

House on a Hill: The Hale - Treadwell House at CCAC

* PROGRAM SEPT. 25 - SEE PAGE 7 *

At midday on Friday, March 27, 1772, a small exploration party from the Spanish garrison at Monterey stopped to rest on a windy hilltop. Their leader Don Pedro Fages was on an expedition to explore the Contra Costa or other side of San Francisco Bay and select a site for a new mission. Father Juan Crespi's diary described the wondrous view from this hilltop, and recorded the Europeans' first sighting of the Golden Gate from across the Bay. The spot where the explorers stopped to rest is thought to be the site where the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) now stands.

This fall CCAC celebrates its 80th year as a college. CCAC is internationally known for its uniquely structured art education and draws students from all 50 states and 50 countries worldwide. It has been at its Oakland location since 1926 when founder Frederick H. Meyer purchased the famous Treadwell estate and moved his school there from Berkeley, its original home.



Hilltop's recorded history spans 215 years. Plaque at CCAC marks Fages Party's historic stop. (Phil Bellman)



Now known as Macky Hall, the tall Stick mansion presides over North Broadway and the bustling California College of Arts and Crafts. (Phil Bellman)

Amidst the college grounds stands Macky Hall, a well preserved Stick-Eastlake mansion which today houses offices. The venerable old house looks down through towering trees upon the busy intersection of College and Broadway. San Francisco and the Golden Gate--now bridged--are visible in the distance. How did this house come to be here and who were its occupants?

After the Fages party's visit, the hillside and surrounding country lay undisturbed for some 48 years. Except for the small Spanish settlements of Mission San

Jose and Yerba Buena (San Francisco), the entire bay region lay open and unexplored, home of the Costanoan tribes. This quiet solitude changed forever in 1820 when the king of Spain granted Don Luis Peralta possession of what is now Oakland, Emeryville, Piedmont, Alameda, Albany, and part of San Leandro.

Peralta had come to the New World in 1775 at the age of 16 with his parents as part of the Anza party. After many years of military service, Peralta was granted this huge estate which he called Rancho San Antonio. The 44,800-acre Rancho became a thriving domain with 8000 head of cattle and 2000 horses. Married to another member of the Anza party, Peralta raised nine children on this private fiefdom.

In 1842, at the age of 83, the Don divided his lands among his four sons. The youngest, Vicente, received the portion from the south end of Lake Merritt up the bay shore to the present Temescal district. The hilltop at Broadway and College was included. If one looked down from CCAC's hill, Vicente's home near 55th and Vicente was the only structure visible for miles.

The Gold Rush era land-grabs against the Peraltas by Horace Carpentier and other squatters are well known. However, Vicente sold a large tract of land including the Claremont Country Club site to Joseph K. Irving in March 1852. Irving partitioned his tract and sold lots between 1852 and 1859. When he died his estate was bought by Col. John C. Hays and three associates.

Hays was a colorful character from San



William Hale (L) and Clinton Day (R): neighbors, contemporaries, and fellow Revolution descendants: client and architect too? (Alameda County Sheriff's Dept.; BAH)

Francisco, the first sheriff and veteran of various vigilante escapades. His home, called Fernwood, was a showpiece of the 1800s (OHA News, spring 1986). Evidently he enticed a number of people to Oakland, among them Horatio G. Livermore (who bought the country club property), J. Ross Browne (travel writer and lecturer whose Chabot Road mansion Pagoda Hill became famous), and another sheriff--W.E. Hale, later sheriff of Alameda County and warden of San Quentin. Hale bought the five acres adjacent to the Livermores--CCAC's hill--from Vicente Peralta around 1879, and is said to have grumbled about the \$500 price.

William Elmer Hale (1842-1900) came west in 1861 to try his luck at the mines. A New Hampshire native, he was a grand-nephew of Nathan Hale and relative of Senator John Parker Hale who broke with the Democrats over slavery and helped form the Republican party. William Hale too was active in local Republican politics, running for governor as well as serving two terms as county sheriff in 1884-86. As sheriff he worked to transfer executions from the hanging-tree province of the counties to the state prisons: he then found himself presiding over San Quentin's first execution in 1891 in the elected office of warden.

Hale's property was far beyond the city's outskirts, and not incorporated into Oakland until 1897. Consequently no known record exists to tell us when Hale's home was built, or by whom. An 1879 loan of \$6600 from William DeFremery to Hale may



Ross Browne's eccentric Pagoda Hill, over the next rise from the Hale house, was one of early North Oakland's scattered estates. (CCAC archives)

have been for construction. His 1880-81 directory address, Clifton and New Broadway, is certainly this location.

Architectural sketches are said to exist or have existed in the possession of the Meyer family that link Hale's house to the architect Clinton Day (1846-1916). An early graduate of the College of California, Day is best known for the City of Paris building in San Francisco and Stanford's Memorial Church. He lived in Berkeley and was active designing homes in the East Bay in the 1880s, including his own house on the present site of Boalt Hall, which was not unlike the Hale house in its style and half-timber detailing.

Most of Day's plans and records were destroyed in the Fire in 1906. His daughter told a poignant story of how her father, having obtained a special pass to enter the ravaged city, went into his office in the City of Paris building. Fire had swept through the building, but he saw his model for the Stanford chapel sitting on a table. As he reached out to touch it, it disintegrated into ash. Altogether Day lost 30 years of records in the fire.

So it may never be possible to prove conclusively whether he designed this



Crisply detailed but sadly incomplete photo of the house in 1923, when Meyer bought it from the Treadwells. (CCAC)

house. However, in the mid-1870s W.E. Hale and Clinton Day lived on the same street in Oakland--Knox Place at Telegraph near the present site of Sears. The two men must have known each other, and an architectural commission could well have been the result.

For some reason Hale kept the new house for only a short time. By 1884 it was in the hands of Ross E. Browne, and then transferred in quick succession to John and Edward Coleman for \$5 gold coin, and then to Kate C. Salisbury for the sum of \$20,000. A little later a George Beckwith owned the property. He furnished the home lavishly but poor health kept him from living there for long.

Ross E. Browne (1849-1936) was one of eight children of author, diplomat, and world traveler John Ross Browne of nearby Pagoda Hill. He studied engineering in Germany, taught at Cal from 1879 to 1885, and was regarded as one of the foremost authorities on mining in California and Nevada. Real estate deals seem to have run in the family in his father's last years. But how he acquired the Hale estate, whether he ever lived there, and what the \$5 "sale" represents are so far mysteries.

Finally in 1889 a family would occupy the property with the means to fulfill its considerable potential. The April 24, 1889 edition of the *Oakland Enquirer* reports: "A Big Sale. A Beautiful Home in this City Changes Hands. James Treadwell, Esq., half owner and treasurer of the celebrated Bradford quicksilver mine, in Lake County, has purchased of Mr. George C. Beckwith his elegant home, situated on New Broadway, for



Carriage house in its original state, c.1922, with half-timbering, octagonal portholes, roof ornaments, and Stick style geometric trim. (CCAC archives)



Treadwell group at Douglas Island in Alaska. "J.T." is probably James Treadwell. (Louis Stein)



The Treadwell company town of Tesla, now totally vanished, had homes, company store, and church. (Louis Stein)



Carnegie bricks from the Treadwells' south county plant pave the walks at CCAC. (Phil Bellman)

the sum of \$35,000 cash, taking the place as it is, the house furnished throughout, together with all the accessories of the well appointed stable." The article went on to say, "This is the place known as the Hale property and was sold about two years ago to Mr. Beckwith for \$20,000."

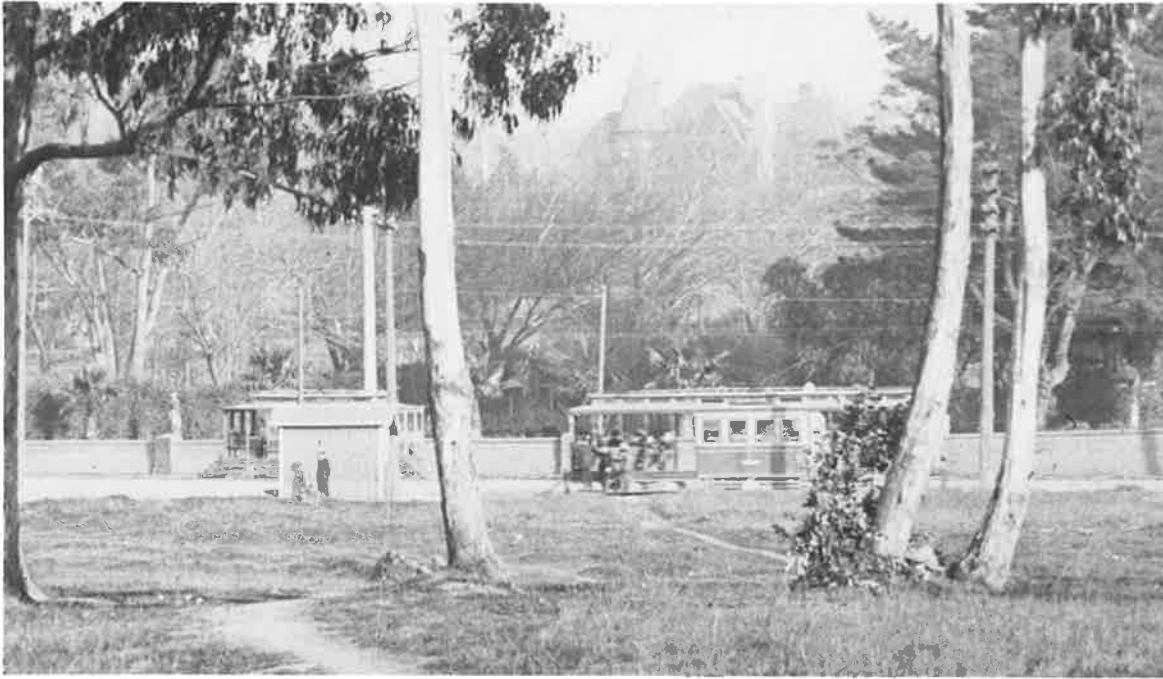
James Treadwell was one of three brothers originally from New Brunswick, Canada, who came to California in their youth in the late 1850s. Around 1880 the Treadwells struck gold on Douglas Island near Juneau, Alaska. They developed the area into the greatest gold producer in the world, and sold the mines in 1888 for \$6 million.

They next turned their attention to southern Alameda County, where they created the Tesla Coal Mine and built a railroad to move out 500 tons a day. The layers of clay and sand surrounding the coal gave rise to additional industries. The clay layer produced 43 different kinds of clay used to create porcelain and earthenware. Combined with the sand, it yielded 80,000 bricks per day. These factories were called the Carnegie Brick and Pottery Company. Bricks with the Carnegie stamp are still visible today in walkways at CCAC.

The Treadwells used their considerable fortune to enlarge and improve the estate. The imposing entrance and concrete retaining wall along Broadway were said to have cost \$22,000 alone. The Treadwell hospitality was legend: there were 16 rooms in the house, 8 large bedrooms.

The view across open land to the hills and bay was magnificent. Family descendants describe watching such historic events as balloon ascensions at Blair Park, the illumination of Oakland one night in 1905 when Mayor Frank Mott pulled the main switch for the first electroliers, and of course the great earthquake and fire in 1906. The Treadwells opened their home to friends driven out by the fire. For days people slept in the hallways and on the stairs.

At that moment, when the Treadwells were enjoying the zenith of their fortunes, across the bay a young man from Germany faced complete ruin. Frederick Wilhelm Henry Meyer (1872-1961) had been working as a cabinet maker in the City and teaching at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute. He lost everything in the fire. He decided to move to Berkeley and start an arts school. Above



College and Broadway in the Treadwells' day, about 1912, "where one transferred to the Rock Ridge car." In the distance beyond the Treadwells' wall is the Livermore house, on the Claremont Country Club site. (Oakland History Room)

all he wanted to create a practical arts curriculum, one that would prepare the student to work for a living.

Meyer had come to California at the age of 15 with skills in furniture making and blacksmithing and an interest in horticulture. He was greatly influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement and its quest for practicality and beauty in everyday objects. This philosophy guided him as the School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts (its first name) opened in 1907.

Meyer began the school with \$45 cash, his own credit, and his wife Laetitia as administrator. There were 43 students, three classrooms, and three teachers: Meyer, designer Isabelle Percy West, and artist Perham W. Nahl. Instead of only teaching subjects like figure drawing, landscape painting, and sculpture, the school would equip graduates to teach or practice design, mechanical drawing, commercial art, and the crafts.

From that humble beginning the school developed rapidly, changing locations in Berkeley three times. With an influx of veterans returning from World War I the school again outgrew its quarters, and by 1922 a search was underway for a new permanent site.

While Meyer's art school was enjoying this steady advance, the Treadwell family fortune was in decline. The earthquake

damaged the brick factory and it was eventually closed. A few years later James was the victim of an unscrupulous bank scheme and mortgaged his property. In 1916, aboard a ferry returning to Oakland from San Francisco, he died suddenly of a heart attack. His widow Louisa continued to reside in the home but keeping up the grounds and paying servants became increasingly difficult.



Frederick H. Meyer, looking after the horticultural aspect of the campus. (CCAC archives)



The view down the hill and across North Oakland in 1923, when CCAC acquired the property. Wall, palms, and waiting shed are same ones seen on p.5. (CCAC archives)

In 1923 it was decided to put the property up for sale. Several offers were considered, including the Shriners' Hospital for Crippled Children and a high school. For the asking price of \$60,000 Meyer acquired the Treadwell estate for his school. Veterans' tuition provided the bulk of the \$20,000 down payment, and Treadwell's business partner Newman Fuller took back a \$40,000 mortgage.

Thus the Treadwell estate passed from private hands to become a college campus. One reason Meyer was attracted to the site was that the four acres "with its background of hills, its outlook over Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco, and the Golden Gate, and its splendid trees and vistas offered endless subjects for landscape study." It was three years before remodeling was complete and the school could transfer completely to its new location.

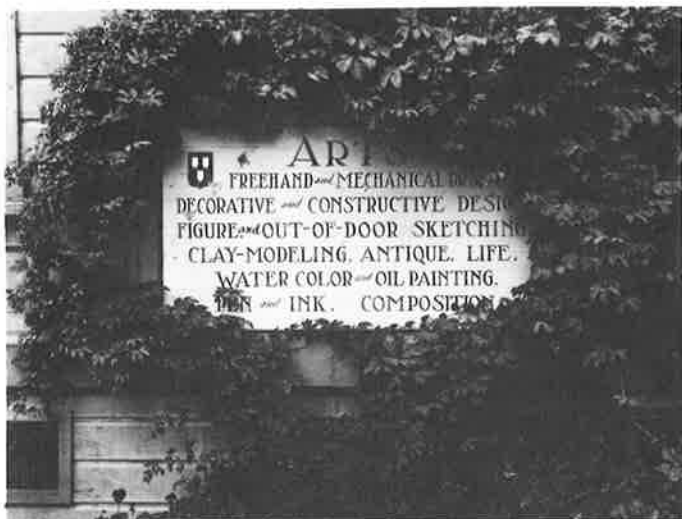
Meyer set his students to work clearing the grounds of the dilapidated estate, and saw to the planting of many exotic horticultural specimens. The house was remodeled to provide the Meyer family's apartment on the third floor, and classrooms and offices below. The carriage house and stables were converted to studios. True to his time, Meyer had some of the Eastlake style exterior detailing removed from the house.

Meyer is recalled as a "peppery compact man with encyclopedic range of knowledge,

boundless enthusiasm and love of plants and animals. His kindness and sensitivity were tempered by occasional bursts of Teutonic bluster." Stories abound of his German frugality and resourcefulness. He and the students built what was called Guild Hall from used lumber from street forms used in the construction of Broadway. They salvaged bricks and even bed springs after old St. Mary's College on Broadway burned down.



Art students clear the grounds along Broadway, as the college prepares to move in. (CCAC archives)



Sign at the old Berkeley campus details CCAC's unique curriculum in the arts. (CCAC archives)

The school grew and flourished through the '30s. In 1936 it was renamed California College of Arts and Crafts. Meyer continued to guide the college's growth, always keeping to the original principles of practicality and thrift as well as beauty. Art schools all over the country began reflecting CCAC's unique curriculum. Social attitudes toward the arts were changing; it was

no longer considered effeminate or dilettante to pursue a career in the arts. Meyer can be largely credited for this trend.

Over the years the college administrators have seen to it that their Eastlake villa and carriage house stayed very much as they appeared in the 19th century. In 1977 the two structures were placed on the National Register of Historic Places; they are also designated Oakland landmarks. The mansion is now known as Macky Hall, honoring Meyer's successor as president, Eric Spencer Macky. As the college celebrates its 80th year this fall, plans are underway to renovate the house. The college hopes to raise \$600,000 and architect Tim Anderson has been hired to oversee the project.

In 1977 a student competition was held for a plaque commemorating the 1772 sighting of the Golden Gate. The winning marker by Lee Zukowski sits out at the foot of the lawn, a reminder that this particular hill-top has always played a significant part in local history.

--Annalee Allen

Special thanks to: Rosemary Reagan Jensen; Debra Nickel, CCAC archivist; Louis Stein.

Victorian Interiors

OHA - CCAC PROGRAM SEPT. 25

On Friday, Sept. 25, Oakland Heritage Alliance and California College of Arts and Crafts will co-sponsor a program entitled "Artistic Interiors of the 1870s and 1880s." The speaker will be Hank Dunlop, head of the Interior Architecture Department at CCAC.

Mr. Dunlop is a graduate of the University of Oregon and was associated with Gensler Architects in San Francisco. His slide lecture will show interiors from Bay Area homes of the '70s and '80s, and he will discuss their place in Victorian style.

The program will be held at the Isabel Percy West Gallery on the CCAC campus at 7:30 pm, following a 6:30 social hour with light refreshments and no-host wine bar. This event is a part of Oakland Preservation Week, as well as marking the 80th anniversary of CCAC. For reservations and information call OHA, 763-9218.



Clinton Day and his daughter Caroline, at the Day home in Berkeley c.1900. Period photos from Bay Area collections will illustrate Hank Dunlop's talk. (Berk.Arch.Heritage)

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.

■ MAXWELL HOUSE DEMOLISHED BY RAMSAY-BASS INTERESTS: NOT A TRACE REMAINS

A major Oakland landmark, the John P. Maxwell house at 285 Lee Street, has fallen to a developer's bulldozer, scooped up into container trucks and hauled to a dumpsite. The weakness of Oakland's demolition and building permit process is blamed for the loss.

The demolition, ordered by Sheldon Ramsay of Ramsay-Bass Interests, took place on Monday morning, August 10, while the City Council was on vacation and before neighbors and Adams Point Preservation Society were able to obtain a temporary restraining order. Mr. Ramsay's project was strongly criticized at the outset by Adams Point Preservation. Apart from one early meeting, Mr. Ramsay never contacted APPS to explore alternatives even though he had been advised that the Maxwell house had significant historical importance.

The majestic home, a 1913 Colonial Revival designed by William E. Milwain of Milwain Brothers, Architects, was built for John P. Maxwell, pioneer hardware and building supplier who himself built hund-

reds of Oakland homes, notably in the Maxwell Park area of Fruitvale.

Milwain designed this symmetrical 6000 square foot home and large garage around a grand staircase and central reception hall entered through a deep mahogany vestibule graced with six classical columns. A large arboretum, a den, two kitchens, butler's pantry with separate stairs, and porte-cochere enhanced the first level while the second level was divided into four parlor suites. The attic doubled as a ballroom.

The demolition appears legal although the City of Oakland had earlier requested an Environmental Impact Report on Mr. Ramsay's 28-unit project. The City required that the EIR - among other issues such as parking and the cumulative impact of development - address the historical importance of the building. By swiftly destroying the building Mr. Ramsay appears to have circumvented the EIR process which is still going on. Unlike the public, Mr. Ramsay had the opportunity to review the Administrative Draft of the EIR which revealed new information about the interior of the house and the career of John P. Maxwell. Presumably this new evidence would have raised the building's significance even higher than it was rated by the Survey a year ago.

So far as can be determined, no effort was made to salvage any part of the structure. The Maxwell house was included in the last two Adams Point walking tours sponsored by Oakland Heritage Alliance.

The demolition of the Maxwell house has strong negative economic impacts on the city and particularly upon the Adams Point district where the presence of stately old buildings has attracted many new investors: home buyers, condominium buyers and renters. As the fine old houses fall, more Oakland residents, feeling the loss of ambiance and historical ties, move to the suburbs.

OHA members may wish to protest the loss of the Maxwell house by writing to Mayor Lionel Wilson, City Council, and Planning Commissioners. Urge a stronger demolition and building permit ordinance that takes historical elements into account before a building is allowed to be destroyed.

--Harlan Kessel



Maxwell House, 285 Lee Street, reduced to splinters - a quick morning's work. Last to fall was the arboretum at left.
(Barbara Neustadt)

STUDY LIST BUILDINGS DAMAGED BY FIRE

Two Victorian houses on Fruitvale Avenue, placed on the Study List by the Landmarks Board this spring, suffered a fire in late July. The smaller of the houses, a Stick cottage, was seriously damaged. The buildings, survivors of the early years of the Dimond district (see Fall 1986 OHA News), have been boarded up since April and are slated to be sold out of the estate of the late owner. Most of the remainder of the block, between Champion and School Streets, is owned by one party who is rumored to be interested in acquiring the site for development. The larger of the houses, an ebullient Queen Anne, is well known and admired by neighborhood residents, and it was at the request of one of them, Kathleen Courts, that the buildings were placed on the Study List. --Carolyn Douthat



3148 Fruitvale, after the fire.

(Phil Bellman)

COUNCIL REVISES DEMOLITION ORDINANCE

A pared down version of the draft demolition ordinance is scheduled for a final vote by the City Council in September. Deletions to the final draft, which had been adopted by the Council's Public Works Committee, were made by the full Council at a special meeting in July. Testimony by preservation and housing representatives at the meeting was not allowed, and the landmarks and housing protections were deleted by a nearly unanimous vote of Council (Wilson Riles opposed the motion).

As amended, the ordinance retains the concurrent building permit/demolition permit requirement, but the requirement of a conditional use permit for demolition of low/moderate income units and landmark buildings was deleted. Mayor Lionel Wilson considered the protections inappropriate to a demolition ordinance, and Council agreed, despite recommendations of the Planning Commission task force and the Public Works Committee. Councilmember Frank Ogawa, who voted to adopt the Task Force recommendations in the Public Works Committee, made the motion to delete them at the Council meeting. The deleted portions were referred to committees for further review.

--Carolyn Douthat

GRANT REFUSED BY METHODIST CHURCH

The grant application for additional seismic studies of the former Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist, submitted by OHA in June, was favorably received by the Western Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, sponsor of the technical services grant program.

But before making a final decision on the application, the Trust arranged a meeting between Reverend Kuhn of the Lake Merritt United Methodist Church, Oakland City Planning Department staff, OHA, and the Trust to discuss the grant proposal. The Trust was prepared to award the grant if the church would agree to a study by an expert acceptable to both OHA and the Methodists. The building committee of the church, however, rejected the proposal, and grant funds were awarded to another applicant, the Camron-Stanford House.

The protracted EIR review for the proposed new church on the site is scheduled to come to a close in September when the Planning Commission considers certification of the final EIR and holds a public hearing on design review of the new building. According to city planner Charles Bryant, the Commission will use the findings of the EIR in evaluating the proposed design for the new building.

Given the steadfast resolve of the Meth-

odist Church to have the new building, or nothing at all, the design review process will be an interesting test of the Planning Commission's sensitivity to preservation in Oakland. While the Commission has no power to prohibit demolition, they could require that any new building have some or all of the design features of the existing church, perhaps causing the congregation to reconsider alternatives to demolition.

--Carolyn Douthat

■ WEST OAKLAND SURVEY - YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

After a year of waiting, the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey's search for architectural and historical resources in West Oakland has begun. Thanks to a grant from the State Office of Historic Preservation, a portion of the Clawson neighborhood and most of Prescott will be researched and evaluated during the next year. These neighborhoods are among Oakland's oldest, with layers of history embodied in their Victorian and Colonial houses. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the buildings to be surveyed predate the 1906 earthquake, and some predate the coming of the transcontinental railroad in 1869.

Volunteers are invited to help research these neighborhoods at the Oakland History Room, and to assist at the Survey office in City Hall. If you would like to volunteer your time and talents, contact Gary Knecht, Survey Coordinator, or Betty Marvin, at City Planning, 273-3941.

--Gary Knecht



Corner store at 32nd and Adeline: outstanding building to be researched in the Clawson neighborhood. (Survey photo)

■ ROTUNDA RESTORATION PROJECT

Saturday morning, August 15, the Western Branch of the Association for Preservation Technology hosted a tour of The Rotunda (originally Kahn's Department Store, last known as Liberty House). Alice Carey, the preservation architect for this huge project, showed a series of slides documenting the history of the building and its restoration. Blair Barry, project architect for the firm of Fitzpatrick, Karren & Associates, also acted as guide. The complexities of combining authentic restoration with the demands of contemporary economics were thoroughly presented by these two experts.

With the enthusiastic commitment of developer Myron Zimmerman, this project should prove another crown jewel for Oakland. The first five floors of the building will be occupied by shops, and the balance of the 40,000 square feet is slated for office space. (Several additional floors have been tucked into the apparent 5-story height.) Current costs are running at approximately \$40 million for the shell alone.

This 1912 Beaux Arts building boasted the largest elliptical rotunda in the world at the time of its construction--and because of the rarity of this type of rotunda, the architects suspect it may still be the world's largest. The huge atrium is currently filled with as complex a scaffolding as most of us will ever see, and it is tempting to imagine the finished vision. Painters were at work during the tour, and magical bits of bronze leaf lay scattered on the floor, residue from the gilding of rosettes far above our heads.

Some forty separate contractors are involved in the work, among them restoration specialists for the sheet metal cornices and leaded glass transoms. We climbed past marble, wrought iron and mahogany staircases, paint cans, tarpaulins, electrical lines, and unfinished walls and ceilings, for a dynamic view of the roof of the building, a close-up of the dome's exterior (a marvel of 1912 engineering, with a complex internal drainage system), and a good look at all the Pompidou-like equipment on the roof. The tour ended at the first floor exterior with an explanation of the processes used to restore the terra cotta arches

and insure an overall unity to the exterior. This whole project would be worth a major exhibit at the Oakland Museum.

--Polly O'Grady

■ REHAB RIGHT IS BACK: YOU NEED THIS BOOK!

Rehab Right: How to Rehabilitate Your Oakland House Without Sacrificing Architectural Assets, by Helaine Kaplan Prentice and Blair Prentice, has just been published in a new edition (with a new subtitle for the '80s, How to Realize the Full Value of Your Old House) by Ten Speed Press. When it first came out in 1978, this magnificent book was a City Planning Department handout for Oakland residents; now commercially published, at \$9.95 for a large, attractive paperback, it is still an amazing bargain. It is also an amazing book, any year, at any price.

Practical explanations and diagrams address maintenance problems peculiar to old houses--simple deterioration (what to do about squeaking floor boards or crumbling elephantine columns), past alterations (affordable substitutes for missing porch posts and balusters), and living in the modern world (inconspicuous security measures). Advice on codes, permits, financing, and suppliers is still Oakland-specific, and includes discussion of the Historical Building Code. Other updates deal with handicap access and asbestos removal, and there is an order form for City Planning's Retrofit Right for energy concerns.

The unique and powerful message of this book is "Let your house be itself"--stated as a parallel to the city's social and cultural diversity. A style guide describes 100 years of Oakland house types, characterizing each in terms that inspire affection and respect equally for an Italianate, Shingle, or Wartime Tract House.

Created a decade ago, Rehab Right is a product of the same 1970s flowering of preservation in Oakland that brought us the Camron-Stanford House restoration, Preservation Fair, Landmarks Board, Cultural Heritage Survey, and OHA. More and more today, the Landmarks Board and the Landmarks Assistance committee of OHA are asking how preservation can reach neighborhood residents as well as civic monuments: this book is one answer. --Betty Marvin

City Landmarks Board Actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month at 4 pm in Room 115, City Hall. Meetings are open to the public. Designation of landmarks is recommended by the Board to the City Planning Commission and City Council. Landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in issuance of demolition permits. Exterior alterations require approval by City Planning staff, at the recommendation of the Board. Over one hundred landmarks have been designated in the 13 years since the Board was created.

JULY

Board reviewed signs for the landmark California Cotton Mills building (1091 Calcot Way, along the Nimitz Freeway); approved with modifications so that the new U-Haul signs match existing signs more closely in size and placement.

Ground floor alterations to the Cathedral Building (1615 Broadway) were reviewed. Tenants are to be a podiatry office in the main space, and a small flower shop in the flatiron tip. Owners proposed to replace existing store windows with nearly full-height bronze-tinted windows in bronze anodized sash, and to remove the present awnings in the arches. Board requested clear rather than tinted glass, expressed concern about the stucco infill of the arches that would be exposed by removing the awnings, and asked to review future signs. They discussed the proposed flower shop entry: door at the building tip would relate better to the Latham Square plaza, but because of the grade, ramp access was only possible through side entries--owner was asked to investigate alternatives.

Board noted draft demolition ordinance expected to be adopted by City Council on July 21 (see Briefing). Voted to send the Mayor a letter requesting appointments to the one existing and one anticipated vacancy created by Mitch Hardin and Celso Ortiz leaving to serve on other commissions.

AUGUST

Meeting was devoted mainly to discussion of proposed Guidelines for Landmark Eligi-

bility, drafted by secretary Chris Buckley following Board directions at special meeting in May. Board had requested a numerical evaluation system similar to that of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey but simpler in format and giving more weight to historical significance and less to architecture. (Points are awarded for exterior design, materials, architect, famous occupant or event, etc., and subtracted for alteration.) Buckley had designed a form and prepared sample evaluations of existing landmarks and Survey properties. The draft system was designed so that buildings with any historical associations at all became likely landmark candidates--not only places where Jack London slept, but homes of prominent businesspeople (e.g John P. Maxwell--see Briefing) and local politicians.

This system (unlike the National Register) would continue to allow landmarks like the Central Pacific Depot (Mi Rancho, 464 7th St.) and Southern Pacific Mole site, where the buildings themselves have been completely altered or even demolished but the historic site is landmarked. Buckley thought there might be 500 to 1000 eligible



Central Pacific Depot, 464 7th St., in 1896 (Illustrated Directory) and today: altered but still historic. Board discusses treatment of non-visual landmarks. (Survey photo)



Wetmore houses on 11th Street (1876-85): threatened by downtown location and neglect. (Phil Bellman)

properties in Oakland under the proposed criteria, with about half falling into the "historic" category whose significance is not visible to the naked eye. Celso Ortiz noted the need to explain these non-visual landmarks to the public (plaques? brochure? newspaper series?): "If I drove by I wouldn't know why it was important. Tourists come to Oakland and want to see the old buildings." Design review policy would also have to be different. Board voted to adopt the proposed system and see how it works.

Board discussed several endangered properties (all Victorian houses on the Study List): the Simpson house at 524 23rd St., where a new owner apparently needs help moving it from the development site; the fire-damaged houses at 3148-54 Fruitvale (see Briefing); and the Wetmore houses on 11th Street near Lafayette Square, where the owner of 583 wants to remove it for a parking lot and the others (573-77 and 571) appear threatened by neglect. Board took no formal action, but agreed to express concern as appropriate; Ortiz suggested producing a brochure on moving houses.

Board's fundraising committee, which hopes to raise money for plaques, brochures, and other landmark assistance programs, asked for information from the City Attorney's office on whether a board can do this. Officers were elected for 1987-88: Gordon Henderson chair and Bert Bertolero vice-chair. Henderson expressed continuing concern about attendance and vacancies on the Board. Board will be sharing a table with the Survey at Preservation Fair.

--Betty Marvin & Kathy Olson

OHA Update

■ PRESERVATION WEEK, SEPT. 19-27

Oakland's tenth annual Preservation Fair expands this year to a full week of preservation activities and observances throughout the city. Beginning on Saturday, Sept. 19, with a kickoff party at the Washington Inn in Old Oakland, and ending with Preservation Fair at the Camron-Stanford House on Sunday the 27th, the week will highlight many aspects of the city's heritage.

OHA's contribution is a lecture on Victorian interiors by Hank Dunlop, Friday evening, Sept. 25, co-sponsored with CCAC--see article on p. 7.

The Port of Oakland is observing its 60th anniversary the same week with activities that dovetail with Preservation Week, including a Seafest celebrating the maritime history of Oakland on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 26 and 27 at Jack London Waterfront.

Elaine Oldham, chair of Preservation Week, urges "everyone to come and join in the celebration of Oakland's history."

A small gate fee will be charged this year: \$2 for adults, \$1 for seniors and teens, under 12 free. See OHA Calendar, p.14, for schedule of the week's events.

--Helen Lore

■ WALKING TOURS A SUMMER SUCCESS

1987 was a banner year for OHA's summer walking tours. Nearly 400 people explored Oakland's neighborhoods during July and August, with an average of 34 walkers on each tour. The high quality of these historical and architectural walks was supported by the careful research and enthusiasm of tour leaders Sharon Moore, Ed Phillips, Deborah Shefler, Michael Crowe, Douglas Brookes, Sister Ethel Mary Tinnemann, Carolyn Douthat, Harlan Kessel, Francine Leatherwood, Leslie Flint, Marlene Wilson, Dean Yabuki, Josef Schmitt, and Fran Matarrese.

Thanks also to Board members who assisted including Annalee Allen, Bill McLetchie, Fred Mitchell, Lynn Fonfa, Naomi Schiff, Julie Barron, and Betty Marvin. Deborah Shefler, as chair of the program committee, spearheaded the tours. Steve Donaldson and

Bill Wilkens of Bay Graphics contributed the design of the handsome brochure.

Good support from the newspapers and radio stations also helped. Stations KFRC, KKHI, KGO, and KYUU carried public service announcements. KDFC taped an interview with Deborah Shefler which was aired August 18 and gave OHA excellent exposure. Deborah did a top notch job of presenting the OHA story. Her interview was interspersed through an hour of music by Beethoven, Smetana, and Respighi--a quality group!

--Helen Lore

■ HISTORIC HOUSES MEET

Representatives of Oakland's seven city-owned historic houses met together for the first time on August 6 at the Dimond library, to explore mutual strengths, problems, and goals, as a first step in possible coordination of their marketing, programming, development, and administration.

Called by City Councilor Dick Spees, with the joint sponsorship of Steve Costa of the City Assets Committee and Les Hausrath, OHA president, the meeting was attended by representatives from the Camron-Stanford, DeFremery, Dunsmuir, Mosswood, Pardee, Peralta, and Talbot Houses. Chuck Schwinn, incoming president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, Jean Spees from the Landmarks Board, Bill Patterson and Peggy Voulkos from the Office of Parks and Recreation, and Annalee Allen, Les Hausrath, and Helen Lore from OHA also attended.

After brainstorming ways in which the houses could join forces for their mutual advantage, the group set three goals for the next year:

1. Develop a mission statement and a city-wide master plan for Oakland's historic homes;
2. Establish a business group to help with major financial and technical assistance;
3. Develop a coordinating structure.

With these objectives in mind, a second meeting was set for October 1 at Dunsmuir House. Those who attended were enthusiastic about the potential for cooperative effort which this meeting elicited. Everyone agreed on the importance of showcasing Oakland's historic houses--an important asset to the city and its heritage.

--Helen Lore

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

OAKLAND PRESERVATION WEEK

Sat. Sept. 19

10 am, Paramount Theater tour followed by Uptown tour.
10-4, William Saroyan Festival of the Arts, Fred Finch Home, 3800 Coolidge.

5-8 pm, Washington Inn Kickoff Party, 495 10th St.

Sun. Sept. 20

12-2, Vintage Films, Grand Lake Theater.
12-4, Dunsmuir House open.

Tues., Sept. 22

2-7 pm, East Bay Negro Historical Society exhibit and program, Golden Gate Library, 5606 San Pablo Avenue; Black Cowboys to perform.

Wed., Sept. 23

11-4, Camron-Stanford House open
7:30 pm, Movie, "Sea Wolf," West Aud., Main Library.

Thurs., Sept. 24

2-5 pm, Peralta House open, 34th Ave. & Paxton.

Fri., Sept. 25

12:30-2, Lecture by Charles Wollenberg, "Bagdad by the Bay," Oakland Museum Lecture Hall.

3-5 pm, Moss House open, Mosswood Park.

7:30 pm, "Artistic Interiors of the 1870s and 1880s," slide lecture by Hank Dunlop, CCAC, Broadway & College; 6:30 social hour. Co-sponsored by CCAC & Oakland Heritage Alliance; 763-9218.

7:30 pm, "From the Ghost to the Elsinore, Jack London's Sea Writing," lecture by Dr. Earle Labor, West Auditorium, Main Library, 125 14th St.

Sat., Sept. 26

12-3:30, Panel/lecture on Oakland maritime history at Gallagher's Restaurant.

10-6, Seafest '87, Jack London Waterfront.

Sun., Sept. 27

10-6, Seafest '87, Jack London Waterfront.

11-6, 10TH ANNUAL OAKLAND PRESERVATION FAIR, Camron-Stanford House, 14th & Lakeside; \$2/\$1.

Coordinated by Camron-Stanford House Assn., 836-1976.

Sep. 19, Sat., 2 pm, slide lectures and book-signing, Mark Wilson on "Art Deco Exteriors of Oakland" and Sally Woodbridge on "Architecture in S.F. Neighborhoods & Downtown," Oakland Museum, James Moore Aud.; donation.

Sep. 20, Sun., 10-12:30, Oakland Museum bicycle tour of Oakland history. Free, space limited, 273-3514.

Sep. 19-27, OAKLAND PRESERVATION WEEK: see box 

Sep. 27, Sun., 11-5, Berkeley Rose Garden 50th Anniversary.

Sep. 27, Sun., Alamo Square house tour, Victorian Alliance & San Francisco Symphony; 474-7500/771-1129.

Sep. 28-29, Mon.-Tues., "Bringing Back Urban Vitality," conference sponsored by National Trust's Main Street Center; Hyatt Regency, Oakland. Info.: OHA, 763-9218.

Oct. 7-Nov. 18, Wed. eves., "Building the City," S.F. Heritage lecture series by Gray Brechin; 441-3000.

Oct. 15, Thurs., OHA Annual Dinner, Fratellanza Club, 1140 66th St., details TBA, save this date!

Oct. 18, Sun., 10-12:30, Oakland Museum bicycle tour of Oakland history. Free, space limited, 273-3514.

Nov. 14, Sat., San Francisco Heritage Soiree, 441-3000.

Nov. 15, Sun., Art Deco Ball, details TBA, 552-DECO.

Dec. 17 (tentative), OHA holiday party on Pagoda Hill: details TBA, watch for announcement.

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 pm., free; 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.

San Francisco Heritage weekly tours; \$3, info. 441-3004. Historic North Waterfront, Sundays 10:30-12, meet at kiosk near cable car turntable in Aquatic Park; 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 Les Hausrath, 834-5652.

Preservation Action Committee: contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370, for time, place, and agenda.

Publications Committee, working on guidebook/history The Broadway Book: Ed Phillips, 465-9829.

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. 2nd Monday, 4:00 pm, usually Room 115, City Hall. For agenda, date, location, 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. Agenda & information 273-3611.

through Sep. 30, "Chinese and Japanese in California," exhibit at Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley. M-F 9-5, Sat. 1-5, closed Aug. 15 & 22, Sep. 5-7; free.

through Nov. 27, "Ships, Rails, Ferries, & Cargo: The Story of Oakland's Waterfront," exhibit for 60th anniversary of Port of Oakland. Oakland History Room, Main Library Tu/Th 12-8:30, WF 10-5:30, Sat. 1-5:30; free; 273-3222

Sep. 15, Tues., 7 pm, "Oakland by Rail: Story of the City's Streetcars," slide lecture by Bill Sturm, West Auditorium, Main Library, 125 14th St.; free.

Sep. 18, Fri., 7:30 pm, Berkeley Historical Society, 3rd super-encore showing of "Berkeley History on Film: Changing Times, '06 to the '60s." 155 Dwinelle Hall, U.C. Campus, \$3 at the door; info. 524-9880.

Oakland Heritage Alliance

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

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

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Oakland Heritage Alliance News

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Carolyn Douthat, Dean Yabuki

EDITOR/PRODUCTION

Betty Marvin

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 (July through August) are as follows:

Joanne Auerbach, Cate Bainton, Valrea Brashear, Gary Campbell, William Coburn, Julia Cochran, Mrs. Betty Eddins, Joan Ettlinger, Ralph Faust, Thomas Fleischauer, Miss Colleen Gallagher, Pam Garrels, Mrs. Agnes Gerba, Marie Guelld, Enola Hicks, Cate Hieke/Claire Wing, Charlton Holland, Vicki/Vincent Howell, T. C. Jefferson, Juanita Johnson, Michael Kern, Shirley Langlois, Miss Jessie Lawton, Nancy Lehrkind, Ken Lewin, Suzanne Linford, George Lyons, Dorothy Marsten, Walter Mast, Ursula McCarthy, Jean Miller, Betty Moore/J. Oxley, Mrs. John Moore, William Nicolson, Elizabeth Neild, H. E. Christian Peeples, Gerald Ondercin, Mrs. Aida M. Peterson, Pat Rigby, Steven Schonborn, Mrs. Norma Smith, Shelby Siegel Solomon, Linda Skaar, Judy Stonefield, Alva Svoboda, Valerie R. Winemiller, Nicholas A. Winkler.

OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL OFFER: LAST CALL!

OHA members and friends have until the end of November to save 22% on subscriptions to *The Old-House Journal* and help support OHA at the same time. Under this special offer, a one-year subscription is just \$14 (regular \$18), and half of that \$14 is kept by OHA. OHA also becomes eligible to win \$1000 from the Journal. Sample copies and order forms can be picked up at OHA or at the Preservation Fair.

Checks for \$14 payable to OHA may be sent to OHA, Box 12425, Oakland 94604, and we will enter your subscription. Give name, address, phone, and whether new or renewal.

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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.

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



Oakland History Notes

(Oakland History Room)

Hall of Records

Alameda County's first county seat was established in 1853 in rural Alvarado. In 1856 the seat removed to San Leandro, where a courthouse was constructed, only to collapse in a smoldering heap during the Great Shake of 1868. County government found its logical home in 1873 in Oakland, the economic center of the county, which celebrated the event with the erection of a solid and dignified courthouse on the west side of Broadway between 4th and 5th Streets.

Facing the courthouse, on the other side of Broadway, a regal, French Renaissance style Hall of Records arose in 1879. Designed by architect William Stokes, the majestic edifice housed the vital records of the county and provided office space for the county treasurer, county clerk, recorder, and Board of Supervisors, which met in the building. Touted upon its opening as the "handsomest, cheapest and most substantial building in Alameda County," the structure exuded a sense of elegance and permanence, reflecting the city's pride as the social, political, and economic focus of the county.

The builders did not stint on refinement of workmanship. Observed one writer, "The wainscoting and the interior of the small rooms, entrances, balustradings, etc. are of white cedar, highly polished and handsomely carved, while ornamental figure heads, carved of the same material, are



placed over the doors." Upon entering the Hall, visitors would find themselves in a grand octagonal space, the roof towering eighteen feet overhead. On the second level, the county recorder was ensconced on an elevated platform, enabling him to overlook his vast domain of bound documents and zealous clerks.

In 1936 a new courthouse was built at Fallon and 10th Streets. Vital records were moved to the new facility, and the Hall of Records began a new career as offices of the county school and welfare departments. As demolition loomed in 1964, a reporter was moved to purple-hued lamentation: "The Ancient Dowager of Lower Broadway has been presiding over the corner with decaying dignity these past few years. Soon ignoble death will overtake her, too, as it did her lifetime companion [the courthouse] in 1950."

--William Sturm

Oakland Heritage Alliance
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