

## Delilah Beasley, Trail Blazer

Delilah Leontium Beasley died on August 18, 1934 at Fairmont Hospital in San Leandro, without any relative at her bedside. The domestic life of Beasley was uneventful. There is no mention of her ever being married. She came to California about 1910, living in Berkeley, Oakland, and Los Angeles. She published one book, The Negro Trail Blazers of California. Much of her time was spent writing newspaper columns and traveling the nation as she pledged her life to "the living world of brotherhood and mutual understanding between the races."

To many her life and career remain a blank. And yet she made history. Her book was the first to document the long-ignored history of California's Blacks, and provided the seeds of an authentic historic tradition. The beautiful 317-page book was published in Los Angeles in 1919 by the Times-Mirror Press, and reprinted in 1969 by the Negro Universities Press.

Beasley was born about 1866, just after the Civil War. She was the first of four children of Daniel and Margaret Harris Beasley. She began her education in the Cincinnati, Ohio, school system. Her parents died nine months apart when she was quite young, and the children scattered to live with friends. Beginning at age 12, it is said, she "corresponded" for the Cleveland Gazette. At 15 she published her first column in the Sunday Cincinnati Enquirer under the caption "Mosaics." Dan Rudd, editor and publisher of the Colored Catholic Tribune, was attracted to her writings and offered her an opportunity to study newspaper work in his plant in Cincinnati.

From the day of her parents' death she had to shift for herself. She took a job in the home of a Cincinnati Judge Hagen as a



Author, journalist, and activist Delilah Beasley (c.1866-1934): frontispiece portrait from her 1919 book, Negro Trail Blazers of California

maid. She soon found the work undesirable and left the job, but in her short time of service she was brought into the presence of distinguished public people and the tone and pattern of literary thinking. Her correspondence attests to the cordial relations she established with many of them.

She moved to Chicago, and began to study massage. Realizing the need for more education, she went to Buffalo, where she studied diagnosis, Swedish movements, and medical gymnastics, and specialized in giving massage in p<sup>r</sup>egn<sup>i</sup>s. Later she conducted a school for Blacks in the science of massage, scalp treatments, and manicuring. In due time, she received a call to come to Berkeley, California, for a former patient who regarded her highly.

In 1910 Beasley settled in California. This was her second visit, and this time she came with the definite intention of writing a book. Not knowing much about California history, she began auditing lectures at the University of California on the literary and general history of the state. She felt that the textbook habit of treating Blacks as invisible except in connection with slavery was antiquated. She felt a sense of duty to put into permanent form a record of their remarkable progress in California, as a lesson for a world in which many lived and strived.

She composed and read a short paper on "My City of Inspiration--San Francisco," and Father David R. Wallace of Oakland suggested she pursue the "pioneer Negro" theme, and gave her a letter of introduction to Mrs. Annie Peters, "a pioneer lady" in Oakland. After a day talking with Mrs. Peters, Beasley was ready to venture out on writing the history of Blacks in California.

She made regular use of the California State Archives and the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley, as well as private libraries around the state. She interviewed old Black pioneers, examined old newspapers, studied records of county hospitals and business and property holdings, and sent letters of inquiry to the supervisors of every county. The boards in Los Angeles and Marysville were "the only ones who knew or took the trouble to send any reply of value."

Beasley delved into the history of unknown individuals and groups, to give a more accurate view of Black Americans. She honored their strength of character and energy, and let them tell their own story: their role in the Bear Flag incident and the Pony Express, the struggle to obtain a right to live in California, and the struggle for citizenship and manhood. She highlighted the growth of the Black community, education, churches, and organizations, and the emergence of distinguished men and women in law, business, literature, and music.

To provide a background for the question of slavery in California, she discussed the Spaniards' enslavement of Indians, and treaties between England and Spain and the U.S. and Mexico. Congress admitted California as a free state, but individuals brought slaves into the state, worked them in the mines, and returned to the south and



Father David Wallace, of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, encouraged Beasley to begin her history. (portrait from Negro Trail Blazers, Oak.Hist.Room)

slavery. Beasley presented evidence that slavery existed in California with all its horrors, from personal accounts, court records, and Freedom Papers issued by the courts. Blacks actually paid more for their freedom in California than elsewhere.

Beasley scoffed at the historians and apologists who claimed that slavery was never condoned in California. She demonstrated how white citizens forged legal chains in keeping with the Fugitive Slave Law. Perhaps it was the excessive claims made for California, perhaps it was the personal histories she heard, but California did not fare well at the hands of this historian. Yet she acknowledged stalwarts in the cause of liberty such as Senator David Broderick and Rev. Thomas Starr King.

Beasley wrote that the lack of support for Black education dated all the way back to 1847. California laws of 1865 and 1866 established a system of common schools, but they were not integrated. On November 20, 1871, the Black pioneers held a convention at the Colored Second Baptist Church in Stockton, and adopted a resolution that the words "children of African descent" should be struck from Section 56 of the School Law, and Black children be educated with other children.

The Executive Committee that called this convention was formed at the First Colored Convention (all free Blacks living in the state) in Sacramento in 1855. Its duties were to raise funds and watch and report discrimination or cruelty to any member of the race. The members had a secret code and transmitted news all over the state by way of the barber's chair. Beasley said, "It really corresponded to the Underground Railroad." The Executive Committee of the Colored Convention learned of movements against the Negro settlers, whether in the state legislature or on the local streets.

The colored schools were closed in 1875, and all children were supposed to attend school in the district where they lived. After the long bitter fight, this was an encouraging vision of the future.

Beasley's trailblazers included many individuals of her own time. In a section on distinguished women, she sketched lives of courage, compassion, and conviction that are an integral part of California's history. The strivings of club women and civic leaders like Hattie Blonde Tilghman, Julia Shorey, Kate Bradley-Stovall, E. Gertrude Chrisman, Elizabeth Brown, and Chlora Hayes Sledge represent the movement of Black Americans toward intellectual and economic self-sufficiency that was so characteristic of the period.

Beasley always advocated "just measures." By this she meant that Black men and women should be fully as qualified as whites in all their attainments. She offered document in text and photographs of the high professional achievements of State Legislator Frederick Madison Roberts, Internal Revenue cashier James M. Alexander, mining promoter Theodore W. Troy, attorneys E. Burton Ceruti and Hugh E. Macbeth, dentists Alva C. Garrott and John A. Sommerville, physicians Wilbur Clarence Gordon and Joseph Ball, Father David R. Wallace of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, and many others.

Another timely chapter was "A History of the Negro at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco." She told how an Oakland schoolgirl, Virginia Stephens, gave the fair its official nickname, "Jewel City," in a contest sponsored by the San Francisco Call-Post. The girl's father, William Stephens, kept quiet about the racial identity of his daughter for fear

she would be denied the honor. But when the fair celebrated Alameda County Day, she "together with 75 colored children, rode through the streets of San Francisco on a float in the parade, with a huge banner proclaiming the fact that Miss Virginia Stephens named the fair 'Jewel City.'" In the fair's Mississippi State Building, an entire room was set aside to exhibit handiwork of colored students from Tougaloo University. Beasley found it especially encouraging that the state that had led the bitter fight to keep California out of the Union, 50 years later was the only one with a creditable Negro exhibit.

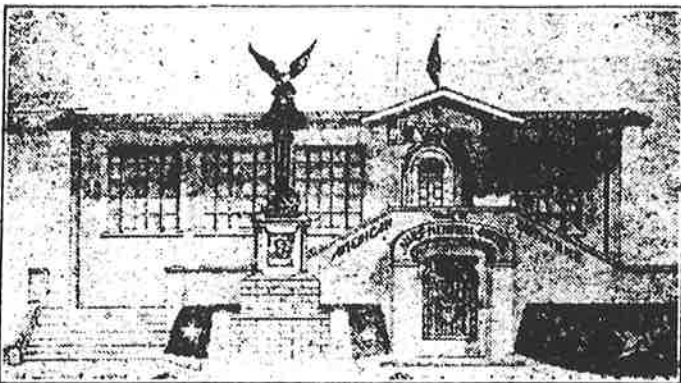
She devoted a long chapter to military history, quoting the New York Times: "A better understanding between the races might have long ago materialized had a page or two from musty old Government reports



Virginia Stephens named the 1915 Fair "Jewel City," rode in triumph in the Alameda County Day parade. She later became California's first Black woman lawyer. The parade banner is on display in "Visions Toward Tomorrow." (Negro Trail Blazers, Oakland Hist. Room)

and official war records...been inserted in the text books on American history, giving the Negro's part in the nation's wars." An announcement in the Pacific Appeal of 1863 revealed a Black recruiting office in San Francisco for service in the Civil War. Personal testimony and the Army and Navy Journal documented volunteer companies all over the state, beginning with the Sacramento Zouaves, organized in celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation. Beasley also documented the honorable service of Black troops from California in World War I.

In 1925 she wrote in the Western American of an Armistice Day address she delivered at the Allied Memorial Center in Oakland. This was a shrine overlooking Lake Merritt, privately erected by Dr. L.F. Herrick to honor all veterans. On this day Herrick had collected the names of 400 colored troops and invited Beasley to give the memorial address. Calling the ceremony a "saddening yet happy occasion," she mourned the soldiers lost but felt the honor would help the race. She told the audience how in 1919 in Los Angeles she had challenged the war memorial service conducted in a white church to give accurate accounts of the bravery of colored soldiers on the Western Front, saying, "these men were being denied this well earned recognition by a Christian soldier in a public statement before thousands." She told how, after praying all night, she went to the printer of her book and asked him not to finish it until she could gather records to prove her point.



*American House of Commons and Allies Memorial Center as it will appear facing Lake Merritt on Lakeshore Boulevard.*

**Miracle in Metal to Be Dedicated Here on Armistice Day, November 11.**

Allied Memorial, where Beasley gave her courageous address on Armistice Day, 1925. (newspaper photo)

She went to every section of the city and gathered evidence from recently returned troops that they had served and won honors. She heard of insults and hardships and prejudice in the American Expeditionary Force. But of the 1440 troops of color from the United States, 60 had been decorated for bravery in action on the Western Front and 90 as non-combat troops. She was proud to report that many were from California.

When Negro Trail Blazers came out it was reviewed in the NAACP's Crisis magazine. The reviewer gave due credit for the thorough search of records and choice of topic, but writing as a "scientific investigator," pointed out weaknesses in footnoting and English composition. Other commentators have noted its emphasis on property accumulation and institutions of the small middle class, which may now seem naive, and also its monumental achievement by an amateur historian who showed the way into the source materials and created a volume which is itself a basic document on the Black experience. At that time the only other history of pioneer Negroes was a pamphlet, "A Souvenir of Distinguished Afro-Americans of the Pacific Coast," by George Watkins.

Beasley expected her work to be read by the people, and it was in keeping with her design to embellish and correct, to build respect for Black Americans. With great joy she announced in the Oakland Sunshine that the American Library Association had included Negro Trail Blazers in its November 1920 list of Best New Books. In summer 1921 she reflected, "The charm of the sale of a book to a library is that so many people will be able to read the book. The other interesting feature is selling to a library--it matters not who else has read the book or recommended its purchase, it is never purchased by any library until the library Board criticises the book. Then, they take a vote on it and send you your check for the amount of the book."

There are no sales records, but Beasley was making personal calls on dozens of people to sell the book. Few writers earn enough from their books to live on, and it is unlikely that Beasley was one of those. During the time she was researching and writing it, she worked at a dormitory at U.C. She wrote that while she studied she worked "browning the fried potatoes and

**The Oakland Sunshine**

June 26 1915

401 8th

**COLORED RACE AT THE EXPOSITION.**

To the Many Readers of the Oakland Sunshine:

It affords me great pleasure to accept the invitation of the editor of this paper to contribute "special feature articles." To those who read the Oakland Tribune, remember a few weeks ago it contained an article from my pen, "Booker Washington and the Clansman." In this article I gave to the reading public a statement that Booker Washington had issued to colored people through the United States in regard to the Clansman. In quoting Mr. Washington in my statement I omitted those parts that would cause the other race to criticize our actions in the fight we were then waging against the Klan. The majority of all nations, and especially of our best work is being exhibited under the protection of the Stars and Stripes. But I am writing too long a letter for my first. Tell you the rest in my next.

Respectfully,

D. L. BEASLEY.

OAKLAND TRIBUNE, SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 1933

**ACTIVITIES AMONG NEGROES**  
BY DELILAH L. BEASLEY

Acknowledgement is extended for the receipt this week of a copy of the Washington, D. C., Post Herald, containing an account of the recent inaugural and pictures of the parade where for the first time Negroes were represented by the 10th Cavalry and other Negro units in the inauguration of a United States President. The rotogravure page of the New York Evening Post, February 25 contained pictures of the recent exhibition by Negro artists held by Harmon Foundation at the Art Center, New York City, February 20 to March 4. This page contained a striking picture of Sergeant Johnson, called "Defiant." A catalog of the entire exhibit was received from Eugene Alexander Burks, artist and musician of Newark, N. J., the front page of which has a picture of the piece of sculpture, "Pearl," by Sargent Johnson, which won for him the Robert C. Ogden prize of \$150. - The catalog also contained an account of the purchase by the Far Western Inter-racial

committee of the "Slave Mother," which was presented to the Oakland Municipal Art Gallery last July for the permanent collection.

The Colored Women's Civic Study Club of Alameda last week were invited, along with similar clubs, to attend a tea held in Hotel Alameda, honoring two councilmen. This Civic Study Club of which Mrs. Leroy Drisdorn is president, returned the compliment last Friday by holding a tea in Lincoln Patriotic Hall, Alameda, at which time they were honored by the presence of the mayor and a large number of the councilmen. After singing "America," they were favored by a solo, "The Rosary," sung by William Scott, accompanied by Miss Marian Blue of Oakland.

Rev. C. C. Coleman, pastor of North Oakland Baptist Church, has been invited to be one of three colored ministers in the Waattstrasse Church, London, England, in 1934. The World Baptist Congress will be

Beasley's Oakland newspaper work publicized achievements of her race. Her first contribution as correspondent to Oakland Sunshine, 1915, and one of her last regular Tribune columns, 1933.

practicing scalp massage among the students." While traveling the state selling the book, she walked so long and hard in the hot sun in Fresno that she had to have part of a toe amputated. Still, she took orders for 24 books (4 for cash) in Bakersfield before seeing a doctor. When she traveled, she slept on the train seat, using her good coat as a cover. She admitted, "I have always had the battle of poor health and poverty to fight. But when I think that my work has been purchased by the library of the British Museum and all across the State I feel that after all I have accomplished something for my race."

In June 1915, Beasley was offered a position as special contributor to the Oakland Tribune and as special feature writer for the Oakland Sunshine, writing columns "in the interest of the race." She wrote on everything from Booker T. Washington and "The Clansman" to Fourth of July celebrations and the Exposition. She maintained, "news of special interest to us as a people ought to be discussed in our own papers

among ourselves. But, if a bit of news would have a tendency to better our position in the community, then it should not only be published in our papers, but in the papers of the other races as well; or if we had a distinguished member of our race visiting our city, then we should have the same mentioned as general news, so that when you pay your two cents for a daily paper you will get race news as well as other daily occurrences." From 1923 to 1933 her Tribune column was a weekly feature titled "Activities Among Negroes." Up to that time there had never been a Black woman writing for the general press.

Many of her Tribune columns report on her activities with the Alameda County League of Women Voters. As accredited delegate of both the Tribune and the League, she attended the organization's national convention in Richmond, Virginia in 1925, and made many friends for her race. Representing the Tribune at the Quinquennial Convention of the International Council of Women in Washington, D.C., she called a conference of



Miss Delilah L. Beasley in 1925, portrait accompanying newspaper report of her Armistice Day speech.

all the press delegates and wire services to chastise them for using the terms "darkie" and "nigger" in reporting a segregation incident during the conference. Returning to California, she visited the editors of leading newspapers and urged them not to permit these terms, and also to capitalize the word "Negro."

She was invited to join the League of Nations Association of Northern California, and became an active member. Her articles on the development of the colored races through the Mandate System and the International Labor Office threw light on that phase of the League's activities. When John D. Rockefeller gave \$1 million for International House at U.C. Berkeley, it was Beasley who answered the protests of property owners at a public meeting who feared Berkeley would be overrun with Blacks and Asians. This led to her conducting an international friendship program with the

Oakland Council of Church Women. She was active in the California Association of Colored Women, and brought the National Association convention to Oakland in 1925.

In 1929, Beasley suggested compiling a list of the Oakland Free Library's holdings of books of Negro authorship. Already there were special library services to Blacks, inspired in part by the Harlem Renaissance. The list was included in the Negro History Week display the following February. The exhibit during the week of February 14 became an annual celebration at the Main Library. In 1933 she brought together local groups to sponsor art exhibits, and at her suggestion a fund was collected to secure Eugene Burks' painting "The Slave Mother," from the Harmon exhibition in New York, for the Oakland Art Gallery.

Delilah Beasley's work involved such sacrifices as very few have the strength of character to make, but her reward must have been great, because she loved that work with all her soul. When the last rites were said over her bier at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Oakland, the ushers, members of the Delilah L. Beasley Club, put into the hands of each person present a mimeographed card which read:

"My Pledge

In Memoria

Miss Delilah L. Beasley.

"Every life casts its shadow, my life plus others make a power to move the world. I, therefore, pledge my life to the living world of brotherhood and mutual understanding between the races."

She was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery. Twenty years after her death, her grave was rescued from oblivion and a monument unveiled. Her tombstone is inscribed, "Author and Columnist, a native of Ohio and for 25 years a resident of Oakland. Miss Beasley died August 18, 1934. She was a member of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church." The California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, with other groups in which Beasley had held active membership, and personal friends, were contributors to the memorial. --Lorraine J. Crouchett

Lorraine J. Crouchett, MA in history from Holy Names College, is the author of one book and articles in Migration Today, OHA News, and the West County Times.

## Black Precedents in Oakland Cultural History

Black settlers made their appearance in Oakland soon after the city's founding in 1850. They were free certainly, but they were also denied equal rights with their fellow settlers. There were among them many who brought a sensitive interpretation of their own Black American culture and the larger culture as well. From the outset they initiated cultural activities--their own music, and their own literature, poetry, and visual arts.

Oakland's Black families from the first sought formal schooling for their children, despite economic and social obstacles. By 1857 Mrs. Elizabeth Flood, a Black teacher and wife of pioneer Isaac Flood, had a private school for Black youth in her home in Brooklyn township, now East Oakland. She also accepted pupils from Oakland city, since there was no public school for them. Hers was the only Black school in Oakland until January 1869, when a school composed mainly of adults was opened in a rented building at Sixth and Jefferson Streets. A white teacher, D. Clinton Taylor, was appointed by the Board of Education to teach there. The school lasted only about six months, after which the children returned to the Brooklyn Colored School. In 1872 the Oakland Board of Education permitted them to attend the regular schools on an integrated basis.

Close upon this victory, the older children won the right to attend local colleges. In 1880 (when the Black population of Oakland was 593 out of a total of 34,555) several local youth were enrolled at the University of California, including Alexander Dumas Jones in civil engineering. The first known Black student at Mills was a multi-talented girl enrolled in 1893.

There was much cultural variety among Black Oaklanders. From many different sections of the country came trained songsters, teachers, musicians, budding bards, and experienced writers. The city pulsed with their activities from the earliest years. In 1876, the Oakland Literary Aid Society was established to sponsor cultural activities in the adult Black community. In

1899, a group of women from Beth Eden Baptist Church founded the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club to develop musical and literary talents of its members.

Music-making was a prominent part of festivities, church programs, and community meetings. The Black churches provided great opportunities for musicians. Early church announcements suggest that Afro-Americans here sang the traditional spirituals and Methodist hymnals brought by the African Methodist Missionary Society missionaries. Ministers served as "song-carriers" to the area as they organized congregational folk-singing. And every young Black Oaklander seems to have been taking music lessons of some kind.

As early as 1869 the small Black community was listening to the operatic repertory of the Hyers sisters, Anna and Emma, who were counted among the great vocal artists of their generation. Home talent was recognized at the 1896 County Exposition, when Oscar T. Jackson, Mrs. W.S. Linn, Hattie and Edna Winslow, and Master R. Clark performed to a large audience. In 1915, Lutie Gilbert and Maggie Parker had a reputation as singers in local musical circles, and Irene Rutherford, daughter of Oakland's first Black physician, was presenting musicals for the general public.

As the Black population spread west of Broadway, numerous music studios were established in the homes of musicians who advertised in the Black weeklies. Popular teacher-performers in the community in the 1920s and 30s included Pearl Hinds, Lillian Jeter Davis, Pinkie Callender, Laura Tooms-Scott, and Elmer Keeton. Songsters of the 1930s and 40s were Arnold Baranco, Leviticus Lyon, Justitia Davis, Genetta Yates, Alfred O'Neal, Marcus Hall, Shirley Williams, and Ada Larkins. Each attained local reputation and won favorable notice in the press. During the Depression they turned to ensemble singing to continue their musical careers (see Winter 1987-88 OHA News).

The self-taught verse-makers of early Oakland penned elegies to their friends and about Black leaders, godly living, pious concerns, and the environment. Reference to race is rare except in the memorials to Black leaders. They seem to have aimed at the general reading public. In 1873 appeared



the first known poem in print by a local Black poet. "Lines to the Memory of the Late Mrs. A.E. Solomon" by Mrs. Charles S. Davis, published in the Pacific Appeal, serves to illustrate an elegy:

You'll think of me sometimes, beloved,  
When I am gone from sight.  
When you can see me never more,  
You'll not forget me quite. ...  
Oh! Sometime think of me,  
And come unto the quiet spot,  
Where all is slumber, lone and still,  
And show that I am not quite forgot.

Turn-of-the-century poet William Nauns Ricks became nationally famous for poetry celebrating the California environment, such as "The Poppy Fields By Lake Chabot" (1913) and "To the Oak of Oakland" (1916).

I wish you'd go to the poppy fields  
That bloom by the lake Chabot,  
Such wonderfully carpeted poppy fields,  
They look like a golden snow  
That has fallen upon the emerald earth,  
Then melted in spots, where the blue  
Of the cornflowers show like bits of sky,  
And the world has a marvelous hue.

"To the Oak of Oakland" tells of the loss of the oak tree in City Hall Plaza which died in 1916. Here we get a strong sense of his pride in Oakland.

With heavy hearts they come to me  
To write your epitaph, Old Tree;  
But how can I, a new-found friend,  
To you a greater honor lend? ...  
This younger race, seems not to see  
The service of your life, Old Tree.  
Your shelter to others are forgot,  
But too few of us know the meaning of  
your lot.

Delilah Beasley's famous Negro Trail Blazers of California, 1919, appears to be the first published book by a local Black writer. But a ready market for Black newspapers developed much earlier. The first Black-owned newspaper, The Illustrated Guide, was established in 1892 by George Watkins, a local printer, and lasted until 1896. The Black population, estimated at 644, was large enough to support its own

paper. Within the decade two other weeklies were established: the Western Outlook, 1896, originally published in San Francisco and relocated to Oakland in 1910, and the Oakland Sunshine, founded in 1897 by City Hall janitor John Wilds. (It merged with the California Voice in 1923.) Others were to follow: the Oakland Pacific Times in 1912, and the Golden State, the Independent, the Times, and the Western American during the 1920s. These were the only organs with regular news about Black life in Oakland until 1923 when Beasley launched her Sunday Tribune column "Activities Among Negroes."

So far as we know, the first Afro-American in California to achieve respect as a painter was Pauline Powell, an Oakland native and resident. In 1890 she had several landscapes in a special show at the Mechanics Institute in San Francisco, highly praised by the Committee on Awards. Some of her works survive in private collections and at the Oakland Museum. Around the turn of the century another local artist, Beatrice Bost, was known for her California landscapes. Her works, too, are held in local private collections.

White-owned music halls and theaters were often closed to Black performers. The late coming of formal "little theater" was a triumph of pioneering individuals like Ida Jackson, Tarea Hall Pitman, and Vivian Osborne Marsh, who directed productions in schools auditoriums, churches, and at festivities. During the 1930s and 40s the Berkeley Negro Theater, the Playmakers, and the Attucks Club of Dramatics, Music and Arts presented many shows.

By this time, just before World War II, the Black population of Oakland numbered 7500. From Oakland's earliest years, the Black community challenged barriers to their creative and artistic expression. When one realizes what their efforts meant to the Oakland cultural scene as a whole, their significance increases. It is in this spirit that this overview is presented.

--Lawrence P. Crouchett

Dr. Lawrence Crouchett is Executive Director of the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, and director of "Visions Toward Tomorrow." He will be speaking on "Black Precedents in Oakland History" for OHA's lecture series on Wed., Feb. 22.



## OHA Update

### ■ EDITH EMELITA COHEN, 1898-1988

On November 30, 1988, OHA and Oakland lost a good friend and very special person.

I met Ita, as she was called by friends and family, in 1981 when OHA was contacted by a donor who wanted to contribute toward painting the Cohen House--a truly extraordinary National Register and Oakland landmark. The house at 1440 29th Avenue was built in 1884 for Alfred H. Cohen and Emma Bray, as a wedding present from Emma's father, Watson Bray. Their daughter Ita was born there and lived there her entire life.

My first visit to the house was unforgettable. I was awed by this fabulous family home which had remained virtually unchanged both inside and out since it was built.

Emelita gave me a tour punctuated with stories about the construction and furnishings. The entry hall is paneled with curly redwood milled from a single tree, a wedding present to her parents. Surprisingly modern looking stained glass windows frame the front door and stairwell. The house's furnishings were given to the newlyweds by Emelita's grandfather, Alfred A. Cohen, lawyer to the Big Four railroad barons. In the center of the parlor is a large Aubusson rug, a fragment of one from Alfred A. Cohen's estate, Fernside, in Alameda. The dining room is filled with family photos (labeled now because so many people want to know who everyone is) and both the parlor and dining room have their original wallpapers and stenciled ceilings. The house was always made cozy by fireplaces in the library and smoking room. The lodge-like smoking room at the rear was added after the 1906 earthquake when two chimneys fell into the sun porch.

What amazed me most was that nothing had really been changed or insensitively remodeled over all these years, as so often happens in older homes. I think it was the preservationist in Emelita that kept it so. While painting the house was the original goal, a vast amount of repair and restoration had to be done prior to painting. Emelita was the driving force behind getting all of that work completed. She loved and appreciated the uniqueness of this house and instilled that love in all her

nieces and nephews, who worked with, and are still working with, OHA to raise funds to restore and maintain this special house.

Emelita made an enormous contribution to all of our lives and to the lives of others she touched, as Camp Director for the Bay Area YWCA, as a lifetime resident of Fruitvale, and as a preservationist. Her sense of humor, her love of all things wild, her ability to inspire confidence, her unflinching devotion to the house on 29th Avenue will all be missed. --Leslie Flint



Emelita Cohen, friend of OHA, in her lifelong landmark home. (Joe Samberg, Oakland Museum)

The family of Emelita Cohen and Oakland Heritage Alliance wish to thank the following people for their contributions to the Cohen House Fund:

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Krusi, Peter Kyhn, Margaret Langston, Dorothy Lanyan, Virginia Leach, Gaye Lenahan, Barbara Levin, Stoner Lichty, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lindstaedt, Helen Lore, Shirley Lyhne-Eichorn/Robinie Lyhne Alinejad, Amy Lyons/Adam Cohen, Richard Lyman, Dolly Marshall, Gene McGraw, Joan McKay, Jane McLean, Earl McMullen, Dr. & Mrs. Jim McRae, Donna Mehrten, Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Mello, Virginia Mills, Yvonne Minor, Margaret Molarsky, Tony Moniz.

Mr. & Mrs. Carroll Neff, Margaret Nicholson, Brad & Laura Niebling, Margaret Northcott, Jane O'Donnell, Dr. & Mrs. H. W. O'Grady, Roberta O'Grady, Esther Oswalt, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Parker, Marian Perry, Aida Peterson, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Pigford, Robert Pipe, Anne Basham Reed, Patty Reidenbach, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Robinson, M. R. Rogers, Helen Rogers, Victor Rosen, Mrs. S. C. Ruopp, Jay Rutledge, Dick Reutlinger.

Bille Sarzan, Alison Siegel-Sanchez, Edie Silber, Judy Singer, Mr. & Mrs. John Sproul, Mr. & Mrs. William Stanton, George & Helene Strauss, Richard Taber, Mr. & Mrs. W. V. Tryon, Oraville Jane Tuttle, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Weaver, Connie Weaver, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Weeks Jr., Dr. & Mrs. Chester Weseman, Edith Wilson, Valerie Winemiller, Mabel McCamman Winkelman, Gordon Winlow, Fred Wolfe, Jean Wood, Ted Wurm, Joe Yee.

Dr. Eric R. Braun, William Chapmen, William & Nora Cole, Mildred Day, Evelyn Deane, Jean Garthwaite, Lise Haas, Cora Houchin, John & Virginia Hussey, L.F. Israel, Gloria Newhouse, Hilary S. Pattee, Marian Perry, Maurine Scammon, Jean Spicer, Carmel Triska, Timothy Vickers.

#### ■ HOLIDAY PARTY

OHA celebrated the holidays with a successful open house at Preservation Park. More than 300 people mingled and enjoyed the surroundings of the freshly painted Ginn House and adjoining Nile Club Gallery while the Latham Fountain splashed outside. A trio from the newly reorganized Oakland East Bay Symphony, led by Robin May, provided uplifting accompaniment. This was an opportunity for the event's co-sponsors, OHA and Bramalea Pacific, to showcase the renewed activity at Preservation Park. As reported in the fall OHA News, Bramalea



Preservation Park: Ginn House, Nile Club, Latham Fountain, City Center--a good time was had by all, at OHA/Bramalea holiday party. (Phil Bellman)

Pacific, the developer of City Center, has entered into an agreement with the city to complete the long-sidelined project.

Additional sponsors of the event were Oakland based law firms Wendel Rosen Black Dean & Levitan, and Crosby Heafey Roach & May. Crogan's Bar & Grill and G.B. Ratto & Co. provided refreshments. The distinctive invitation featuring the fountain was designed by Steve Donaldson of Bay Graphics.

Co-chairs Susanne Hirshen and Annalee Allen thank the following for their time and contributions:

Claudia Albano, Daphne Anderson, Julie and Earl Barron, Jim Bertram, Bramalea Property Management staff, Builders Booksource, Cal Performances, Michael Dean, Lee Dwyer, Lynn Fonfa, Dan Fontes, Ronald Gamba, Carolyn Gee, Gulf Coast Restaurant & Oyster Bar, Les Hausrath, Daryl Halverson, Carolina Juarez, Helen Lore, Robin May, Mary Jane McConville, Al Michaan, Howard Mills, Laura and Brad Niebling, Sally Nielsen, Park Place Restaurant, Kirk Peterson, Mary Phillips, J. Seulberger & Co., Larry Sousa, Norm Tuttle, Ultra Lucca Delicatessen, and GraceAnn Waldon.

Congratulations to raffle winners Joe Lityens, L. Marques, Arlene West, Margaret Framm, Lillian Baird, Dick Davis, Craig Miller, Angie Zigens, Tim Walsh, Beth Jaffe and Betsy Yost. --Annalee Allen

#### ■ OHA PROGRAMS FOR 1989

OHA presents a full line-up of informative and entertaining events in 1989. This winter, history lectures on the fourth Wednesdays of January, February, and March, span three perspectives on Oakland history.

On January 25, William Sturm, librarian of the Oakland History Room, a regular contributor to the OHA News and a popular speaker, guides us through the high-level political world of Mayor John L. Davie. Davie's tenure from 1915 to 1931 coincided with Oakland's boom years and emergence as a prominent West Coast city.

Ethnic diversity and the struggles of minority communities are hallmarks of Oakland's history, and on February 22, Dr. Lawrence Crouchett, Executive Director of the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, will focus on the historical role of Oakland's Black citizens in shaping the city. "Visions Toward Tomorrow" at the Oakland Museum from Jan. 21 to March 25 elaborates on themes of Dr. Crouchett's talk, as do articles in this issue of the OHA News. Dr. Crouchett is also co-author of Visions Toward Tomorrow, a penetrating and lavishly illustrated history of the East Bay Afro-American commu-

nity, 1852-1977, much more than an exhibit catalog, available at the museum.

Family history is the focus on March 25. Dean Yabuki, coordinator of the Japanese in Oakland History Project and longtime OHA supporter, and Lynne Horiuchi, Japanese American Family Album Project, will demonstrate how family photographs can illuminate group and individual identity and document domestic life and family and ethnic traditions.

In the spring a neighborhood history lecture on April 26 focuses on Lake Merritt and on May 24, a provocative discussion of contemporary approaches to local history: Do local historians and preservationists idealize the past? What are the risks and challenges in coming to terms with a community's heritage?

All five OHA lectures will be at the Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara Avenue at Elwood and Jean Streets, Oakland. Programs begin at 7:30. Admission is \$5 for OHA members, \$7 general public.

Following our annual spring house tour (May 21), Doug Brookes, curator of the Treasure Island Museum, will lead a special Saturday tour of the museum on June 10. The new Treasure Island Gallery will be open, featuring memorabilia of the 1939-41 fair. The museum also highlights the military history of Yerba Buena and Treasure Island, the days of the China Clippers, and the construction of the Bay Bridge. In July and August our popular weekend walking tours of Oakland's prominent and less-known neighborhoods will again be offered.

Watch your mail for announcements of these events, and plan to set aside some time to discover what Oakland--and OHA--is about. --Sally Nielsen, program chair

#### ■ SURVEY NEEDS A FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS TO RESEARCH WEST OAKLAND

Phase I of the City Planning Department's comprehensive survey of West Oakland was completed on November 30, 1988. State Inventory forms are being copied and will soon be available at the Oakland History Room in the main library, joining the Central District and Adams Point volumes.

Among the volunteers who contributed to successful completion of the 15 month project, two deserve special mention: Donna

Kempner, professional architectural photographer who took over 900 photos of West Oakland buildings; and Gail Lombardi, OHA member who spent hundreds of hours during the past year gathering long forgotten information about buildings and people in West Oakland. Donna and Gail made a significant difference in the quality and quantity of work produced during this phase.

Phase II of the West Oakland Survey is now under way. If you would like to volunteer to sort through early census records and directories, find building permits, interpret Sanborn maps, and record data from 19th century tax assessor's map books, contact Gary Knecht or Betty Marvin at the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (City Planning, 273-3941, afternoons except Tuesday). You can make a valuable contribution while solving mysteries, organizing lots of data, and learning how things were done in 19th century Oakland. --Gary Knecht

#### ■ EMERYVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Over the last 10 years there has been considerable interest in the history of Oakland, and two books have been written on the subject. Not so Emeryville--but that situation is about to change.

On Sept. 15 a group of local historians and librarians met at the Oakland History Room to organize the Emeryville Historical Society: Dr. Lawrence Crouchett, Nancy Smith, Donald Hausler, Theresa McCrea, and Marilee Snow. Supporters include librarians Patricia Vanderberg (UC Berkeley), Adela Lines (SFPL), and Bill Sturm (Oakland History Room), and writer and Golden Gate neighborhood activist Tom Van Demark.

The purpose of the Emeryville Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and disseminate information on the City of Emeryville, including documents, photographs, books, newspapers, maps, and ephemera. It plans to publish a newsletter and establish an archive, and notify all Bay Area libraries and historical societies of its agenda. EHS hopes to work together with OHA and other organizations, including the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, on future research projects. For the time being, the EHS can be reached c/o Theresa McCrea, 2826 Garber St., Berkeley CA 94705. --Donald Hausler



## 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.

### ■ ANOTHER LOST LANDMARK

A fire on November 18 has claimed yet another Oakland landmark--the 100-year old Herrick House at 12th Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Transients may have started the blaze, which took 28 firefighters 3 hours to control. The Herrick house is another in a lengthening list of significant Oakland buildings which have been lost in recent months (see OHA News, vol. 8, no. 2, "Neglect and Demolition...").

The Herrick House was moved to the site adjoining Preservation Park in late 1985 by Gestalt Development Corporation. The Office of Economic Development and Employment (OEDE) had authorized Gestalt to move both the Herrick House and the smaller Merriam House from their previous location on Pill Hill. It was hoped that proximity to Preservation Park would create a suitable climate for converting the structures to offices. The large Herrick House had to be cut in two to make the move downtown. Apparently financing difficulties hampered progress and the buildings stood on blocks for three years. According to the Montclarion, the buildings were not insured. The fire came just days before city officials reacted to Alameda County Grand Jury criticisms of the handling of the Preservation Park redevelopment project.

The Herrick House is named for its original owner, Edward M. Herrick, president of Pacific Pine Lumber Co., an early consortium of lumber mill operators from Washington, Oregon, and California. The mid-1880s was a time of depressed prices for the lumber industry, despite the ongoing building activity in the Bay Area. To stabilize prices and demand, several mills banded together and agreed to limit hours worked. Herrick, who presumably had access to the highest quality lumber at the best prices, seems to have commissioned local architect Clinton Day to design his house. Building records state that the house was built at Hawthorne and Webster Streets in 1885 for

\$16,000, then a sizable sum.

In an era when the East Bay was rapidly growing with structures designed and built by self-taught contractors, Clinton Day stands out as one of the first university trained architects in the area. He attended the fledgling College of California at its original Oakland location. He might have gone to Yale, where his grandfather Jeremiah Day had been president for thirty years, but his father, Sherman Day, who had brought his family west in the 1850s and was one of the founding trustees of the College of California, convinced him to remain here. Sherman Day, a state senator and Surveyor General of California, was also responsible for laying out many of Berkeley's early streets, after the trustees moved the College from downtown Oakland to the bucolic hills to the north.

In the 1860s there was not yet formal architectural training in the colleges. Sherman Day's son followed the customary path. After graduation he apprenticed in the office of an established architect, David Farquharson. Originally from Scotland and trained in Europe in the classical manner, Farquharson designed some of the earliest buildings on the Berkeley campus, including South Hall, still standing. His student Day designed several campus buildings too, the best known being the old Chemistry Building (demolished in 1963).

The trade magazine of the day, California Architect and Building News, listed Day's name on many 1880s and 1890s projects in San Francisco and the East Bay. He designed the Arlington and LaSalle buildings in Victorian Row (484-94 and 491-97 9th Street) in 1876, and probably also the Ross House at 477-87 9th. The Hale-Treadwell House at Broadway and College on the CCAC campus is thought to be his work (see Fall 1987 OHA News). He built many residences in the popular Queen Anne style. His later commercial structures such as the Union Trust Building on Market Street in San Francisco were more highly classical in style. Information on the work of Clinton Day is sadly incomplete. Early building records are sketchy, and all of Day's own records and plans were lost in the 1906 earthquake and fire. His studio in another of his well-known buildings--the City of Paris on Union Square--was destroyed. He died in 1916.



Today fewer and fewer of Clinton Day's buildings are standing. None of his buildings at U.C. remain. Thus it is particularly regrettable to lose the Herrick House after so much has gone into saving it.

At December's Landmarks Board meeting, OEDE was asked if qualified restoration architects had been consulted to see if the damaged building could still be saved. OHA's Preservation Action committee has written a letter to OEDE and the developers urging them to take this step. Sometime in January George Williams, head of OEDE, will make a final determination on this landmark. If feasible plans to retain what remains cannot be formulated, the building will be demolished and the site will become a parking lot. At some future time OEDE may decide to move another historic structure onto the site and start again. It is hoped lessons from the Herrick House, namely the dangers of slow financing, inadequate insurance, and lax building security, will not be repeated. --Annalee Allen

■ HISTORIC PRESERVATION TASK FORCE

The Historic Preservation Task Force has been meeting throughout the fall, and has now begun to vote on the preservation issues and policies to be included in its report to the Planning Commission and City Council. In early January the task force established internal procedure and began to address substantive preservation issues. Each person attending a meeting has one vote. Minority opinions will be included in the final report on an issue by issue basis rather than in a separate report.

The first question undertaken was the scope of Oakland's historic preservation policy--which kind of properties warrant some kind of preservation effort. It was agreed that this could take the form of regulation, honorific status, or both. Properties warranting both recognition and regulation include buildings, structures, objects, districts, portions of buildings (e.g. the colonnade of the former Fourth Church of Christ Scientist), natural or landscape features with historic associations (such as the Borax Smith Estate palm trees on Ninth Avenue), and public interior spaces. Recognition, but not regulation, was considered appropriate for private interior spaces and activities (such as historic businesses like Ratto's on Washington Street). In the next few months, the task force will consider the standards and processes for evaluating properties, the treatment of ethnic history, and appropriate regulatory controls and incentives.

Public comment is welcome, and OHA members who are interested should contact Annalee Allen (654-6791) or Carolyn Douthat (763-5370). The work of the task force deserves your attention, since the plan that results will set preservation policy in Oakland for years to come. --C. Douthat

■ WEST OAKLAND REDEVELOPMENT

A large area in West Oakland is currently being considered by the city for designation as a redevelopment area. In January, the City Council, acting as Redevelopment Agency, endorsed a preliminary plan which has been in the works for the past 2 years. Prepared by the Planning Department, the document contains a description of the project area and sets out goals and methods



Herrick House before (Pill Hill, 1985) and after: latest landmark to perish by fire. (Phil Bellman)



for revitalization. The 1,332 acre area is roughly bounded by Emeryville, the Southern Pacific yards, and the Port of Oakland. The eastern border follows an irregular line along Cypress to 18th, diagonally across to Grand Avenue, and along Highway 24 to I 580.

Redevelopment designation is being considered as a means for achieving what the private market has not--physical, social and economic revitalization. One of the purposes of the plan is development of a comprehensive strategy to address housing, economic, and land use issues. Under state law, redevelopment designation is appropriate for the improvement of blighted areas and the general welfare of the residents. According to the draft plan, in West Oakland these goals can be achieved by instituting a major housing rehabilitation program, a comprehensive effort to return Seventh Street to a viable business and commercial center, and land use policies which will encourage development of substandard properties and reduce the incidence of incompatible uses. West Oakland residents have long complained about junkyards, scrap operations, and auto wrecking yards in residential areas. In the Prescott neighborhood BART, the Post Office, and the use of Seventh Street as a major truck route have contributed to the fragmentation and deterioration of the commercial area.

Proponents of the plan see major advantages in redevelopment status. Redevelopment areas are eligible for various federal programs. In addition, property taxes collected in the area do not go in the city's general fund, but are instead used for redevelopment projects. This feature of redevelopment prompts criticism that Oakland's general fund is already chronically short of money, and that removing a large portion of the city as a revenue source will further erode city services.

Because of the lack of development pressure up to now, the proposed redevelopment area retains much of its original character. West Oakland reflects important periods in minority and ethnic history, and has fine examples of 19th century architecture. One of the goals identified in the preliminary plan is the preservation of architecturally and historically significant resources, to increase neighborhood pride and improve the appearance of the area. While it is encouraging that the

report recognizes historic buildings as a resource, there are few specifics in the plan itself for encouraging preservation. It recommends two actions to meet the general goal of recognition of historic resources. One is the completion of the Cultural Heritage Survey for the area; the second, as part of a comprehensive rezoning study, is the use of design review and landmark and historic district zoning to encourage revitalization. Still, the plan does not present preservation as a direct tool for housing and economic development.

The Seventh Street economic revitalization program, and the ambitious Housing Development Action Program, both outlined in the plan, could include preservation components to encourage sensitive rehabilitation and compatible new construction. Incentives might include:

- (1) Special listing of older buildings in the area to qualify them to use the State Historical Building Code.
- (2) Loan programs which would favor rehabilitation and compatible new construction.
- (3) Code enforcement programs designed specifically for older buildings.
- (4) Targeting buyers interested in preservation and compatible new construction for purchase of city acquired properties.
- (5) Waiver of set-back, parking, or other requirements for compatible construction.
- (6) Design standards for public or private rehabilitation, and information on methods, materials and styles (as in Rehab Right).

Sometime in February the Redevelopment Agency is expected to authorize the Office of Community Development to fund preparation of a final plan, and begin to interview consultants. Copies of the draft plan can be obtained from City Planning, 3rd Floor, City Hall. --Carolyn Douthat



## ■ ORCHIDS AND ONIONS

On November 16 at the Paramount Theatre, the Oakland City Assets Committee presented the Second Annual Orchids & Onions, recognizing the best and the worst in urban design in the city. Preservation and reuse projects again came out winners. Among them were the Val Strough Honda Showroom at Broadway and Piedmont Avenue, the Asian Resource Center Building at 310 8th Street, Dunsmuir House and Gardens, the interior of the Pacific Coast Brewery Bar at 906 Washington for reuse of a 1912 mahogany bar from the old Cox's Saloon, a recreated Victorian interior in the Washington Inn at 495 10th Street, and the 10th Avenue Historic District. Last year an onion went to the proposed demolition of the Church of Christ Scientist--this year's onions went to new visual offenses to the cityscape. Among them were the ground floor remodeling of the Cathedral Building at Broadway and Telegraph, the proliferation of cyclone fencing in residential neighborhoods, and the manufactured units at 2127 23rd Avenue, pictured in the fall OHA News.

The awards are a laudable effort to increase public interest in good design, and with enough publicity may act as a catalyst for improving the quality of both new construction and the treatment of historic buildings. --Carolyn Douthat

## ■ GROVE STREET CAMPUS: MOVING THE MONEY AROUND

The City Council has yet to consider approval of a Disposition and Development Agreement with North Oakland Redevelopment Associates for the shopping center/housing project proposed for the old University High School site on Martin Luther King Jr. Way. As reported in the fall OHA News, redevelopment staff has been searching for non-federal money to replace the Community Development Block Grant funds which were originally used to purchase the property from the school district. The intent is to avoid the federal Section 106 review which is required when federal money is used on a project affecting a structure potentially

eligible for the National Register.

In early January, George Williams, Director of the Office of Economic Development and Employment, reported to the Redevelopment Agency's Committee on Community Development on the possibilities for new funding. The money in the Grove Street campus would be shifted to another account and replaced by Redevelopment Repayment Funds, which do not have the federal restrictions. Three million dollars in CDBG funds would be moved into another account used to fund housing programs, the Center for Independent Living, and administration and staff costs. So far, the only catch is that about \$500,000 of the Repayment Funds are already allocated to specific housing programs and funding for those programs must be found. The Committee voted to have staff prepare the necessary reports, get approval from HUD, and prepare a resolution for the Council/Redevelopment Agency to approve the transfer.

Meanwhile, a vote on approval of a contract for preparation of an EIR on the project was postponed until it is known whether the Section 106 documentation will be required. Staff has recommended Brady and Associates to prepare the EIR, with Architectural Resources Group responsible for the historic preservation section.

--Carolyn Douthat

## ■ MORATORIUM ON MANUFACTURED HOUSING

In December, the City Council enacted an emergency moratorium on the placement of manufactured housing in the city. During the moratorium the Planning Department will draft changes to the zoning law to provide for more design control. The moratorium was enacted on the recommendation of the Planning Commission after a well attended public meeting in November. Commissioners considered the increasing problem of poorly designed and incompatible units being placed throughout flatland neighborhoods.

The Commission recommended that Council enact the moratorium, which will last for 4 months, and consider zoning changes to (1) enact design review for all new construction in single family zones, including manufactured units, and (2) require a conditional use permit for placement of manufactured units in all other zones.

--Carolyn Douthat

In the shadow of the BART tracks, 7th Street awaits redevelopment. West Oakland's historic business district was a Black social, cultural, and commercial center for years, noted for jazz clubs. (P. Bellman)



## ■ KING ESTATES LAND USE CONTROVERSY

One of the last significant vestiges of Oakland public open space west of the MacArthur Freeway is now on the endangered list. Some 76 acres of grassy knolls situated near the freeway and between the King Estates and Oak Knoll neighborhoods are threatened by development. Under review in the City Planning Department is a proposal by Oliver DaSilva Co. for a planned unit development of approximately 200 houses. The development requires severe grading and earth removal, and construction on landslide terrain and near active fault lines. The lower 18 acres are owned by the City, the rest by the Trust for Public Land.

Originally part of the vast Peralta land grant, this area belonged from about 1878 to 1919 to William H. Ivey, a farmer from Pennsylvania, and his wife Ludovina. After her death it passed to Arthur Dale King. Originally from Tennessee, King founded King Lumber Co., was president of Kimball Oil Co., a director of Wells Fargo Bank, and a real estate developer. In 1956 his descendants sold a portion of their estate to the City and school district for school, park, recreation, and road purposes. The Tribune, April 17, 1957, reported that "development of the King Estate in the southeast hill area into a model school, recreation and park project moved ahead today with approval of a master plan by the Oakland Park Commission." King Estates Jr. High and Howard Elementary School were completed in 1961. The adjacent park land was never developed, and is part of the open space now proposed for development.

King descendants transferred the larger parcel to the Trust for Public Land in 1978-79. According to representatives at the local Trust office, the proposal to sell the land to a private developer comes after years of unsuccessful attempts to interest the City in acquiring the land for public use. Adjacent neighborhoods have long believed the land was intended for a park as shown on most maps of the area. Developers and politicians have not involved neighborhood residents in plans for the land. Opposition to the development is spearheaded by the newly formed King Estates Neighborhood Association and the long established Oak Knoll Home Owners Association. --Robert Seymore & Barbara Sutherland

## City Landmarks Board Actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month at 4 pm in Room 211 City Hall. Meetings are open to the public. Designation of landmarks is recommended by the Board to Planning Commission and City Council. Landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in issuance of demolition permits. Exterior alterations require approval by City Planning staff, at the recommendation of the Board. 108 landmarks have been designated in the 14 years since the Board was created.

### NOVEMBER

Board approved paint colors proposed by the Wilcox/Leimert Co. for 801 Broadway/450 8th Street in the Old Oakland S-7 preservation zone. Larry Mortimer, architect for Jubilee West, presented additional details of proposed work on Liberty Hall at 8th and Chester, but formal design review was postponed pending further research on lighting fixtures. Board resumed review of Henry Chang Jr.'s design for a 7-unit apartment building at 686 10th Street in the S-7 zone. Revised plans were approved on condition that the exterior masonite siding be long enough to avoid vertical joints, that it be paintable, paint colors be approved by the Board, and wood windows be used.

Board received a request from the Pardee Home Foundation for support of a grant application under the California State History and Archaeology Program, for architectural, archaeological, access, and landscape work at the Pardee House, 672 11th Street. Action was postponed until December because one of the proposed consultants was an associate of a boardmember, leaving the Board without a quorum to vote.

Chair Frederick Hertz and vice-chair Marji Shaw presented a memo proposing Board priorities for 1989, reflecting suggestions from the Mayor, Preservation Task Force members, and the City Planning Department. Special meeting to discuss priorities was scheduled for January 23, 4 pm.

Secretary Chris Buckley reported that the Planning Commission had recommended approval of the Preliminary West Oakland Redevelopment Plan, and had agreed to incorporate the Landmarks Board's recommendations into the plan (see October LPAB actions, Fall OHA News). The recommendations would next be reviewed by the Redevelopment Agency's Committee on Community Development, Econ-



omic Development and Training/Housing, and boardmember Anthony Pegram would attend.

#### DECEMBER

Board voted to endorse the Pardee Home Foundation's state grant application.

Reviewed designs for exterior alterations to 901 Washington, the Swan's/Oakland Free Market complex bounded by 9th, 10th, Washington, and Clay Streets, in the Old Oakland S-7 preservation zone. Approval included stipulations that work be monitored by the Secretary, that the applicants return for review as design details develop, and that no historical materials be removed.

Reviewed and approved modifications to previously approved storefront designs for the Leimert Block, 456-66 8th Street, after discussion of the National Park Service's preference for "contemporary compatible" rather than "false historical" designs in projects using preservation tax credits.

Reviewed work at 521-25 8th Street in the S-7 zone, where most of the building except the upper facade had been demolished under a permit for interior work. Owner was directed to work with Secretary on restoring the storefront and trying to determine the original appearance of the upper facade.

Representative of the Office of Economic Development and Employment reported on the recent fire at the Herrick House (moved from Pill Hill and awaiting restoration next to Preservation Park). OEDE considered the building a total loss and proposed a "similar" new building on the site; Board suggested consulting a preservation architect before giving up on it.



#### JANUARY

Board recommended approval of door and window treatments, light fixtures, and landscaping at Liberty Hall and annex, 8th and Chester Streets. Paint colors (similar to the original) will be reviewed later.

Rifkin Realty Partners requested landmark designation of the Calou Laundry Building, 730 29th Street. This was a condition of Planning Commission approval of Rifkin's major variance to convert the building into artist studios and housing. Secretary Buckley reported that the building qualifies under the Board's landmark evaluation standards, receiving an "A" rating (the highest possible), as an unusual use of Chateau style for an industrial building in a neighborhood setting. The Rifkin project calls for demolition of subsidiary structures (tanks, smokestack, etc.), for which permits were already obtained. The new single-story building in their place will not be subject to design review by the Board. Some Board members had reservations about demolishing the outbuildings and recommended incorporating them in the new construction; applicants said it was not feasible. After discussion, majority of Board voted to recommend designation of the main building only, rather than the entire complex.

Anthony Pegram reported on progress of the West Oakland Redevelopment Plan. The Office of Community Development accepted five of the Board's six recommendations for incorporation in the plan, but tabled the suggestion for a repair-lien program for City repairs to substandard properties pending study of its feasibility. Board voted to advise the Planning Commission that the report was reviewed, and urge OCD to investigate the repair program.

Board noted the reported threat to the 16th Street SP Depot, a city landmark, as a result of plans for new freight and passenger stations. Buckley reported that another fire at the Simpson House, 524 23rd Street, had completely destroyed the roof.

Gordon Henderson announced his departure from the Board after 2 1/2 years service, and received the thanks of his colleagues; he now occupies a seat on the Planning Commission.



--Kathy Olson





◀ Glazed brick and terra cotta on Swan's Market: Board says original materials must be kept. (Phil Bellman)

# 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


- Sat 21 Jan - Sat 25 March  
Visions Toward Tomorrow, Black history exhibit. Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak at 10th St., Oakland. Related events: see below or contact museum.
- Wed 25 Jan - Sat 19 Mar  
Eliel Saarinen in Finland. University Art Museum, 2625 Durant Avenue, Berkeley. 642-0808.
- Sat 21 Jan & Sat 4 Feb  
Access for Disabled Persons at Historic Sites. National Trust workshop. Filoli, Woodside. \$20 incl. lunch. (202) 676-4085.
- Sat 4 Feb 10-4  
The Lure of California to Black Americans, panel, Oakland Museum, James Moore Theater, free.
- Sat/Sun 11-12 Feb 10 am-5 pm  
San Francisco Postcard Sale. Sheraton Airport, Burlingame (Broadway exit below Airport). \$3.50.
- Thurs 16 Feb 8 pm  
Preservation in Micronesia. Michael F. Crowe, Architectural Historian, National Park Service. Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. 2318 Durant, Berkeley. \$2/BAHA, \$3/General. 841-2242.
- Sat 18 Feb 1-4 pm  
Amazing Grace--The Black Church in the East Bay, music & discussion, Oakland Museum theater, free.
- Sat 18 Feb Evening  
5th Annual Art Deco Preservation Ball. Art Deco Society of Cal. Paramount Theatre, Oakland. 50th anniversary of Treasure Island Fair. ADSC, 109 Minna Suite 399, San Francisco, 94105, 552-DECO.
-  Wed 22 Feb 7:30 pm  
Black Precedents in Oakland History: Community's Development, 1852-1940. Dr. Lawrence Crouchett, Exec. Dir. Northern Cal. Center for Afro-American History & Life. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara Av. Refreshments. \$5/\$7. OHA, 763-9218.
- Sun 26 Feb 12-5 pm  
The Changing Faces of Black Dolls, panel/exhibit, Oakland Museum, James Moore Theater, free.
- Sat 4 March 1-5 pm  
Black Community Building: Institutions & Innovators, panel discussion, Oakland Museum, James Moore Theater, free
- Sat/Sun 11-12 March TBA  
Santa Cruz 3rd Annual Postcard & Paper Show. Holiday Inn, 611 Ocean, Santa Cruz. 475-9148.
-  Wed 22 Mar 7:30 pm  
Found History: Local and Ethnic History Through Family Photographs--Japanese Americans in Oakland. Dean Yabuki, Japanese In Oakland History Project, Lynn Horiuchi, Japanese American Family Album Project. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara Avenue, Oakland. Refreshments. \$5/\$7. OHA, 763-9218.
- Sun 23 Apr 1 pm-5 pm  
Panoramic Hill House Tour. Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. Details TBA, 841-2242.

-  Wed 26 Apr 7:30 pm  
Lake Merritt: the Heart of Oakland. Leslie Flint, Preservation Consultant. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara. \$5/OHA, \$7/General. 763-9218.
-  Sun 21 May, time TBA  
Oakland Heritage Alliance spring house tour: Julia Morgan (tentative) Cost TBA. OHA, 763-9218; volunteers call OHA or chair Mary Jane McConville.
-  Wed 24 May 7:30 pm  
Doing Local History: the Challenge & Danger. Dr. Richard Orsi, Prof. of History, Cal State U., Hayward. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara. Refreshments. \$5 OHA/\$7 general. OHA, 763-9218.
- Fri 9 June - Sun 11 June  
Art Deco Weekend by the Bay. Art Deco Society of Calif. Tours, Art Deco Sale, and Event. ADSC, 109 Minna Street, Suite 399, SF 94105, 552-DECO.
-  Sat 10 June 1:30-3:30 pm  
Treasure Island Museum Tour. Douglas Brookes, Curator. Oakland Heritage Alliance. Meeting place TBA. \$5/OHA, \$7/General. OHA, 763-9218.

## Regularly Scheduled Tours

- Dunsmuir House. Tours of Colonial Revival mansion every Sunday, spring through fall; 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland; \$3; 562-7588.
- Camron-Stanford House. 1876 Italianate on Lake Merritt. Tours every Wed. 11-4 & Sun. 1-5; \$2/\$1, free first Sun.; 1418 Lakeside Dr., 836-1976.
- Paramount Theatre. Art Deco movie palace, 2025 Broadway. Tours 1st & 3rd Sat., 10 am, \$1, 893-2300.
- Oakland Tours Program. Old Oakland, City Center, Uptown, Chinatown, Pres. Park, Port; April-Oct., 273-3234.
- Black Diamond Mines. Somersville Rd., Antioch; Sat. & Sun. 10, 11, 1:30, 2:30; reservations required for mine tour, 757-2620; \$2 + \$2 parking.
- Ardenwood Historic Farm. Park open April-Nov., Thurs.-Sun. 10-4; house tours hourly Sat. & Sun./variable Thurs.-Fri., \$4-\$1.50 dep. on age & day, tour extra; Ardenwood Blvd. or Lake Blvd., Newark; 796-0663.
- McConaghy House. 102 year old farmhouse at 18701 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward. Tours Thurs.-Sun., 1-4, \$2/adult. Closed January. Info. 581-0223.
- San Francisco Heritage weekly tours; \$3, info.441-3004. Victorian & Edwardian Pacific Heights, Sundays 12:30-2, Haas-Lilienthal House, 2007 Franklin; Haas-Lilienthal house tours, Sun. 11-4:30, Wed. 12-4

## 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, contact Annalee Allen, 654-6791.
- Preservation Action Committee: contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370, for time, place, and agenda.
- Publications Committee, working on guidebook/history The Broadway Book: Fred Mitchell, 655-4920.
- Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. 2nd Monday, 4 pm, Room 221, City Hall. Contact City Planning, 273-3941.
- City Planning Commission. Every other Wednesday, 3:30 pm, Room 115, City Hall. Agenda & dates, 273-3941.
- City Council. Every Tuesday evening, 7:30, Council Chambers, City Hall. City Clerk, 273-3611.



# Oakland Heritage Alliance

P.O.Box 12425, Oakland, CA 94604 763-9218

# Oakland Heritage Alliance News

### CONTRIBUTORS

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### EDITORIAL BOARD

Carolyn Douthat, Dean Yabuki

### EDITOR/PRODUCTION

Betty Marvin

OHA NEWS welcomes contributions--research projects large or small, historic photos, reports on preservation issues or events, etc. Contact Betty Marvin, 849-1959, Dean Yabuki, 832-5355, or OHA, 763-9218.

Back issues are available for \$2 from OHA.

## 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 (October 1 to January 1) are as follows:

Barbara & Leonard Avery, Patricia Bacchetti, Ken Duffy, David French, Stanley Goldstein, Beth Jaffe/MWM Architects, Debbie Lefkowitz, John Allen Owens, Ronald Reuther, Karen & Preston Sherwood, Gary Sirbu, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L. Yost, & Armand Zanata.

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.

### OFFICERS 1988-89

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Financial Officer.....William McLetchie  
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## Donors

OHA appreciates gifts from the following members:  
David Beery & Jack Redford, Emelita Cohen, Jon Good, Ren Henerlau, Dario Meniketti, & Virginia Robles.

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Oakland Heritage Alliance, P.O.Box 12425, Oakland, CA 94604

**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.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  Change of Address only

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  \$10 Limited income (1 vote)

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I would like to serve on the following committee(s): Membership  Programs   \$30 Family (2 votes)

OHA News  Publicity  Landmark Nominations  Landmark Assistance   \$50 Organization (1 vote)

Preservation Action  Summer Tours  Development, Fund Raising  other   \$100 Sponsor (1 vote)

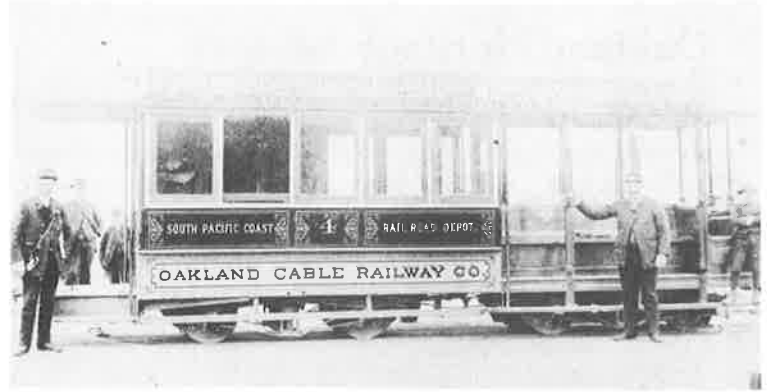
\$250 Patron (1 vote)

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## Oakland History Notes: Oakland's Cable Cars

Unknown to all but the most ardent aficionados of local transport is the fact that Oakland once had not one, but two cable car systems. The first line, the Oakland Cable Railway Co., inaugurated service on November 19, 1889, beginning from its turnstile at 7th and Broadway, traveling north on Broadway to 14th, and then out San Pablo Avenue to Park Street. The entire trip took 16 minutes, with six cars running at intervals of five minutes from each end of the line. Owned by James G. Fair, one-time U.S. Senator from Nevada, Comstock millionaire, and dabbler in trains and real estate, the line was conceived as an adjunct of the South Pacific Coast narrow gauge railroad, which connected Oakland to San Jose and Santa Cruz. The cable cars replaced horse-cars which had begun over the same route in 1871 and, unlike their steeple-climbing relatives in San Francisco, ran in an area flatter than a collapsed opera hat.

The cars, befitting the Gilded Era, were colorful and opulent. "The closed portion has five windows," informs one account, "and the interior is furnished in white ash, rubbed down and varnished. The trimmings are silver plated and the general appearance light and attractive...The body of the cars is painted a rich maroon with gold stenciling...The gripmen and conductor are clad in neat dark blue uniforms, similar to those worn on the Market street cable road, with peaked caps bearing upon



the band the letters S.P.C.R. Co."

The line connected the newly developing residential areas along San Pablo Avenue to the downtown shops, and conversely, provided access from the center of town to the sundry delights of the Shellmound amusement park and the Oakland Trotting Park, located at the end of the line near Park Avenue and Powell Street. Mr. Fair sold the Oakland Cable Railway to Southern Pacific in 1887. In 1889, the cars were extended from 7th and Broadway to Water Street to serve the S.P. ferry terminal.

Another cable car system, the Consolidated Piedmont Cable Co., began in 1890, linking downtown Oakland and the foot of Piedmont Avenue. A spur line ran up Oakland Avenue to Highland Avenue, whence one could enjoy the sylvan pleasures of Blair's Park. Replacing the horsecar lines of yesteryear, the cable cars in turn would be replaced by the electric cars, which began service in 1891. The bright and shiny maroon-colored cars clattered up San Pablo Avenue until 1899 and then, like the horsecars, vanished into the tule fog of time. --William Sturm

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