



## Great Estates in April house tour will feature Claremont Pines

By Dennis Evanosky

OHA's "Great Estates in April" tour takes place Saturday, April 20, in Claremont Pines and Upper Rockridge, and features a neighborhood that emerged in 1927 from the Philip E. Bowles estate as suburban garden development. Part of the neighborhood underwent a second renaissance 64 years later after the 1991 Oakland hills fire.

The tour offers a rare opportunity to view impressive examples of Tudor and Mediterranean revival style homes designed by two of Oakland's most distinguished architects, William Schirmer and E. Geoffrey Bangs.

Schirmer and his partner Arthur Bugbee designed Sweet's Ballroom in downtown Oakland. Schirmer also had a hand in the design of the Alameda County Courthouse on Lake Merritt. Things would have gone differently if Schirmer's father, a former sea captain, had had his way.

Dad owned Schirmer Stevedoring and Bal-last. "He wanted his oldest son to enter the firm. But unlike his brothers, Bill refused," Dave Weinstein writes.

Instead, "Bill" studied architecture at the Mark Hopkins Institute, then studied or worked with Willis Polk. By 1916, Schirmer was designing homes in Oakland in partnership with Bugbee. "By 1921, the firm was earning praise as pioneering designers of fine apartment houses," Weinstein writes.



**VISIT OUR NEWEST LANDMARK:** the Morse house is expected to be Oakland's latest landmark by the day of the tour

Bangs was a Cal graduate, who earned his bachelor's degree in 1914. One year later he held a master's degree. He spent his early career working in the office of John Galen Howard. Bangs designed many public buildings and large-scale public housing projects in Northern California, including Lewis Hall at his alma mater, the Contra Costa Hall of Records in Martinez and the courthouses for Shasta and Butte counties

This year, OHA is offering two types of tours, both on April 20. "Vintage Vistas" will run from 1 to 4 p.m. In addition to visiting

the interiors of four great homes and a beautiful garden, use the self-guided walking map in the descriptive booklet, which points out views of additional homes, vistas and local landscaping. "Vintage Vistas" offers the opportunity to study the neighborhood's eclectic architecture. Tickets purchased before the day of the tour cost \$30 for OHA members; general admission tickets are \$35. They will cost \$5 extra on the day of the tour.

"Sunset over the City" runs from 5 to 8 p.m. and offers the opportunity to meet and

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## Claremont Pines: an estate transformed

By Dennis Evanosky

Claremont Pines borrowed its name from nearby Claremont, a neighborhood that became part of Oakland in 1908, and from Philip E. Bowles' spacious home "The Pines."

Bowles, a Humboldt County native, lived in the mansion on a sprawling estate with his wife, Mary, and the couple's daughter and two sons. The San Francisco Blue Book listed Philip and Mary's address "at Broadway Terrace and Prospect Drive." (Prospect Drive

became Margarido Drive in 1928 as a memorial to Tony Margarido who died in World War I.)

Claremont Pines has its roots in land that John Coffee "Jack" Hayes and Charles and Horatio Livermore purchased from Vicente Peralta in 1850. Twenty-nine years later, the trio recorded a deed for the portion of the land bounded by today's Romany Road, Golden Gate Avenue and Broadway. The deed bears the title "Rockridge Township."

In 1904, Bowles, who graduated from UC

Berkeley in 1882, purchased 58 acres and built his family home. He had successful careers in the shipping and banking businesses. He served his alma mater as a regent from 1913 to 1920.

He died on Jan. 20, 1926, at the age of 67. His obituary called him a "fancier of fine horses" and said that "his stable of animals on his beautiful Oakland estate was reputed to be one of the finest in the country." A biography in Joseph Eugene Baker's *Past and Present of Alameda County*, written

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# Pines

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while Bowles was still alive, said, “Mr. Bowles is a man of strong physique, particularly fond of outdoor sports of all kinds, being especially interested in the manly sports of the Claremont Club, to which he belongs.” Bowles did not have to go far to visit the club. Its members set up shop just across Prospect Drive in 1904, the same year he purchased his property.

After his death, Mary sold the estate to four Southern California developers: Charles B. Hopper, J.R. Pinkham, and Arthur and Harold Braly. The four men set up the Claremont Pines Corporation.

“The corporation chose the York Company, Inc. of Oakland to handle the development and exclusive sales of Claremont Pines,” writes The Grubb. Co.’s Jeffrey Smith. York went to work subdividing the property. Susan Dinkelspiel Cerney writes that the new neighborhood boasted “large lots, underground utilities and decorative streetlights. She says that the neighborhood used “British street names to attract showplace Period Revival homes”—all this in harmony with the then-popular Garden City Movement.

Mary shared part of her husband’s estate—\$350,000 of it—with UC Berkeley. The school built the imposing “Bowles Hall” on a hill overlooking the campus with the wind-fall. The *Berkeley Daily Planet* called Bowles Hall “the first state-owned college or university residential hall in California.” The men who live in the hall call themselves “Bowlesmen,” a moniker they proudly carry with them the rest of their lives. They even have their own drinking song.



ALL: MARTHA PECK



**PORTICO** of the Walter A. Genesy House, top. At bottom, a rosette detail from the DeFremery House, and a lantern detail from the Morse House.

Mary moved out of the family home on Oct. 7, 1927, and the York Company wasted little time transforming property into Oakland’s newest neighborhood. Two days later, on Oct. 9, 1927, an *Oakland Tribune* article announced that buyers were welcome. Clyde O. Sweet, president of the York Company, told the *Tribune* that “competent development experts” declared Claremont Pines a “masterpiece.” He assured *Tribune* readers that the new neighborhood would become “the finest home area in the bay district.”

The company hired A.V. Cole as sales manager., who came all the way from Hollywood. “He has been identified with some of the most noted developers,” the *Tribune* reported.

“Men and machinery are working every day,” an Oct. 16, 1926 *Tribune* advertisement boasted, this just one week after Mary moved out.

“This will be the finest residential property in the country,” the Oakland Paving Company chimed in on an advertisement on the same page. “Our men will be on the job tomorrow.”

“Improvements at Claremont Pines are being rapidly installed,” York Company’s vice-president H.G. Schwartz told the *Tribune* on Oct. 30, 1927. “Prospect Drive overlooks the beautiful links of the Claremont Golf and Country Club, fashionable property, and our earliest building development will be along this street,” said Schwarz.

He also told the *Tribune* that Country Club Drive had been “hewn through and was ready for stumping.” Grading would then follow the stumping, Schwartz explained, “We are also opening Lincolnshire, Glenbrook, Beechwood and Yorkshire drives.”

“The recent rains freshened the woods and added to the charm of Claremont Pines, bringing even more visitors than at the formal opening to the tract,” the *Tribune* enthused. The newspaper assured future visitors to the site that the York Company had a tract office on Broadway Terrace in the works “to provide their guests with rooms to study plats and examine plans.”

The *Tribune* promised that the new office “would have a picturesque tile roof and other improvements. The aromatic scent of wood burning in open hearths would add an appeal at the tract office, just as it did at its headquarters in the Bowles mansion in the center of the woods.”

An application to honor the Morse house on Margarido Drive as a city landmark says that the developers built the concept of design review into the tract restrictions: the Claremont Pines Art Jury, comprised of prominent local architects, made certain that all the homes were attractive and in harmony with the image the Claremont Pines Corporation envisioned.

In 1930, some three years after development began, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* called Claremont Pines “one of the hand-somest residential parks in the entire state.” Clyde Sweet’s prediction three years earlier had come true, at least according to the *Gazette*. ■

Buy tour tickets at [www.oha-greatestates.eventbrite.com](http://www.oha-greatestates.eventbrite.com) or call 763-9218 for info.

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## OHA benefited from their wit, integrity, and vast knowledge

By Naomi Schiff

Fall and winter have brought the losses of four key people in OHA's founding, development, and current activities: Michael Crowe, Carolyn Douthat, Jane Powell, and Cynthia Shartzer, each an irreplaceable member of the preservation community.

If you needed a careful reading of the legal underpinnings, a creative approach to approach historic preservation, and a concise explanation of how it could work in the rules and regulations, you called **Carolyn Douthat**, an attorney who gave enormous hunks of time to the preservation community—an OHA board member, CPF board member and president, and highly regarded author of studies on economic incentives and on mitigation measures for historic preservation. All of it was delivered with wry asides, penetrating questions, and a faint air of exasperation that so many people were so dense. After the Loma Prieta earthquake, OHA worked closely with her in figuring out a response to the devastating decision by the city to demolish the Pardee Building, a large historic building on San Pablo Avenue, north of City Hall. The Facade Improvement Program that resulted, was Carolyn's creation.

When you went to the 1870s house east of the lake, after the boisterous greeting by her beloved dog Rose you saw shelves of books on gardening, and volumes of local and western history, coexisting with recent paintings by Squeak Carnwath and other local artists. Carolyn was always ready to weigh in; when the Diocese of Oakland suddenly fixed on a site for a new cathedral, smack in front of the historic Oakland Auditorium (Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center), she was the one to call to ask about whether such a use of public land could occur. (She was understating the ensuing controversy when she said: "Don't even need to fight it! It will never happen!")

On the other hand, if you wanted a hilarious, sarcastic, and yet erudite statement before a public body, from someone who deeply distrusted government, you had to call **Jane Powell**. She didn't need OHA to



"**THIS IS MY HOUSE, CIRCA 1910,**" wrote Jane on her website. "Jesse Matteson, the man who designed and built it, owned a lumberyard. He lost the lumberyard in a recession in 1908. He managed to hold onto the house until 1912. I lost most of my income in the economic crash of 2008, one hundred years later."

carry her message: her many writings and her public speaking were entirely adequate to spread the idea that preservation and re-use of good structures is the modern, sensible, and aesthetically right thing to do. Yet, she devoted years to being a board member and president of OHA. Memorably, Jane's presidency endured a protest (with picket signs) by some Lakeshore area residents, when OHA objected to the demolition of the Rubino Building. Meeting in the kitchen at Camron-Stanford House, the board was astonished to find a well-dressed protest group gathered at the front steps, demanding to be let in. Imagine the consternation: as tenants of a historic building, we weren't permitted to use the front entry (we entered through the back) and had absolutely no access to the big iron key that unlocked the front. We were sure the protestors didn't believe us as we shouted through the door that we had no way to open it! (A civil meeting occurred, later on.)

In the houses she rehabilitated with enormous respect for their histories, yet with regard for the needs of modern life, Jane lives on. But even more, her writings are worth revisiting, from her gorgeous books to her articles for the *Daily Planet*, the *San*

*Francisco Chronicle*, and others. Her writing combined caustic wit, great use of language, preservation knowledge, and hands-on experience. Her early passing just as she had turned the financial corner on saving the huge house she dubbed The Bungamansion is a tragedy; we're left to wonder what more she might have done.

"It's not as though it isn't still possible to find tacky souvenirs. I simply worry about the spread of tastefulness into an area of life where tastefulness isn't warranted. Therefore, I urge everyone to buy tacky souvenirs wherever you find them, because if you don't, they may not be reordered."

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### Welcome to our new members!

OHA is pleased to welcome these newest members to our roster:

Bridget Flanagan, Summer Brenner, Marvin L. Johnson, Daniel Scovill, Tom Coroneos, Maxine Heiliger, Ruben & Anita Llamas, Jonathan Lammers, Kevin & Agnes Faughnan, Adam Ellis, Terri James



# Memorial

*Continued from page 3*

**Michael Crowe** bridged any gaps between earnest government service, long experience of—and influence on—U.S. historic preservation practice, and fantastic social events. His founding in 1981 and subsequent leadership of the Art Deco Society overlapped with two stints on the board at Oakland Heritage Alliance, and long involvement as board member and president of the California Preservation Foundation. He was always eager to merge preservation with a great party, a house tour, a garden social. The memorial gathering that his husband Dan Jepson assembled was the best-dressed such event ever seen. Mourners donned their best vintage clothing, drove up in restored cars, and listened to jazz age standards.

We always called Michael to understand the inner workings of the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. If you had a technical question, he knew the answer. He always knew exactly whom to call. He was completely authoritative and held firm opinions. His letters were straightforward, to the point, and sometimes devastating. Most recently he turned the course of a project at Mountain View Cemetery, where he had led extremely popular

OHA tours for decades, with a single well-written critique of some proposed construction. (To their credit, cemetery management revised their plans.)

Michael turned a great phrase; he appreciated architectural whimsy as much as its historic and cultural import. Jay McCauley quoted Michael describing the Art Deco Pflueger Bell Telephone building in San Francisco as “ornamented with flying phonebooks.” His career and avocation stretched from saving Cincinnati’s famous Art Deco Union Terminal through working on the repurposing of the Presidio, helping save Oakland’s uptown Art Deco buildings, all the way to presenting jars of homemade jelly to OHA volunteers.

**Cynthia Shartzter** was on the board from 2004 to 2006 and found that her work as an archaeologist in ancient Cairo was of a piece with advocating for 19th and 20th century buildings in Oakland. A U.S. Agency for International Development professional, she spoke many languages and lived in several countries. In joining the board, she became the best member signup outreach person ever: she would grab you at a walking tour or lecture and convert you into a paying member before you knew what happened.

Her doggedness, intensity, and scholarly rigor resulted in an exemplary landmark application for the Ninth Avenue Terminal, which was used as the underpinnings for all the ensuing studies, documents, and environmental studies. She deposited a tidy box of background research at the OHA office one day, just assuming, from her own example, that everyone did this when they wrote something up. After she and her husband Brian were posted out of the country again, she continued to write letters to government entities, pushing for the reuse of the terminal building from afar. She would suddenly weigh in (from Lima, Peru!) with a comment on news we had sent, or encourage our advocacy efforts. In a recent email she wrote: “This tribute brings back memories of the fantastic Revels performances . . . Brian & I are looking forward to this December’s performance at the Scottish Rite Temple when we’re back in CA for the holidays.” ■

## Thanks to our generous donors!

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**Our fabulous Walking Tours begin in July! To volunteer, call 763-9218.**

## *In memoriam*

OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE  
Preservation Heroes Fund



Tom Haw

In memory of Michael Crowe, Jane Powell, Carolyn Douthat, Cynthia Shartzter

Alison Finlay

In memory of Michael Crowe, Jane Powell, Carolyn Douthat, Cynthia Shartzter

Naomi Schiff

In memory of Michael Crowe, Jane Powell, Carolyn Douthat, Cynthia Shartzter

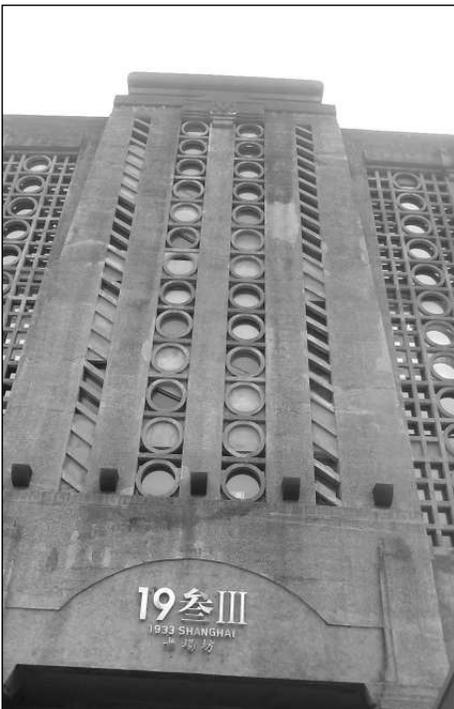
## Some personal observations about historic preservation in China

By David Nicolai

Someone recently brought to my attention the fact that four years ago, when I left Oakland to become an English teacher in China, an item appeared in an *OHA News* column about my departure. Noting the widespread destruction of old Beijing neighborhoods to make way for the 2008 Summer Olympics, the anonymous author made the light-hearted suggestion that I could teach people here a few things about historic preservation.

Well, I have been busy teaching English, not historic preservation, here for four years—the year in Yangshuo-Guilin, in the south of China; the second in Shenyang in the northeast; and the last two in Tongxiang, about 120 kilometers west of Shanghai in East China. I have also travelled to Beijing, Hong Kong, Xi'an and Guangzhou. Even if I haven't taught historic preservation, I've visited historic buildings, villages, and museums, and observed preservation in practice here. I have learned some Chinese, but little enough that the following observations will be very personal, informal, and non-expert.

The good news is that historic preservation is alive and kicking in the People's Republic.



**CONCRETE ART DECO FACADE** of a 1933 Shanghai building.



**VERY TYPICAL ENTRYWAY** to a historic house in Huangyao.

Yes, it came too late, as it did in the U.S. and elsewhere, after years of destruction to historic buildings and artifacts during the Cultural Revolution (c. 1966–1976) and the first years of breakneck economic growth during the post-Mao era (c. 1980s and 1990s). Things have improved since then, and during the past 20 years or so there is clear evidence that historic preservation (and environmental protection) are increasingly important goals for the rulers of China.

I first flew to Guangzhou, perhaps better known to readers as Canton, which was nearby to my first job in Yangshuo. During three dizzying days in this huge metropolis of seventeen million people, I was able to visit or take photos of a historic Catholic cathedral, Anglican church, and Muslim mosque (there is limited freedom of religion here), as well as stroll the charming hutongs, or alleyways, of central Guangzhou. I felt hopeful that other Chinese cities would have as much history to offer.

Yangshuo, on the other hand, is a thoroughly modern town, the creation of a tourist boom due to the magnificent karst peaks landscape surrounding it, with no historic resources to worry about. The same was true of Guilin, the nearest large city, but three day

trips within Guangxi province took me to more interesting destinations. A favorite student took me to his hometown of Quanzhou, a non-descript, small city of no interest, except for a lovely Buddhist temple where restoration work was underway to repair the ravages of the Cultural Revolution. I got goosebumps watching workers laboring to place a reproduced, colossal head atop a Buddha statue. “Squash the Cultural Revolution!” I thought. The same student took me and a few friends on a day visit to Huangyao, a charming and well preserved village and the site for filming outdoor scenes in *The Painted Veil*, a wonderful movie which partially motivated my move to Guangxi. One remarkable thing about Huangyao, which is also true in every other historic Chinese village I have visited, is that it is a completely inhabited town, despite its being heavily protected by government statute. Old Chinese towns are bustling with the real life of the local people—well-preserved but empty historic buildings or period actors are not the Chinese way. Finally, I visited Longsheng, a tourist destination world famous primarily for its steep and magnificent rice terraces, but

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## China

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also for its lovely wooden houses, a rarity in China. Not only were the old houses well preserved (and lived in, by farmers and animals!), but the many new buildings were also of wood and designed in the old style. Whether this was due to local zoning or simply because the locals were smart enough to build in a manner that would encourage tourism, I do not know.

My second year was spent in Shenyang, the ugliest place I have ever lived, in the frigid Dongbei, or Northeast, of China. An industrial powerhouse, I most remember Shenyang for its block after block of dead street trees and rubble-strewn sidewalks, though it does contain the Gu Gong, the second most important imperial palace in China after the Forbidden City in Beijing. It also is home to an intriguing house museum, the Zhang Xueliang Mansion, an early twentieth-century residence with an imposing front facade worthy of Paris or Vienna, such an incongruous sight in Shenyang, China! Zhang is actually a fascinating historic figure—a former opium addict and playboy who cleaned up his act and played a genuinely heroic role in bringing the Communists and Nationalists together to fight the Japanese in the 1930's, but inside the house is filled with third-rate period furniture and has very little about Zhang's fascinating life.

Alas, the same is also true of two other house museums in Shanghai, the Soong Ching Ling and Sun Yat-Sen Museums. These were two of the greatest champions of a liberal and democratic China during the twentieth century, and both gorgeous houses are located in the heart of the French Concession, Shanghai's most historic and most beautiful district. They also both have small museum areas where you can learn much about Ms. Soong and Mr. Sun, but the period rooms are lifeless. China needs a few foreign experts to help, and I volunteer!

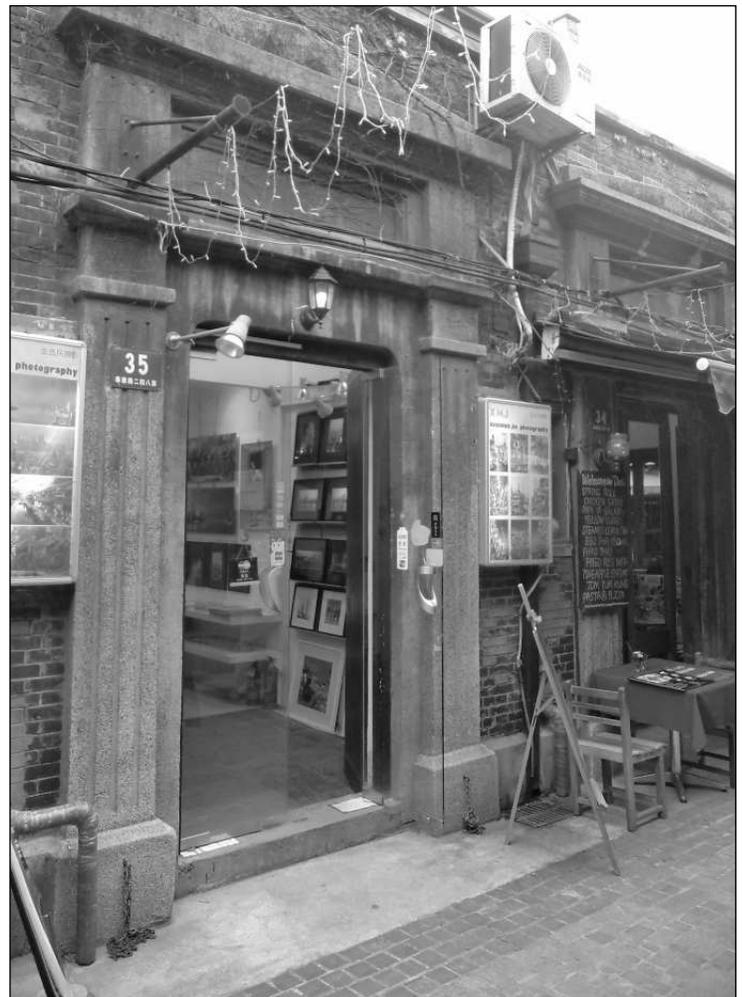
I have been living very close to Shanghai for the past two years (30 minutes away by bullet train), in the Yangtze River Delta region of East China, which I regard as the heartland of Chinese culture and history (Hangzhou, which many Chinese consider the most cultured city in the country, is only fifteen minutes away by train). I teach in

Tongxiang, a relatively prosperous manufacturing center which, if it ever had any historic buildings, lost them years ago. But only seventeen kilometers away lies Wuzhen, one of the most famous of all the historic "water villages" which dot this region of many rivers and canals. I have only visited Wuzhen once, in the summer of 2011, partially because a day's outing there can be an expensive proposition. The admission fee is 150 yuan (around \$23), and, at that price, you might as well spend most of the day there, perhaps eat both lunch and dinner at restaurants, have a few beers, and spend some *real* money. Although the Beijing government decreed that all public museums were to be free to the public shortly after I got here in 2009, historic (and natural) sites are another matter altogether, and many are very expensive by American standards. Remarkably, most of these high-priced attractions are crowded with Chinese tourists most of the year—a testament to the burgeoning middle-class and its eagerness to explore China's historical legacy.

Wuzhen is indeed very charming and absolutely worthy of a one-day trip, but Shanghai is a teeming, colorful megalopolis of well over twenty million people (arguably the largest city in the world, depending on how you count city populations), and I have only just begun to explore it, despite many trips there over the past two years. I knew before my first visit that I would find the city very large and very complex, but I did not realize

before seeing it that Shanghai is a remarkably pleasant and civilized city, with lovely parks and trees and flowers everywhere, clean streets, civilized traffic (a rarity here!), world-famous skyscrapers, and, best of all, more historic buildings than you can shake a stick at. Despite the vagaries of its twentieth-century history, including the War Against Japanese Aggression (WWII), the Civil War, and the Cultural Revolution, much of the historic fabric of this wonderful city remains intact and is very unlikely to be lost in the near future. For example, most observers agree that Shanghai has the largest number of Art Deco buildings in the world, and if you search "shanghai art deco" at [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com), you will see hundreds of examples of these worthy survivors.

Shanghai is most famous, of course, for The Bund, the dozen of so gleaming Art



SHIKUMEN DOORWAY to an art gallery in Tianzifang, Shanghai.

DAVID NICOLAI

Deco and Neo-classical high rises which symbolized the city's commercial and financial might during the early twentieth century (all of which have been carefully restored in recent years), but there is so much more to Shanghai than the Bund. There are dozens of historic temples, churches, mosques, and synagogues (one of which now houses the first-rate Museum of Jewish Refugees concerning the large community of German and East European Jews who escaped to Shanghai in the 1930s); lots of late nineteenth-century colonial structures; the aforementioned Art Deco; and, my favorite, block after block of lilong, or shikumen, housing from c. 1910-1940. In Chinese lilong means neighborhood lane and shikumen means stone gate, and these names capture two of the essential elements of this housing type. A typical building will occupy an entire city block whose periphery contains shops below and houses above and guards an inner grid of lanes and small courtyards and entryways to hundreds of homes, accessible from the streets through, traditionally, pairs of wooden doors framed by stone portals, often of elaborate design.

According to Anne Warr, author of the definitive 2007 guide *Shanghai Architecture*, by 1940 three quarters of Shanghai's residents lived in shikumen, and a majority of the city's population continued living in them up to the 1990's, when the economic boom led to replacement of hundreds, if not thousands, by high-rise buildings. In 2004, the Shanghai government enacted preservation statutes protecting all existing lilongs, and, according to Warr, "today the inner life of Shanghai cannot be fully understood without venturing through one of the lilong gates into a parallel world of serenity and order."

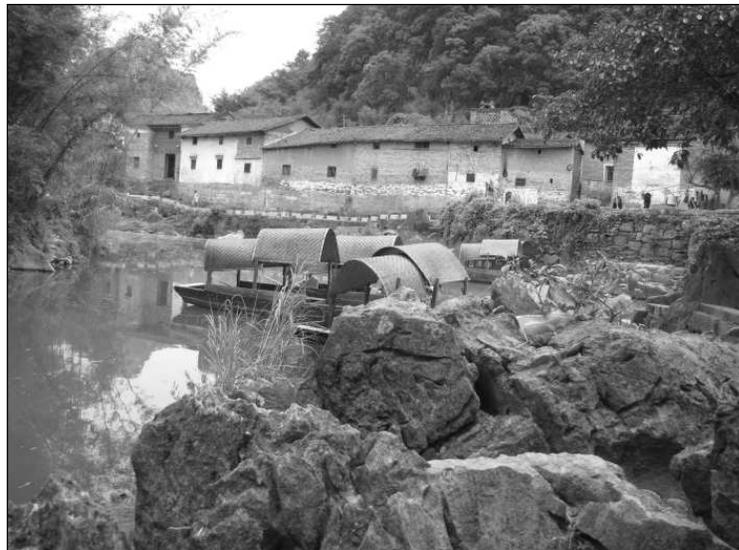
Most foreign tourists are probably hesitant to walk through a shikumen gate, and many would find it rather messy, what with all the hanging laundry and people brushing their teeth and washing their hair in the communal stone sinks, but I find it utterly charming, particularly with all bicycles and green plants and pets. I like to tour Shanghai by bicycle, and I never hesitate to stop and wander inside any shikumen building which looks promising from the outside. For the more squeamish, there are two projects involving rehabbed shikumen buildings which might seem more appealing. One is called Xintiandi (New Heaven and Earth) and is composed of two

blocks of typical shikumen housing in central Shanghai which were extensively rehabilitated in 2001 and turned into a center of very upscale dining and shopping. For those whose tastes do not run toward expensive stores or restaurants, Xintiandi does offer an excellent Shikumen House Museum, recreating the lives of typical residents of that

neighborhood, and a museum honoring the birthplace of the Chinese Communist Party (a bit heavy on the rhetoric, but with some really valuable artifacts).

Xintiandi has been an enormous success, with huge crowds at all times and in all weather. A little out the way, and a bit funkier, is Tianzifang (Field Lanes), a much larger group of shikumen lanes than Xintiandi, which were slated for demolition in 2006, but saved by locals, particularly artists who had settled there. Artists' studios and galleries still predominate at Tianzifang, as well as more modest and alternative restaurants and stores. So an afternoon at Tianzifang probably offers a more honest glimpse at shikumen life than an evening at Xintiandi.

Another fascinating restoration/adaptive reuse project in Shanghai was completed in 2008. It is called Shanghai 1933, because the building, a fabulous Art Deco all-concrete structure, was completed that year for use as a municipal abattoir, or slaughterhouse. The main facade is very impressive, and inside there is an M.S. Escher-like maze of curving ramps, walkways, and stairs, designed for cows and men alike, which is most remarkable. The developers wisely chose a minimalist approach to restoring the interior, including, for example, new signage for the "confinement" rooms for the cattle, and the renovated structure was meant to become a center of artistic creativity and industry. Sadly, during my one visit in 2012, my friend and I



OLD HOUSES and boats in Huangyao

were almost the only visitors to a building housing a few uninteresting stores and restaurants and many closed businesses. Oh well, the project is relatively new, and perhaps with new management it will soon find its rightful niche in Shanghai's cultural scene.

I am itching to get involved in historic preservation or exploration in Shanghai, but it may not be so easy to do so. Anne Warr, mentioned above, founded a group called Explore Shanghai's Heritage, but the internet indicates they are either very inactive or even non-existent. Another group called Shanghai Flaneur (despite the very French name, they are a group of German expatriates; Germans are much more active culturally in Shanghai than expatriates from the U.S. or other Western countries) offers a fairly active calendar of walking tours of historic Shanghai, but I am very put off by the ticket price of 300 yuan, or almost \$50 per head!

Neither of these groups would ever engage in direct advocacy for preserving key buildings, because in China historic preservation is basically in the hands of government officials. Things have improved in recent years, but traditionally the Chinese government has not encouraged the development of NGO's (non-governmental organizations, as we say here, on non-profits, as you say in the U.S.),

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## China

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whether in historic preservation or in other worthwhile causes.

The urban planners working in Shanghai are obviously a rather enlightened group, who have not only embraced preservation but also done some of the highest-quality new development in the world (Oakland city planners should be sent here on a field trip!).

Also, there is lots and lots of money in Shanghai, and money talks here (China today seems like a more ruthlessly capitalist country than the U.S., in my opinion), so the wishes of developers with deep pockets are also critical in determining the fate of the city's historic landscape. ■

*David was director of the Pardee Home Museum from 1997 to 2009 and an OHA volunteer and director for many years. He has been teaching oral English in China since February 2009.*



## Tour

*Continued from page 1*

socialize with OHA members, architects, homeowners and neighbors while enjoying music, drinks and appetizers.

Tickets to this multi-venue reception cost \$75 for OHA members; general admission tickets are \$95. OHA will also honor these tickets on the 1 to 4 p.m. "Vintage Vistas" tour. Advanced ticket purchase is required; no "Sunset over the City" tickets will be available on the day of the tour.

Free street parking is available on Broadway and on nearby side streets. The parking lot at St. Peter's Anglican Church, 6013 Lawton Ave. will be available after 3:30 p.m.

Advance purchase available at <http://oha-greatestates.eventbrite.com/>.

Pick up your prepaid ticket or buy a ticket on the day of the tour at St. Peter's. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. ■

## Livermores

*Continued from page 12*

ermores had moved to San Francisco, Horatio P. sold the balance of his Rockridge holdings to Realty Syndicate. F.M. "Borax" Smith, Realty Syndicate's principal, was an avid golfer and a charter member of the Claremont Country Club which purchased 107 Rockridge acres from the Syndicate when it moved in 1904 from the edge of Lake Merritt to its present site.

The Livermore mansion became the country club's first clubhouse and the stables were made over into housing for club employees. The remainder of the land later ended up in the hands of the Laymance Real Estate company, developers of the various Rockridge subdivisions above Broadway.

On Jan. 24, 1927, the beautiful home burned to the ground in a four-alarm blaze that was, according to country club historian Robert Patmont, "of disputed origin but devastating effect." The Livermore stables survived on the club grounds until they had to be torn down in 1977.

Horatio P. Livermore moved his family from Oakland to San Francisco in the 1890s. Admiring the work of a young architect named Willis Polk, Livermore purchased a house on Russian Hill and commissioned Polk to remodel it for him. Livermore went on to develop other Russian Hill parcels and was so important to that San Francisco neighborhood's development that he is referred to as the "Father of Russian Hill." Continuing the family practice of hiring important architects, Mrs. Livermore ordered up a "widow's cottage" from Julia Morgan following her husband's death in 1916. One of H. P. Livermore's grandchildren, George Livermore, became an architect himself. Later generations of Livermores have devoted themselves to environmental and conservationist causes.

As you wander Claremont Pines during our April 20 house tour, consider the Livermores and their contribution to the neighborhood's development and their role in the history of our state. ■

## Join us for these upcoming events!

■ **Why so many things called Anza?** A fascinating lecture on Oakland's Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail. 7-8:30 p.m., Thurs. April 12, at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave.

■ **Tour the Scottish Rite Center:** Get a peek at this landmark on the western shore of Lake Merritt. 10-noon, Sat., May 18, Oakland Scottish Rite Center, 1547 Lakeside Dr.

■ **Partners in Preservation Awards:** See the award winners and celebrate with them! 7:30 p.m., Thurs., May 9, Chapel of the Chimes.

■ **Highland Hospital Highlights:** Big changes at Highland have preserved some of the old, and are replacing the acute hospital tower with something seismically stable. 10-noon, Sat., June 15. ■



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## Preservation action for Oakland projects underway

By Naomi Schiff

■ **NINTH AVENUE TERMINAL:** OHA representatives met with the Army Corps of Engineers, the developer, and the State Historic Preservation Office on February 21. OHA expressed disappointment in our inability to obtain relevant public documents and were told to file a FOIA request. We discussed possible mitigations, saying those proposed were much too weak. The new director of SHPO, Carol Roland-Nawi, and staffer Kathleen Forrest traveled from Sacramento for the meeting. Because the Ninth Ave. Terminal and its platform are partly in the navigable channel, the Army Corps has to prepare a Section 106 review and supervise mitigations. The developer proposes to demolish all but 20,000 square feet of the 180,000 square-foot building, the last break-bulk terminal of its type on the bay. The terminal was built with bond funds; the older section was completed in 1930 and the newer in 1950. The consultant report agrees that the building is a historic resource. The terminal stands on Tidelands trust lands, so would remain in public ownership as the developer moves forward with a 60+-acre residential condo project. However, the plan calls for the developer to demolish most of the terminal and replace it with a park atop the concrete platform, which stands on pilings half on land and half in the water. We continue to advocate for preserving at least the older section of the building, an important industrial and maritime resource in Oakland's history.

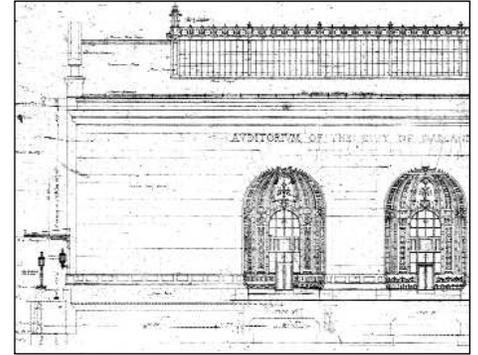
■ **CELEBRATION FOR LAKE MERRITT: SAVE THE DATE!** The city of Oakland and the Measure DD Coalition, in which OHA played a large role, invite you to attend a celebration on June 9 to mark the successful completion of the Lake Merritt Boulevard project, which replaced the old protofreeway, added a pedestrian/bike bridge across the newly widened channel to the Estuary, and is creating a bird marsh on the western side of the crossing. A new walking path will connect the Lake with the Laney College area. At-grade signalized crosswalks have replaced the slimy tunnels of yore! For photos and information about the area, see

the current historic display at the Oakland History Room.

■ **LANDMARKS BOARD APPOINTMENT:** Peter Birkholz, local resident and an architect with Page & Turnbull, has been appointed to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory board. Past chairperson Ana Naruta has left due to her move and new life in New Mexico. Architect Tom Biggs is leaving the board, which now seeks an Oakland-resident archaeologist or landscape architect.

■ **LATHAM SQUARE PROPOSAL:** City planners are thinking about a no-car plaza around Latham Fountain and Cathedral building, a well-known site featured on the cover of *Oakland: The Story of a City*. The historic fountain where Telegraph joins Broadway is proposed as a focal point for a temporary pilot project, to see if the plan would succeed. Find information at [www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/EC/s/Bicycleand-PedestrianProgram/LSP/index.htm](http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/o/PWA/o/EC/s/Bicycleand-PedestrianProgram/LSP/index.htm) or email ideas to [parks@oaklandnet.com](mailto:parks@oaklandnet.com).

■ **DEMO BY NEGLECT?** An 1896 building on Harrison Street near the mouth of the Posey Tube was seriously damaged in a fire apparently set by squatters. It is on the site of a proposed high rise, and the owners are an investment group with ties to Bay Alarm. OHA had warned earlier that security was deficient. This may be considered "demolition by neglect" under the city's conditions for approval of a high-rise residential building at the site. The historic building was supposed to be offered for sale, move, or



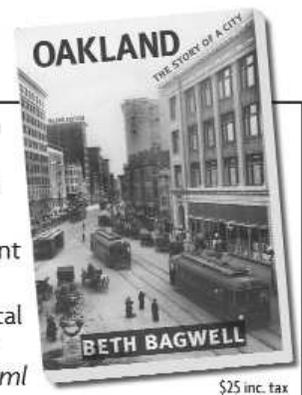
**THIS DETAIL** from a 1913–14 Oakland Auditorium plan shows elaborate ironwork along the ridgeline. (The Stirling Calder reliefs are not seen in this elevation.)

other mitigation. At the landmark board's March 11 meeting, staff said that its condition needs now to be reviewed to determine the next steps.

■ **MYSTERIES OF THE DEPARTMENT FORMERLY KNOWN AS REDEVELOPMENT:** The city's downsized development department issued a limited RFP (it remains confidential) to two proponents, to develop an as-yet-unzoned vacant parcel created by the 12th Street/Lake Merritt Boulevard reconfiguration. Also possibly up for sale is a lot at Valdez and 23rd, a site at City Center above the city's parking lot, and—last but not least—the Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center/Oakland Auditorium. Much uncertainty remains, as negotiations continue between Oakland and the state regarding "clawbacks" and financial arrangements in the wake of the elimination of redevelopment agencies, statewide. ■

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## Yankees arrive and take over the East Bay redwoods

**Peralta and Moraga's redwood forests fall victim to laws of supply & demand**

*By Dennis Evanosky*

(Part two of three)

When New Spain's Governor Pablo de Solá, granted Luis Maria Peralta 11 square leagues of land in today's East Bay in 1820, the Franciscans stepped in and made two requests: first, that the governor not grant Peralta outright title to the port that the priests had established on the shores of today's San Leandro Bay near the site of the Oakland Coliseum. The padres also requested that the governor allow Peralta to act, not as owner to, but as guardian of, the majestic "San Antonio Redwoods" that crowned the hills above the port. The Franciscans had already made use of some of the logs in this forest when they built Mission San Jose. The priests did not want to see the trees logged for commercial purposes.

In 1826, six years after Peralta received his grant, the HMS *Blossom* under the command of Frederick William Beechey sailed through the Golden Gate. As he sailed into the bay and navigated his ship toward Yerba Buena Cove, he noticed (or ran into) an impediment in the bay: a rock that would later bear the name of his ship. Beechey discovered that he could use a pair of trees that towered on the eastern horizon as navigational aids.

Just as the Spanish granted Luis Maria Peralta his vast rancho, the Mexican government did the same for Joaquin Moraga and his cousin Juan Bernal. The Moraga-Bernal spread consisted of 13,000 acres in an area that later encompassed the towns of Canyon, Moraga and Lafayette. Moraga and Bernal named their grant Rancho de Laguna de los Palos Colorados—Ranch of the Lake of the Redwoods. The name reflected not only the impressive trees on their property, but also the lake that once stretched through the property that now contains Moraga's Camplindo High School.

Moraga, Bernal and Peralta were primarily interested in raising cattle and paid little attention to the trees that bordered their grazing fields; at least until ship-jumpers, scalawags and other fugitives from polite society began helping themselves.

The first of these intruders appeared in 1840 in the person of George Patterson who had deserted the English barque *Columbia*. Another ship-jumper John Parker had joined him.

In a twist to our story, Parker had deserted HMS *Sulfur* under F. W. Beechey's command.

A pair of Frenchmen busied themselves among the valuable trees. "Two French carpenters Mm. Sicard and Leroy are exploiting these woods to good profit," said fellow countryman Dufлот de Mofras in 1841.

De Mofras was in California to assess the area's value to the French government. He mapped San Francisco Bay; part of his creation looks like a treasure map leading right to Luis Maria Peralta's San Antonio Redwoods. In 1842 Luis divided his inheritance among his children.



**WILLIAM MENDENHALL** was one of the first northern European loggers in the San Antonio Redwoods.

This may have drawn some unwanted attention to the intruders in the hills above Antonio's hacienda because the logging stopped at least for a while.

This attention likely encouraged John Augustus Sutter who had been importing lumber from the San Antonio Redwoods to mill the pine trees closer to home instead.

A trio that historian Sherwood Burgess paints as the "vanguard of the American loggers" in the San Antonio Redwoods arrived at Sutter's Fort Christmas Day 1845. Early in 1846, Napoleon Bonaparte Smith, his brother Henry Clay Smith and William Mendenhall headed for the redwoods in the hills across from Yerba Buena. The Peraltas scarcely made them feel welcome. After fleeing "the

irate Dons," the Smiths and Mendenhall eventually returned to Sutter's Fort and likely witnessed the raising of the American flag complete with a 21-gun salute on July 11, 1846. The sight of Old Glory emboldened the party to head once again for the San Antonio Redwoods.

This time they had company. Henry Clay Smith had taken Mary van Gordon as his bride. His brother married Margelina Brown. Margelina's father, Elam Brown, joined them on their venture to harvest the redwoods.

When the party arrived in the hills above Antonio Peralta's hacienda, they discovered they were not alone. They happened upon Jacob Harlan and Richard Swift, already there helping themselves to the trees. Harlan's cousin Joel joined them in cutting lumber for William A. Leidesdorff across the bay in Yerba Buena.

About six months into this venture word reached them about John Marshall's discovery of gold at a mill along the American River.

Sutter had already made use of the lumber milled from trees felled in the San Antonio Redwoods but it was too costly. He instead milled trees along the American River, and that led to Marshall's discovery.

The onslaught of gold seekers had its affect on the San Antonio and Moraga redwoods. Demand for lumber soared and with that demand the price for a board foot. Burgess says that "soon, many a disillusioned miner was hurrying to the redwoods." ■

*In part three, we'll meet the loggers who discovered an untapped forest: the Middle Redwoods.*



**REDWOODS** from Oakland created the foundation beneath the Montgomery Block in downtown San Francisco.

COURTESY DENNIS EVANOSKY

COURTESY DENNIS EVANOSKY



# Adieus, thank yous and news

*By Alison Finlay, President*

In January I became OHA's new president. I am grateful to have a hard-working board of Tom Haw, Melissa Pauna, Doug Dove, Naomi Schiff, Kathryn Hughes, and Dea Bacchetti, and pleased to welcome new board members Charles Bucher and Martha Peck. I am also extremely blessed to have as executive director the multi-talented, dedicated January Ruck who holds down our office, applies for grants, and manages myriad details that get our programs accomplished and our goals met. January, you're awesome!

I also want to thank our outgoing president, Rachel Force, who filled an unexpected office vacancy, restored order to the office, and helmed our turn as host city for the state preservation conference last May. Joan Dark is also leaving the Board. After working on the Fernwood House Tour, Walking Tour, Lecture and Building Tours Committees, Joan is cutting back. She promises to continue to be involved, but not as much. Thank you Joan and Rachel for all you have done!

On a sadder note, this winter saw the deaths of board members Michael Crowe and Cynthia Shartzter, and past-presidents

Jane Powell and Carolyn Douthat. Naomi's article in this issue remembers them and their preservation legacies in Oakland. We are starting a Memorial Fund for preservation advocacy in their honor. Please consider remembering them with a contribution to keep OHA's voice strong.

Speaking of advocacy, we are delighted (and very proud!) that the Oakland League of Women Voters has chosen to honor Naomi Schiff this spring with a Making Democracy Work award for her work as a preservation and city planning advocate. Bravo! Naomi says she is a front person, that we are in this together. True, but we are grateful to have a dedicated, thoughtful and gracious representative on the frontlines. Thank you Naomi!

Also providing invaluable assistance is Chris Buckley, whose incisive commentary on preliminary planning policy has led to more preservation-friendly zoning. OHA, and Oakland, is in his debt.

OHA has influenced city policy, urging the city to act responsibly.

Recently we have been critical of a 66-year contract allowing 17 new electronic billboards along the approach to Oakland from the Bay Bridge eastbound. Not only

are they distracting and unsafe, but this is a bad deal for Oakland.

OHA is now 33 years old. Last year we published an expanded version of Beth Bagwell's *Oakland: The Story of a City*. We owe a big thank you to the DeLong Sweet Foundation and others for financial support in helping us realize that long held goal.

In March, we saw how the St. Joseph's Senior housing adaptive use project was coming along and as part of our lecture series there was a Jazz History of Oakland at Piedmont Piano Company.

What's ahead this year? We'd like to capitalize on the work of the city's Cultural Heritage Survey and put plaques on more of Oakland's historic buildings. We want to build our membership. In April, we are putting together a house tour in two versions, an afternoon tour and in the evening a benefit tour with food, wine and entertainment at lovely homes with sparkling sunset views of the bay. We can use volunteers; please call the office if you'd like to pitch in!

In May, we honor worthy projects and people with our Partners in Preservation awards, and visit the Scottish Rite Center, an art deco gem.

So, mark your calendars, invite a friend or neighbor, and join us as we explore and celebrate Oakland! ■

#### CONTRIBUTORS:

Kathleen DiGiovanni, Dennis Evanosky, Alison Finlay, Kitty Hughes, Elaine Macy, David Nicolai, Martha Peck, January Ruck, Naomi Schiff

PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

*OHA News* welcomes article submissions. Send to [news@oaklandheritage.org](mailto:news@oaklandheritage.org).

MISSION STATEMENT: OHA is a nonprofit membership organization which advocates the protection, preservation and revitalization of Oakland's architectural, historic, cultural and natural resources through publications, education, and direct action.

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*OHA membership keeps you informed, helps make our city more livable, and puts you in touch with our many events. It makes a wonderful gift, too!*

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Some limited income memberships are available. Call for information

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## The Livermores of Rockridge

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

Once upon a time, a native of Maine named Horatio Gates Livermore made his arduous way to California to make his fortune in gold. He settled in Georgetown, El Dorado County, and by 1854 he had become a California State Senator. Two years later his sons Horatio Putnam and Charles E. Livermore traveled west to join their father in California.

[For the sake of clarity it's important to note here that the Livermores of our story are not to be confused with the Robert Livermores of the Livermore Valley. They are two entirely unrelated families.]

Horatio G. Livermore had recognized the untapped power of the American River and envisioned a prosperous mill town on its banks like the towns of his native New England. He built a sawmill at what is now the city of Folsom to process logs brought down the river from higher elevations. To power that mill the Livermores, father and sons, built the first dam across that river. From that beginning the family's interests spread. By 1862 they had acquired the Natoma Water and Mining Company and after that 9,000 acres of William Leidesdorff's Rancho de los Americanos. Over the years the Livermores' interests spread statewide from land, lumber, and hydroelectric power to railroads, irrigation, vineyards, wineries, and fruit-drying. Their power-generating interests ultimately became part of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

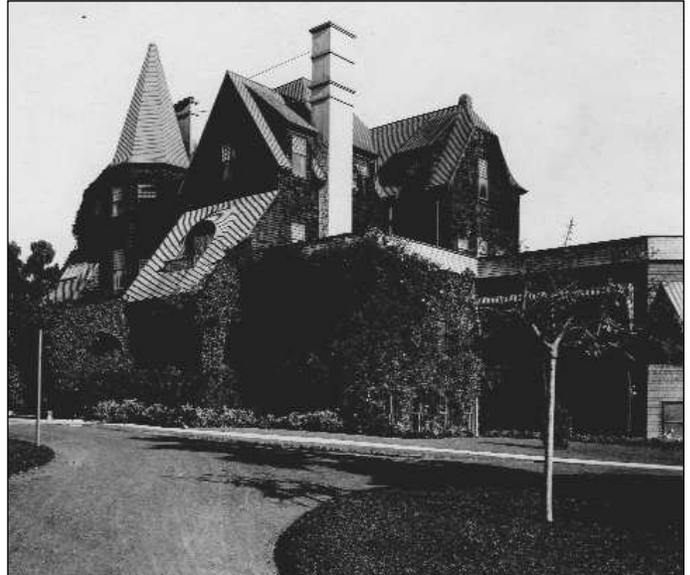
In 1869 Horatio P. and Charles Livermore, along with Col. Jack Hays, purchased 600

acres in the rural Oakland hills. On his portion of the property Horatio P. Livermore built a 38-room mansion for his family at a spot described by Robert Patmont in his *History of the Claremont Country Club* as "across Broadway Terrace from the fifteenth green" or roughly near what is now Glenbrook Drive and Romany Road.

The family built three homes in total but according to daughter Mattie Livermore Hurtgen everyone lived together in the big house that H.P. built. She described an idyllic childhood of horseback rides and picnics in the open countryside.

The Livermores laid out many of the Rockridge streets that are with us today. In a map filed with the county in 1879, the Livermore brothers, along with Jack Hays, set out as permanent public thoroughfares Acacia, Buckeye, Ocean View, Brookside and others.

In a newspaper interview published in the 1950s, Mrs. Hurtgen recalled her father as "a lover of trees and flowers" who planted hundreds of eucalyptus, cedar, and redwood trees on his land. The nursery that Livermore established, Thermal Vale, appears on early maps along the greens of today's Claremont



**THE LIVERMORE HOUSE** in use as the country club clubhouse sometime before 1927

Country Club. According to a *Piedmonter* article by Ray Raineri, Livermore's many plantings include the massive old eucalyptus that still stands at the intersection of Golden Gate and Acacia, the tree that became a beacon of hope in the aftermath of the 1991 Oakland hills fire.

In 1891 H.P. Livermore sold 58 acres of his Rockridge property to Oakland banker Philip E. Bowles. When Bowles built a new house for himself, "The Pines," within view of the Livermore home, Horatio P. had his 38-room house moved down the hill and across the valley to a site closer to the intersection of McAdam (now Broadway Terrace) and Broadway. Several years later, after the Liv-

See **LIVERMORES** on page 8