--Survey Fund, 5569 Lawton Ave., Oakland 94618. Survey coordinator Gary Knecht has promised free maps of downtown Oakland survey results for all contributors until current supplies run out.

Since 1979 the Survey has been co-sponsored by OHA and by the Landmarks Board. Survey information is available to the public at the Oakland History Room (main library), in the City Planning Department (6th floor City Hall), and through OHA. For more information about the Survey, contact Gary Knecht at 273-3941.



■ CENTRAL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Central District Development Program, the long awaited study on the future of Oakland's Central District, is undergoing review and comment by the City Council. In a series of public meetings which began on May 27 the Council will hear public comments on the study. The meetings will consider the summary report section by section, ending with a "Catch-up" session July 29.

While the report does not completely ignore the historical resources of the Central District, it does not fully explore the unique architectural character of the downtown as a strong selling point for attracting businesses. The Uptown District is known nationwide among architecture buffs for its collection of Art Deco buildings, including the Floral Depot, I. Magnin's, the Fox, and the Paramount. The City Center area possesses a lesser known but equally interesting collection of early 20th century skyscrapers and Beaux Arts-inspired commercial buildings. The Cultural Heritage Survey identified over a dozen districts of probable National Register caliber in the Central District. Using the wealth of material collected by the Survey, the consultants could have developed specific recommendations for promoting an image of downtown as a unique place to visit, work, and most importantly, spend money.

OHA's Preservation Action Committee is reviewing the report in detail and will be making specific comments by letter. Copies of the summary report and meeting schedule are available at the Department of City Planning, City Hall. --Carolyn Douthat



■ PERALTA HACIENDA PARK

This summer a minor miracle will take place in the Fruitvale District. After years of planning and yards of red tape, an Oakland Housing Authority turnkey project will be moved from the corner of 34th Avenue and Paxton to make way for expansion of Peralta Hacienda Park.

Fifteen years ago the park site, once the center of Rancho San Antonio, consisted of Peralta Creek and its eroding banks, privately owned houses sliding downhill, and an unofficial refuse dump. In 1975 the Fruitvale District Community Development Board made creation of open space in the district its main priority, and working with the Flood Control District, the Housing Authority and various city departments, has allocated over a million dollars in Community Development funds to create Peralta Hacienda Park.

The significance of the site to the history of the East Bay is well documented. In 1820, Luis Peralta received one of the last Spanish land grants in Alta California, extending over the present-day cities of Albany, Alameda, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Piedmont, and part of San Leandro. In 1842 he divided the area among his four sons. The headquarters of the rancho given to Antonio, the eldest, was located at what is now 34th and Paxton.

An adobe was built there in 1821. Eventually the 2½ acre hacienda contained two adobes and some 20 guest houses, and was an established stop for travelers on the northern branch of El Camino Real. The Italianate farmhouse now at 34th and Paxton was built in 1870 and moved a short distance to its present site in 1897. The house is both a City and State Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

After numerous meetings with the Fruitvale community, a three phase plan for the park was developed for the City by landscape architect Rich Seyfarth. In 1981 the first phase was completed, and received an Environmental Planning Award from the Cali-

Downtown Oakland as a luxury shopping area in the 1940s: CDDP overlooks its remaining --and marketable--glamor. (postcard)

fornia Parks and Recreation Society in 1982. Peralta Creek is now a reconstituted creek which meanders through open space containing play structures, grassy recreation areas, and quickly maturing alders. Acquisition and restoration of the 1870 farmhouse, as well as the moving of the turnkey project, are part of Phase II which will also involve the closure of Paxton Street and the construction of a commemorative plaza containing the footprints of the two family adobes.

Because of cutbacks in federal Community Development funds, \$350,000 is needed to complete Phase II of the project. Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, a non-profit organization, has been formed to seek funding for and operate the complex. In conjunction with the city Office of Parks and Recreation, the group is pursuing special state funding and a possible cooperative venture with the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

This fall OHA plans to co-sponsor an event with the Friends of Peralta Hacienda to celebrate Phase II and generate wider interest in the future development of the park. Contact Carolyn Douthat (763-5370) or the Friends of the Peralta Hacienda (Claudia Albano, 534-2780).

--Carolyn Douthat



1870 farmhouse forms historic anchor of Peralta Hacienda Park (Betty Marvin)

■ ANTHONY HOLDSWORTH EXHIBIT



"Road to Nowhere": Anthony Holdsworth's vision of 7th and Jefferson Streets

For those interested in the Oakland urban environment, and exhibition of paintings by Anthony Holdsworth at the Pro Arts Gallery should not be missed. The collection of 25 works runs from July 5 to August 8 and represents the artist's summation to date of his unique vision of Oakland city life. Holdsworth sets out from his North Oakland studio onto the streets searching for views that appeal to his sense of broad urban vistas. Once he has selected a site he sets up his canvas and paints the entire picture at the location. Often people from the neighborhood gather and Holdsworth talks as much as he paints, answering questions and fielding comments. For him such a dialogue helps to keep a focus on why the sites are selected in the first place, to capture a neighborhood's character.

Available light plays an important part in the composition of his cityscapes, as it is directed upon the building surfaces. The pavement itself forms an interlocking function in the paintings, both in its variation of texture and as planes to lead the eye far into the distance. Holdsworth concentrates on the manmade aspects of the urban environment, hence he tends to select areas downtown with little or no foliage or trees. The street signs and parking meters become the vertical elements anchoring the flat horizontal streets. Always sharply

angled perspectives dissect the picture plane cutting a strong outline against a light-filled sky.

The artist is particularly interested in the juxtaposition of the building styles found downtown, the very old with the more contemporary. It is the older buildings with their complex surfaces, however, which acquire particular dignity in his work.

Holdsworth, age 41, was born in England. He came to the Bay Area to live in 1970. Before settling here he spent time in Florence, helping to restore paintings damaged in the floods. It was in Florence that he developed his perceptions of urban scenes. Towns, he says, are the built environment which should be seen as distinct from the natural countryside. Holdsworth tends to avoid the "picturesque" in favor of the "real" scene we all see every day, yet do not really perceive. In so doing he captures the essence of the Oakland city where we work and live.

The Pro Arts Gallery is located at 1920 Union Street in West Oakland. Viewing hours are Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11-5. For further information, phone 763-7880.

--Annalee Allen

■ CHURCH DEMOLITION PROPOSED

The congregation of the Lake Merritt United Methodist Church has proposed to demolish the Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist at 1330 Lakeshore Avenue (1922, Carl Werner architect) and replace it with a new church building. (The former Methodist church, damaged by fire in 1981, is now being replaced by the YMCA/parking structure at 24th and Broadway.)

On June 27 architect Terrill Wade applied to the city for design review of the new church, and submitted a Request for Environmental Review. A prominent visual landmark with its monumental classical columns, the 1922 building is identified as a primary resource by the Citywide Preliminary Survey, and is part of the Cultural Heritage Survey's National Register-eligible Lake Merritt District.

For more information or to comment, contact the Zoning Division (273-3911) and ask to see case files D-86-311 and ER-86-42.

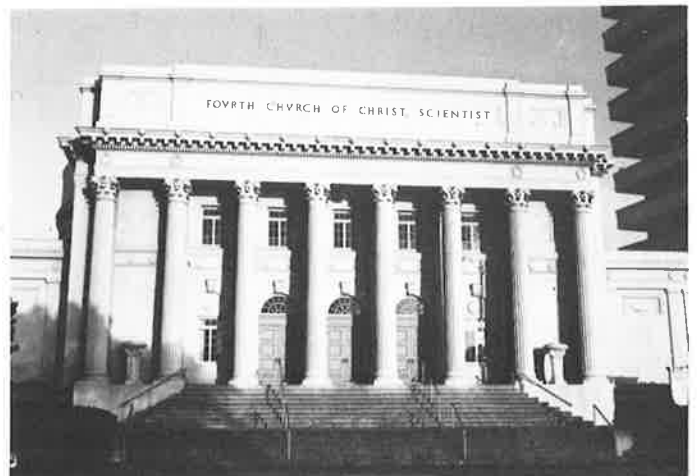
--Gary Knecht

■ GLADDING, MCBEAN & COMPANY PHOTOS TO CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

In March 1986 David Luchetti, president of Pacific Coast Building Products Inc., selected the California State Library as the permanent home of the historical photograph collection of its subsidiary company, Gladding, McBean & Company.

Located in Lincoln, Placer County, this company has been the major producer of architectural terra cotta and its products have been used to decorate buildings around the United States and the world. Noteworthy examples are the Wrigley Building in Chicago, the Russ Building in San Francisco, the Times-Mirror Building in Los Angeles, and New York's Carnegie Hall.

This generous donation of over 10,200 images represents a monumental addition to the Library's photographic collection and provides an invaluable record of the era when terra cotta served as a primary decorative device on the surfaces of buildings. Covering the years 1900 to 1940, the collection consists primarily of views of urns, columns, friezes, pilasters, lintels, panels, and other architectural details. Also included are photographs of the town of Lincoln, interior and exterior views of the plant, and portraits of the artists, artisans, and models who helped produce these beautiful fired clay products. Once processed, the collection will be a major resource for the study of early twentieth century architecture, decorative arts, and business history.



Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist (1922) on Lake Merritt: threat to demolish.

City Landmarks Board Actions

The **Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board** meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:30pm in Room 211, City Hall. Meetings are open to the public. Designation of city landmarks is recommended by the Board to the City Planning Commission and City Council. Landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in issuance of demolition permits and require design review by City Planning staff for exterior alterations. Final approval or denial of alterations is determined by the Board. Over one hundred landmarks have been designated in the 12 years since the Board was created.

MARCH

Board approved landmark resolution for the Overland House, 101 Broadway (see February). At the request of the owner, designation as initiated for 1937 8th Avenue, a single family Queen Anne residence on a terraced site remarkable for its early concrete work. Gary Knecht of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey made a presentation on coordinating the different lists of significant buildings, noting that 99 of the Survey's top-rated buildings in the Central District are neither landmarks nor even on the Study List, and thus have no protection. He suggested adding them all to the Study List, as had been done with early Survey findings in 1982. Board members noted that their Study List was prioritized into A and B lists, and wondered how that paralleled the



Mission Revival style Madison Street Temple: one of the buildings for which Survey's and Board's ratings differ. (1910s postcard)



1937 8th Avenue: owner proposes landmarking

survey rankings. Knecht agreed to come back with slides for further discussion.

APRIL

Board approved and forwarded to the Planning Commission resolutions nominating two new city landmarks, the Leamington Hotel at 19th and Franklin and the house at 1937 8th Avenue. Gary Knecht showed slides of buildings considered of National Register quality by the Survey but without any form of recognition by the Landmarks Board. He proposed a coordinated list of the Board's Study List, the Survey's findings, and the numerous other categories of designation such as Landmark and Merit Award, State Historic Landmark and Point of Historic Interest, National Register and National Historic Landmark. Demolition permit applications, for instance, could be checked against such a list kept by the Planning Director. Board discussed the concept of a combined study list, and the desirability of maintaining



their own independent priorities. Board discussed preparing a slide show on landmarks for community groups--perhaps the Board's own production, or the one Chris Buckley had shown them on the Citywide Preliminary Survey.

MAY

May meeting was canceled for lack of business.

JUNE

Board approved alterations for the Liberty Hotel, 801-15 Washington Street, including paint colors, replacement of decaying wood members, removal of aluminum on the facade, and replacement of a cornice. Action was deferred on designation of First Presbyterian Church, 2619 Broadway, until the July meeting when the minister can be present. The First Congregational, First Christian Science, and First Baptist Churches were all reported to view their designations favorably.

Board heard that Councilmember Frank Ogawa had earlier suggested designating the Produce Market--which is on the Study List--as a historic district, but reconsidered. After reviewing all aspects, the Board decided to monitor events pertaining to the Produce Market, and delegated Mitch Hardin and David Hoard to approach the Chamber of Commerce and City Councilors.

The new Landmark certificates, inscribed and signed by the Mayor and Chairperson David Hoard, are nearly ready; Board proposed presenting them to owners in a ceremony at the Preservation Fair in September. Board asked for status report on Preser-



A rare pair of Italianate cottages on Chester Street: West Oakland survey delayed by budget cuts; see also p. 7. (Survey photo)

vation Park, in view of rumors about leasing delays and possible changes of use, and difficulty individual Board members had visiting the site. Proposed to contact the Black Chamber of Commerce, now in charge of the project, and ask to hold the next Board meeting at Preservation Park.

Gary Knecht reported that the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey's grant application to the State Office of Historic Preservation was rejected. He remains as survey coordinator, but the research/writing staff positions are eliminated as of June 30. He welcomed survey volunteers, but estimated that a minimum of \$8000 would be needed to commit to a full-scale survey of West Oakland. Board offered suggestions of funding sources.

--Kathy Olson & Betty Marvin



Herrick House, moved in sections from Pill Hill, achieves new spatial relation with neighbor; Landmarks Board asks for update on Preservation Park.

(Betty Marvin)



OHA Update

■ PATRICK ANDERS LEAVES BOARD

The OHA Board of Directors regrets that architect Patrick Anders has resigned his board position, due to an unexpected press of business. We have enjoyed working with Patrick, and have especially appreciated the prompt and thorough way in which he has completed tasks on behalf of the organization. Patrick has been instrumental in choosing a painting contractor and otherwise advising on the Cohen House restoration: we are delighted that he will still oversee the paint job for the family and OHA.

No successor has yet been named to Patrick's position. The Board would very much like to continue to include an architect in its circle. OHA members (or prospective members) who might be interested in serving are invited to contact Les Hausrath or Carolyn Douthat.

--Ed Phillips



176 Panoram

Looking north on San Pablo, Telegraph, and Broadway c. 1904: "main stem" of Oakland will be the focus of OHA's Broadway Book.

■ "BROADWAY BOOK" PROGRESSES

OHA's Publication Committee continues to gestate an offspring of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Provisionally titled The Broadway Book, this work will present a physical and social slice of Oakland and its buildings, as viewed along a straight line from the Estuary to the Caldecott Tunnel. The survey of the Central District will be the primary resource for most of the book, plus some additional research on buildings, institutions, and neighborhoods along the outer reaches of Oakland's "main stem."

It is expected to be a popularly priced, attractively illustrated publication which will make the story of Broadway, and by extension the surrounding city, widely available to Oaklanders and visitors. The book will follow up on OHA's commitment to help bring the Survey's products to public attention. At present the committee is producing a prototype chapter on Old Oakland. Future tasks will involve writing, editing, graphic design, fundraising, and finding a publisher.

Members currently contributing their time and skills are Annalee Allen, Earl Barron, Carolyn Douthat, Leslie Flint, Jon Good, Laura Niebling, and Ed Phillips. Harlan Kessel has offered valuable advice on the publishing process. Other helpers are welcome, and as needs for particular skills arise, many of you talented members can expect to be tapped. This is a very big effort for OHA, and we need to make use of all available resources. Please contact Ed Phillips if you are interested in contributing in any way.

--Ed Phillips

■ HOUSE TOUR SCORES BIG

The Fernwood section of Montclair was THE place to be on Sunday, April 6. It seemed that all of Oakland turned out, along with other visitors from as far away as Arizona. In fact there were some 1000 tourists, easily twice the number anticipated, yet no one lacked for refreshments or a warm welcome. A second printing of the tour guidebook had to be rushed to the scene!

The big news is that the house tour netted almost \$12,000, being shared equally by the co-sponsors, OHA and the Fernwood Comm-

unity Club. Fernwood's proceeds will support their annual gatherings, as well as ambitious projects like utility undergrounding. For OHA, it means we can definitely meet our prime goal for the year, to open a small downtown office and staff it part time.

A big factor in the tour's success was the extensive publicity achieved by new Public Information chair Sally Nielsen. On the eve of the tour the Tribune published a seductively written feature by Karen Benoit, the Montclarion did two different pieces, and other papers provided prominent listings. (April was a good month for OHA publicity. A week after the tour the Tribune mentioned OHA in two articles on Oakland creeks.)

The "Fernwood Formula" turned out to be very workable, and worth trying again in other parts of the city. Cooperation and sharing of tasks with the neighborhood group proved highly rewarding to both organizations. OHA provided research on architecture and history, guidebook, mailings, publicity, and handled advance sales, while the neighbors took care of on-site tasks like admissions, refreshments, security, decorations, cleanup, and numerous logistical details, not least being convincing the homeowners of the benefits of the tour.

OHA hopes to work with other neighborhood groups in putting on future house tours. A couple of big questions follow: Is there another association president like OHA member Craig Miller who spearheaded the whole Fernwood affair? And where do we find another sure-fire draw like Fernwood's Carr Jones house? If readers have the answers, let us know and we'll get to work.

--Ed Phillips



Carr Jones's Chryst House--the sensation of the Fernwood tour. (Betty Marvin)

■ ALAMEDA PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

OHA was one of several local preservation organizations invited to participate in a preservation conference held in Alameda on May 18. The conference was organized by the Alameda Victorian Preservation Society and the purpose was to bring together groups from throughout the Bay Area to exchange ideas and promote cooperation. Representatives from such groups as Heritage Homes of Petaluma, Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association, Hayward Area Historical Society-McConaghy House and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association were present. Discussion topics included methods of organizing house tours, dealing with city government, and staffing and offices. Representatives agreed that increased communication among organizations would benefit the cause of preservation as well as avoid scheduling events on conflicting dates. BAHA offered to host the next meeting, tentatively set for January of next year. The discussion was followed by a short walking tour in Alameda's historic district and refreshments at the home of AVPS VP Cathy Ferron. OHA's representative was board member Annalee Allen.

■ ORAL HISTORY SURVEY

The Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library is trying to determine what oral history sources exist in Northern California, and how researchers might find them. OHA received their questionnaire in connection with A Guide to the History of California, due for publication this year. There may not be time to respond for the book, but individuals or organizations in our readership who have or know of oral history collections might still contact ROHO, for their ongoing effort to publicize and encourage the use of oral history. They plan to deposit a complete file of responses at the State Library in Sacramento. The information requested is name and address of institution or contact person, number of tapes, subjects and dates, and whether they are transcribed, indexed, or catalogued. ROHO's address is Room 486, The Bancroft Library, Univ. of California, Berkeley 94720.

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 listings, contact Oakland Heritage Alliance.

Upcoming Activities

through Aug. 8, paintings of Oakland by Anthony Holdsworth, Pro Arts Gallery, 1920 Union Street, Oakland; Wed.-Sat., 11-5; 763-7880.

through Aug. 15, San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge 50th Anniversary Exhibit, Oakland History Room, Main Library, 125 14th Street, Tues.-Sat.

through Aug. 15, Oakland in Ebony, 1840-1950, East Bay Negro Historical Society exhibit and slide show, Main Library, 125 14th St., Mon.-Sat.

July 30, Wed., 8 pm, lecture by Robin Freeman, "Social History of the Arts and Crafts Movement," Berkeley Architectural Heritage, 2105 Bancroft Way; free.

OHA NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING TOURS, Sat. & Sun. 1:30-3:30; donation per tour \$3 members, \$4 general; reservations not required, for starting places see below.

July 26, Adams Point (NEW TOUR); Harlan Kessel; Lakeview Branch Library, Embarcadero bet. Grand & lakeshore.

July 27, Produce Market & Lower Broadway (NEW TOUR); Leslie Flint; King Way & Embarcadero (old Grove & 1st Sts.).

Aug. 2, Richmond Boulevard; Julie Barron; 3252 Kempton Way near Fairmount.

Aug. 3, Cathedral District (NEW TOUR); Dean Yabuki; St. Francis De Sales Cathedral, 22nd, Grove, & San Pablo.

Aug. 9, Golden Gate Neighborhood; Ed Phillips; Golden Gate Branch Library, 5606 San Pablo Avenue.

Aug. 10, Downtown Art Deco; Michael Crowe; Camera Corner, 13th & Broadway (cosponsored by Art Deco Society).

Aug. 16, Mountain View Cemetery; Barbara Smith & Michael Crowe; Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Av.

Aug. 17, Uptown Art Deco Terra Cotta; Dean Yabuki & Sharon Moore; Mary Bowles Bldg., 1718 Telegraph.

Aug. 23, College Avenue (NEW TOUR); Sharon Moore; Rockridge BART lot, College & Keith.

Aug. 24, Borax Smith Estate; Gail Solomon; 8th Avenue & East 24th Street.

Aug. 30, Sat., 4pm, "The Gatsby Summer Affair," Dunsmuir House: dancing, car show, period costumes & entertainment; \$25/person. Art Deco Society, 552-DECO.

Sep. 7, Sun., time TBA, encore matinee of Old Oakland Films at the Grand Lake Theater.

Sep. 7, Sun, 10-5, Alameda Victorian Preservation "Day in the Park," Franklin Park, Morton & San Antonio; info. for exhibitors/sellers 531-6632.

Sep. 11, Thurs., 6:30, banquet & book party for Concord Historical Society's new book History of Concord; Concord Hilton, \$25, 676-3045.

Sep. 16 & 17, Tues. & Wed., Art Deco Society's 4th Annual Art Deco Fashion Show, 8 pm, SFJCC Auditorium, 3200 California; \$5 Art Deco members, \$10 guests, check to Art Deco Fashion, 109 Minna St. #399, S.F. 94105.

Sep. 21, Sun., 12-2, Pacific Heights Art Deco Walking Tour with Michael Crowe; Lafayette Park, Sacramento & Gough; \$2 Art Deco Society members, \$3 general.

Sep. 28, Sun., 12-5, Preservation Fair, Camron-Stanford House, Lake Merritt at 14th St.; info. 836-1976.

Sep. 30-Oct. 3, American Association for State & Local History national convention, "Turning Dreams into Reality" (museum management & related); Oakland Convention Center; \$95/\$125; info. 273-3842 (Oakland Museum History Dept.).

Oct. 5, Sun., Alameda Victorian Preservation Society house tour, details TBA.

Oct. 18, Sat., 1:30-3:30, Uptown Oakland Art Deco Terra Cotta Walking Tour, cosponsored by OHA & Art Deco Society, led by Dean Yabuki; Mary Bowles Bldg., 1718 Telegraph; \$2 members, \$3 general.

Oct. 19, Sun., 12th annual Oakland Black Cowboy Parade.

Regularly Scheduled Tours

Dunsmuir House. Tours every Sunday, spring through fall; \$3; 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland; 562-7588.

San Francisco's Historic North Waterfront. S.F. Heritage walking tour, Sat.s at 10:30 AM; cable car turntable, Hyde & Beach; \$3, under 12 free, 441-3000.

Black Diamond Mines, underground mining museum, Sat. & Sun. 10, 11, 1:30, 2:30; reservations required, 757-2620; \$2+\$1.50 parking. Somersville Road, Antioch.

Ardenwood Historic Farm, park open Thurs.-Sun. 10-4, house tours hourly Sat. & Sun./variable Thurs. & Fri., fee \$3-\$1 dep. on age & day; Ardenwood Blvd. or Lake Blvd., Newark; 796-0663.

Oakland Tours Program. Old Oakland, City Center, Chinatown, Uptown, Pres. Park, Port. April-Oct., free, 273-3234.

Camron-Stanford House. Wed. & Sun., free, 836-1976.

Paramount Theater. 1st & 3rd Sat., 10 AM, \$1, 893-2300.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Oakland Heritage Alliance. OHA Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of the month, 7:30 pm. For agenda and location, please contact Les Haurath, 834-5652.

OHA Preservation Action Committee; contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370, for time, place, and agenda. Meetings are open to all interested persons.

OHA Publications Committee, working on a guidebook/history called The Broadway Book, meets usually on Tuesday evenings-- call Ed Phillips, 465-9829.

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, 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.



Oakland Heritage Alliance

5569 Lawton Avenue, Oakland, CA 94618

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

644 Longridge Road, Oakland, CA 94610

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OHA NEWS welcomes contributions--research projects large or small, historic photos, reports on preservation issues or events, what have you. Contact Betty Marvin, 849-1959, or Dean Yabuki, 832-5355.

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 (March through June) are as follows:

Leslie Baxter, Berwin Berlin, Jerry Bowling, Margaret Brisfman, Robert Burchard, Ron/Roanne Butier, Virginia Carter, Diana Demeter, Patricia Devine, Marcia Diehl, Bonnie Evanhoe, Alan Garretson, Brian Gross, Jose Gutierrez/Patricia Pinkston, Bonnie/Earl Hamlin, Alberta Hankenson, Carole Hirsch, Eleanor Keating, Rose Marie Klein, Pam Krawiec, Paula Kruger, Mary/Daniel Lamey, Mary Lentz, Mr./Mrs. Kenneth McLetchie, Earl McMullen, Donna Mehrten, Tony Moniz, Helen Moss, Cheryl/Steve Nevares, Greig S. O'Dea, Dave Parker, Mrs. Albert Payne, Kirk Peterson, Mrs. Ellen Pitts, Nancy Platford, Tatiana Poushine, Terry Roberts, Ellen/David Ryan, Josef M. Schmitt, Donald Schnarr, Alison Siegel-Sanchez, Susan Serrine, Robert Sorensen, Jr., Stephen Statler, Kathryn/Ted Stephanides, Mary Ann Thompson, Marsha van Broek, Bertena B. Vaughn, Dot Watson, Catherine Watters, Virginia Willoughby, Ted Wurm.

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

Y.W.C.A. Home 1907-15

"Young women of Oakland are to be guided in the straight and narrow path," intoned the announcement in 1907 requesting funds for a new YWCA sheltering home for young working females. "No more lingering by the wayside; no more late hours at night; no more freedom in lodging houses. The women of Oakland are out to save and reform girls. The whole effort of the ladies will be to keep good girls good and make bad girls good."

Following the huge influx of refugees from San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire, Oakland's YWCA facilities at 1274 Franklin Street became greatly overtaxed. Founded in 1877, the local Young Women's Christian Association had as one of its principal aims the providing of temporary shelter to working women newly moved from their homes. In 1886, Anthony Chabot, father of the local water supply, had donated funds for a sheltering home which was eventually established on Franklin Street.

Now, in 1907, additional facilities were sought and found with the purchase of the three-story Ely W. Playter mansion on the southwest corner of 14th and Castro. Built in 1865, the house was once residence to Mr. Playter, banker, businessman, and one-time Oakland mayor (1885-87). Transmogi-



(Oakland History Room)

fied into a "sheltering home", the main floor of the edifice became headquarters for the YWCA, also containing a luncheon room and parlors. Rest rooms and small classrooms were to be found on the second floor, and the top floor served as a gymnasium.

Soon outgrowing the modest space provided by the old house, the YWCA in 1915 opened new headquarters in the present Julia Morgan designed structure at 15th and Webster Streets. Mr. Playter's somewhat modified mansion reverted to private ownership until, in 1948, it suffered the ignominy of being demolished to provide space for a service station, demolished in turn for the freeway.

--William Sturm

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