# **NEWS**



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VOL. 8, NO. 3

FALL 1988

# Life History: Searching for Persons in the Oakland History Room

The history of a city is the history of its people, their lives and daily doings, their hopes, visions, and aspirations. The life of any individual becomes a history in miniature, a part of the larger picture of which that life is an essential part. The Oakland Public Library's Oakland History Room contains a wealth of information about the city's people, an abundance of "miniature histories." The sources available to research the life of an Oakland citizen are varied and numerous: city directories, voting registers, newspapers, photographs, club histories, business guides, all provide pieces of facts about a person's life.

To demonstrate the breadth of resources available on an Oaklander's life, let us follow the mortal peregrinations of one Joseph Dieves, a businessman of the city's late 19th century community. The first question which may be asked is "When did Mr. Dieves come to Oakland?"--for in the city's early days, most Oaklanders were not natives. This question, and a number of others, can be answered by looking in the Oakland City Directories, published from 1869 to 1943 (with two more published in 1967 and 1969). The Oakland directories, which also covered Alameda and Berkeley in most years, list (or profess to list) all of the adult inhabitants of the city in alphabetical order, giving full name, residence, occupation, and sometimes place of occupation. They also provide classified listings of businesses (e.g. "Blacksmiths," "Clairvoyants") and extensive information about city government, clubs, churches, and buildings. Checking the first published directory for Oakland, 1869, discloses that Joseph Dieves was the "proprietor, Cosmo-



Joseph Dieves

Joseph Dieves, in Wood's <u>History of Alameda County</u>, 1883. County histories, familiarly called "mug books," are important biographical sources. (Oakland History Room)

politan House, Broadway between 7th and 8th Street." Further perusal of the directories will also tell us how long Mr. Dieves lived in Oakland. The 1875 directory shows that our subject is now residing at 411 9th Street and is a partner in the firm of Kramm and Dieves, proprietors of the Oakland Brewery. Further searching reveals that he was last listed in 1888, still a partner in Kramm and Dieves, and now residing at 1416 Telegraph Avenue. The city directories have provided pieces of facts about Joseph Dieves which will enable us to check other resources.

The next question is "Where did Mr. Dieves come from?" The Alameda County voting registers, which the library has from 1867 to 1944, answer that and many other questions. (The voting registers have some drawbacks: until state suffrage was passed in 1911, they did not list women; nor do they list non-citizens. U.S. censuses for 1860, 1870,



#### DIRECTORY

OF THE TOWNSHIP AND

# CITY OF OAKLAND,

Together with the Townships of

# BROOKLYN AND ALAMEDA,

FOR THE YEAR 1869.

CONTAINING A

# COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF THEIR INHABITANTS,

With their places of residence and business; also, its

#### PUBLIC OFFICERS AND THEIR OFFICES.

Also, a Complete List of all Public Societies and Organizations, with their Officers; also a comprehensive statement of all State and Municipal Legislation, affecting the City, in detail; also, a review of the

#### HISTORY OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND,

With a detailed statement of the present and proposed operations of the "Water Front Company," and the Pacific Railroad Company, with an account of the relations of those Companies to the City in the past. Also a variety of other useful information.

COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY

#### B. F. STILWELL.

1869.

Title page of Oakland's first city directory (1869) shows the breadth of information these resources contain. (OHR)

1880, 1900, and 1910 provide a way to find these people.) The 19th century registers give each voter's full name, birthplace, age at time of registration, occupation, town of residence, place and date of naturalization, and date of voter registration. In the 1867 register we see: Joseph Dieves, hotel-keeper, residing in Oakland, 50 years old, from Germany, naturalized in San Francisco on October 11, 1856, and registered to vote in Alameda County on Aug. 28, 1866. We now know where Mr. Dieves came from, that he came to San Francisco as early as 1856, and his approximate date of birth. The miniature history is growing.

The next query might be simply, "Who was Mr. Dieves?" Beyond the questions of how long he lived in Oakland, where he came from, and what he did for a living, we

really would like to know who he was, what he was like, what were his interests in life. Frequently, though not always, these questions can be answered through the Oakland History Room's "Local History File," a card catalog which indexes thousands of names appearing in books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers. On a given subject of local history, be it a person, building, business, street, or event, the Local History File will indicate specific sources of information.

Looking under the name of Mr. Dieves, we find three references to books containing biographical sketches. J.M. Guinn's History of the State of California, 1907, tells us that he was born August 24, 1816, in Heimetzheim on the Rhine, learned the trade of cabinetmaker, traveled about Europe, and came to the United States in 1847, settling briefly in Boston. He arrived in California in 1853 via the Isthmus of Panama, hoping to make a fortune in the Gold Rush. Failing in this endeavor, as did many others, he came to Oakland, practiced the carpenter's trade, bought five acres in San Leandro and established the Eagle Hotel, and finally, where we met him in the directories, became the proprietor of the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Oakland. After a career as a hotelier, he became a partner in the Oakland Brewery and lived at "No. 318 Telegraph Avenue, where he passed the evening of his days." He died in August 1889, leaving four children and a wife Gertrude. Our biographer informs us that Mr. Dieves "had firm faith in the future of the city of Oakland and invested his means liberally in real estate and in building many of the first residences of the city...He was a liberal and public-spirited citizen and always gave freely of his time and means toward the upbuilding of public interests." A further reference in the Local History File leads to Wood's History of Alameda County, 1883, which contains more biographical particulars and a picture of Joseph Dieves, revealing a kindly if rather stern bearded gentleman.

The Local History File can also be used to locate facts and pictures on the subject's business. The topic "Oakland Brewery" leads us to this piece of puffery in Elliott's Oakland and Surroundings, 1885: "...no housewife could be cleaner about her work than are the employees of the Oakland



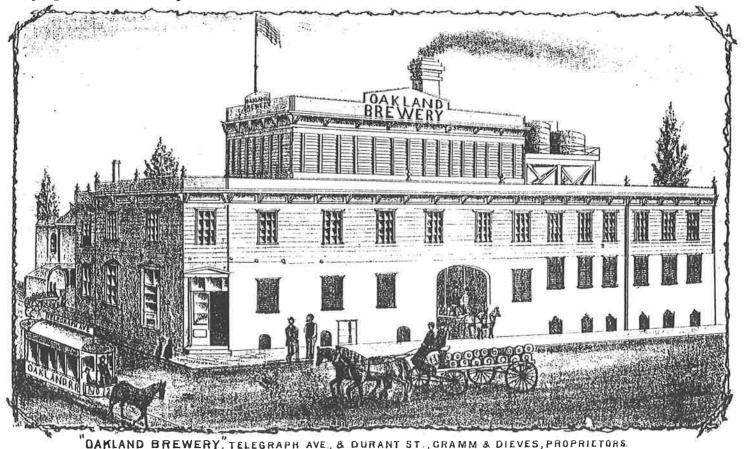
Brewery. Every room is kept as sweet as a milk pantry should be. There are no unpleasant odors about the place. Water and muscle are unsparingly used. Tidiness reigns all about." A drawing of the brewery appearing in the same book attests to the immaculate splendor of the firm.

The abundant facts provided by these sources enable us to check yet a further vital source: newspapers. The library's Newspaper Room contains microfilm copies of all of Oakland's daily papers, from 1868 to the present. Knowing the exact date of a person's death allows us to check for obituaries, which frequently give more information about the individual. A perusal of the Oakland Enquirer for the period of Mr. Dieves' demise in August 1889 reveals a lengthy notice bannered "Death of Joseph Dieves: a pioneer and well known citizen passes away." Among many now familiar particulars, one learns that Mr. Dieves was "a genial, jovial man and familiarly known as 'Uncle Joe Dieves' by his many friends. He was a man of kindly, generous impulses, and highly esteemed among his associates." He

was survived by his widow Gertrude and two children, Joseph L. Dieves Jr. and Mrs. I. Surryhne. Knowing the names of survivors may help the researcher to trace any living descendants, who may be sources of further information.

Early Oakland newspapers have also been indexed, and the Oakland History Room currently has indexes covering the period 1869-1894. A check of these indexes shows an obituary in the Enquirer for Mrs. Dieves who died in April 1892. This reveals a distasteful bit of marital parsimony: "When the husband died he left an estate valued at from \$150,000 to \$200,000, but the will provided that the widow should only be allowed necessary expenses" -- a seeming blot upon the escutcheon of kindly "Uncle Joe." The index also yields the following in the Enquirer of May 20, 1890: "The Dieves Monument--a granite shaft and bust of Italian marble," which was to be placed over the earthly remains of Mr. Dieves in St. Mary's Cemetery at a price of \$2500. Genial, kindly, but perhaps neither generous nor modest.

The last, and necessarily final, question



Dieves & Kramm's Oakland Brewery at Telegraph and Durant (now 19th Street), depicted in 1885. (Oakland History Room)





1869 photo shows Dieves' Oakland Brewery at its first location, 9th and Broadway. Library's print is captioned "IOOF building at 11th and Franklin shows on left, Brayton Hall in center distance. These have just (1925) been razed." (OHR)

concerns the manner of our subject's earthly departure. While the fact of death is adumbrated in the obituary, the mode of leaving is sometimes only vaguely stated. For those desiring more precise information the History Room holds the birth and death certificates for Oakland for the period 1870 to 1904, with indexes. The certificates are filed alphabetically, month by month. The death certificates indicate cause of death, birthplace of parents, length of residency in the city, and place of burial. The certificate for Joseph Dieves discloses that he died of "vascular disease of the heart" at the age of 72, as attested by Dr. D.D. Crowley. The form is stamped by Henry Evers, Undertaker.

The Oakland History Room also has an extensive collection of photographs of Oakland, which includes pictures of persons, their houses, and places of business. A look at this collection reveals an 1869 view of the Oakland Brewery at its first location at the northeast corner of 9th and Broadway. The view also provides a peek at Oakland when Mr. Dieves first appeared on the scene.

Extensive biographical sources in the Oakland Main Library's History and Literature department may also give facts about a local person. The Newspaper Room's indexes

to San Francisco papers, covering the period from 1894 to 1949, may further fill the picture of an individual's life.

And so ends our quest for the life and times of Joseph Dieves—but not quite. The Room's newspaper clipping file, kept from 1920 to 1978 and covering local news articles from Oakland and San Francisco papers, shows an obituary dated March 17, 1957, for Joseph A. Dieves, grandson of "Uncle Joe," who died at the age of 87 leaving a number of descendants. The library's extensive collection of out—of—town telephone books may reveal some relatives of our subject. Perhaps the story is only beginning...

If, as some wise professor once stated, "the best history is biography," we have had, through our travels into the life of Joseph Dieves, a true glimpse, in miniature, of Oakland history, a piece of the past made vital through the life of one of the city's many, many citizens. The Oakland History Room provides a multitude of such glimpses—histories in miniature.

--William Sturm
Librarian, Oakland History Room

Mr. Dieves and his brewery are featured in a special exhibit titled "Die Oaklander: Oakland's German Community," at the Oakland History Room through December 15. The Oakland History Room at the Main Library is open Tues.—Sat., 273-3222. Biographical researchers are welcomed by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, 273-3941.



# **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.

#### ARTS IN THE PARK?

As reported in the Tribune in September, Preservation Park may soon emerge as an arts center. Bramalea Pacific, the Toronto based company which is developing City Center, has entered into an agreement with the Oakland Redevelopment Agency to complete the 11 remaining buildings in Preservation Park, and manage the whole project for 10 years, after which it will return to the city. Completion is scheduled for late next year, with the exteriors rehabilitated and the interiors redone. Because of budget constraints, the interiors will not be restored to their original condition, but will retain the essential layouts and features like ceiling height and window and door openings. Susanne Hirshen, the project manager, sees the completed project as an arts related complex, and is negotiating with several arts and non-profit groups to lease space in the buildings. Hirshen comes to the project with the experience of founding and directing the Festival at the Lake, a major annual outdoor event showcasing Oakland and Lake Merritt.

OHA has been following the progress of Preservation Park and is currently interested in the treatment of the interiors of the buildings. Initial proposals called for gutting to the studs and installing modern wall surfaces and lighting. This was initially seen as the only economically feasible way to complete the project. However, in late September OHA representatives, along with some Landmarks Board members and Bramalea project staff, toured the interiors of the buildings. The ll unrestored buildings, many of which have been open to weather, vandalized, and used as impromptu housing over the years, vary greatly in both condition and architectural detail. There is a great deal of water damage to some, and others have been stripped of moldings, fireplaces, and doors. However, a surprising amount remains, both particular

features like bay windows, molding, and plasterwork, and the generally intact character of several of the houses.

In a report on the tour, OHA urged Bramalea to consider the houses on an individual basis in developing their schematic design for the project. At least two, the Buckley house and the Hunt house, are substantially intact and very interesting architecturally. In others, certain features could be retained to give a flavor of the original styling. The flexibility of a building-by-building approach could help keep the project within its budget while retaining enough detail to provide variety and interest to the interiors. —Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ NEIGHBORHOOD NEGOTIATES

The Adams Point Preservation Association, in a series of meetings with developer Gilbert Chan, has been negotiating to save a 1906 Julia Morgan designed house at 401 Lee Street (see Summer OHA News). The initial proposal was to build 55 units on the site of 401 Lee Street and its neighbor, 405 Lee. The developer has now come up with a design which would save the Morgan house and convert it to four units, and develop a 3 story, 22 unit complex along the side and rear of the property. The materials and roof height of the new portion would be similar to the Julia Morgan. Following a meeting in September, the neighborhood group asked that the following conditions be met:

- (1) 401 Lee Street saved on site and the exterior kept as originally designed.
- (2) The design of the new portion refined to soften its bulk and provide more attractive outside corridor entrances.
- (3) Adequate parking for the new project.
- (4) An oak tree on the property retained.
- (5) The developer to seek city landmark and National Register status for the building, use the Historic Building Code in any rehabilitation or conversion work, and confirm the economic feasibility of the plan before proceeding through the city process.
  (6) Approval of the project by the Adams
- (6) Approval of the project by the Adams
  Point group would be contingent on approval
  of final plans as submitted to the city.

Chan was asked to work on cost estimates and refining the design for another meeting in October. --Carolyn Douthat



#### TASK FORCE

The Historic Preservation Task Force, established by the City Planning Commission and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, began meeting in July. Task force members include representatives from neighborhood groups, business and civic organizations, and preservation and design groups. The task force met for an orientation in July, followed in September by two meetings to review historic preservation programs and legislation at the local, state, and national levels. These meetings included a slide presentation illustrating the Citywide Preliminary Inventory and the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey.

The task force will be meeting monthly in an effort to identify preservation issues and opportunities in Oakland, and come up with a statement of policy and implementation for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. Given the varied interests represented on the task force, these meetings will provide an excellent opportunity for discussion of the use of preservation regulation and incentives as a way to foster the economic and cultural health of the city. Many of the objections which are raised when preservation issues come before city bodies may be answered by a clearer understanding of the purposes and benefits of preservation.

As part of the first review session, staff presented a background paper on the importance of historic preservation to Oakland. In brief, the paper suggests that preservation offers a number of tangible benefits to a city, particularly one with the advantages and problems which Oakland has. As a labor-intensive process, rehabilitation creates 1.6 times as many jobs per dollar as new construction. Properly managed, rehabilitation is significantly less expensive than new construction, and offers an opportunity for the creation and retention of low cost housing and unique commercial locations. Preservation creates a sense of community identity, which is an asset in attracting new business. The charge of the task force will be to translate these general benefits into a set of policies and programs which can work in Oakland. The job is supposed to take at least a year. -- Carolyn Douthat



Latest design for Hotel II still raises questions about compatibility. (courtesy of City Planning Department)

#### ■ HOTEL II ALIVE AGAIN

In July, the City Council gave preliminary approval on a conceptual design for Hotel II in the 1100 block of Broadway. The developer, Richard Hadley, has developed hotel projects in Seattle and resort hotels in other parts of the U.S. and works with the Warwick Hotel group, most of whose hotels are in Europe and on the Eastern seaboard. Council approval at this stage was needed to enable Hadley to seek financing for the project, by authorizing the Office of Economic Development and Employment to begin negotiating a Disposition and Development Agreement. This past spring, OHA and Oakland Design Advocates heard a presentation on the hotel, and reviewed the proposed design. Since then, OEDE and the Planning Department have met with the State Office of Historic Preservation to review the design. Under the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement executed in 1984 by the City, the State Office, and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, any design must be approved by the State Office prior to issuance of city demolition permits for the buildings on the site. State Office is involved because federal money will be used to demolish the 1100 Broadway Building annex, part of a National Register property (also a City Landmark).



Preliminary review of the design by the state was not enthusiastic. According to a letter from the State Office, the project as designed does not meet the guidelines for a hotel project on that site which are contained in the EIR, nor does it meet the Secretary of Interior's quidelines for new construction affecting historic structures. Both of these are conditions contained in the Memorandum of Agreement, and until the project meets the guidelines, it cannot be approved. Council approval of the design concept does not affect the formal city review process, which will include environmental review, landmark and S-8 design review, and several conditional use permits.

OHA board member Randolph Langenbach, an assistant professor of architecture at UC Berkeley, used the hotel project as the subject of an exercise for his graduate design students. Working from the developer's latest design, and the existing size and site requirements, students were asked to provide design solutions which would respond to the existing Broadway streetscape. These alternatives may be presented to the developer as examples of designs which address the EIR guidelines for the project.

—-Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ MANUFACTURED HOUSING

In the past months, public concern has developed over the placement of manufactured housing in older residential neighborhoods. As the housing crunch increases in the Bay Area and the price of housing escalates, developers have found that manufactured units can be brought in and sold or operated at a profit, often as rental units. Concern has arisen because of the appearance of the units, and their lack of compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods. Most of the units about which neighbors complain are in the flatlands, often in historic neighborhoods.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing in September to review neighborhood concerns and developers' opposition to increased regulation. Under state law, manufactured housing cannot be subject to any regulation which does not also apply to single family homes, except as to siding, overhangs, and roofing material. Community suggestions include instituting design re-

view for residential construction citywide, and a moratorium on manufactured housing until a new regulatory scheme can be adopted. A staff report outlined alternative steps which the city could take, including design review for all residential development, design review in those areas where the problem seems critical, or requiring a conditional use permit for placement of the housing in any but single family zones.

The Commission has recently heard a number of applications relating to manufactured housing where additional permits were being requested, such as waiver of parking or landscaping requirements, and is not unfamiliar with the design of the units. In addition, speakers from the community brought photos of some of the most offensive examples of the type. Developers and industry spokesmen at the hearing acknowledged that while compatible and attractive manufactured housing is available, there have been abuses. Their position is that no additional regulation is required because informal negotiations with the Zoning Department would result in attractive designs. However, in the many cases in which no discretionary permits are required, additional regulation seems the only way to insure that some sensitivity will be shown.

The issue of the design of infill housing in historic neighborhoods, particularly manufactured units, is receiving national attention. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mid-Atlantic office, has sponsored several workshops on the subject and is co-sponsoring a design competition for architecture students, to be judged at the National Trust Annual Meeting in Cincinnati in October. ——Carolyn Douthat



Manufactured units like these at 2127 23rd Avenue have prompted a call for design review. (photo: Chris Roberts)

#### ■ CAN YOU SHOP IN AN OLD HIGH SCHOOL?

Sometime this fall, the City Council will be asked to approve a Disposition and Development Agreement for a project on the site of the old University High School on Martin Luther King Jr. Way between 58th and Aileen Streets. Recently used as a film set, the school was a feeder high school to the University of California, later Merritt College, and Oakland Tech's temporary site during rehabilitation of the Broadway campus. It was acquired by the city from the school district in the early 1980s.

Built in 1922-23, the Spanish Colonial complex was designed by Charles W. Dickey, who also designed the Claremont Hotel. The main portion consists of classrooms and administration on three sides, an auditorium at the 58th Street end, and a library in the center surrounded by courtyards, where wisteria and sycamore have gone wild. The complex has been identified as potentially eligible for the National Register.

This summer OHA was asked by the city to review development plans for the site. Since then, several meetings and site tours have been held with the Office of Economic Development and Employment and the developer, North Oakland Redevelopment Associates. NORA, whose general partner Delaware Development Corporation carried out the Delaware Street Historic District project in Berkeley, was among three firms considered when the project was advertised in 1987.

The site has a long history of neighborhood hopes and disappointments. Located in a neighborhood of single family homes, the vacant complex has been poorly maintained and attracts unwelcome users. An earlier plan to retain the complex for a wide variety of community, housing, and commercial uses fell through, and the property was returned to city control in 1986.

The present plan was developed after a series of community meetings. After negotiation within the community, it was agreed that the project should include a senior center, day care, supermarket, and market rate housing, and that the existing buildings should be kept. The resulting request for proposals in 1987 specified that the auditorium and the main building be kept. The plan also provided that the city would retain control of the main building, and



University High School in 1934, an impressive Spanish Colonial presence on the street. (Oakland History Room)

mothball it for future use. This mothballed building turned out to be unattractive to prospective supermarket tenants and, subsequent to its selection as developer, NORA requested that the condition be removed, and city staff has agreed.

As now proposed, the development will contain housing along Dover Street, retail and community space in the center of the block, and parking along King. Additional buildings will be developed as tenants are found, such as a small office building and a family restaurant.

If this plan is followed, demolition of all the existing buildings will be necessary. Since federal money was used to purchase the site, and the buildings are of possible historic significance, federal Section 106 review is required. To get around this potentially lengthy process, city staff has been directed to explore the possibility of replacing the federal funds with local money.

Given the size and location of the site, either reuse or new development is bound to have a strong effect on the surrounding neighborhood. The urban residential character of the area, coupled with the recent history of major supermarkets leaving Oakland, makes any shopping center of this size worthy of careful review.

In discussions with OEDE and the developer, OHA has emphasized that the needs of the project do not preclude use of the existing buildings, and that retaining the buildings might provide more flexibility for future uses. A landmark to many in Oakland and the East Bay, the exterior of the main complex is intact and, due to its



open plan, could be adapted to many of the uses desired by the community. An alternative plan has been suggested which would save the west portion of the main building, and NORA and OEDE, though expressing reservations, have said it will be seriously considered as an option.

The development agreement is supposed to be finalized and presented to Council in the next month or so, and, if approved, will enable the developer to secure financing, and the city to begin the environmental review process. ——Carolyn Douthat

#### ■ SETBACK FOR THE ROTUNDA

On October 4 the City Council voted to cancel an agreement to lease office space from Myron Zimmerman's Rotunda Building at 15th and Broadway. Citing pressing need to move the city's data processing division to larger quarters, council voted to move into Bramalea's building at 505 14th Street where the city already rents office space for mayor and council. The city agreed with Zimmerman last March to lease space in the Rotunda. According to the Tribune, Zimmerman originally planned to spend \$30 million renovating the domed 1912 Beaux Arts building and have it ready for stores, restaurants, and offices by late 1985. Overruns have pushed the cost to \$48 million, and now the primary lender, First Interstate Mortgage Company, is being sold and informs Zimmerman he must seek other financing. The Rotunda has been described by Mayor Wilson as "critical" to the future of the city, and in fact the council has pledged a \$5 million loan to the project once private financing is in place. The office lease was to further cement city commitment to the project. Now that the city has withdrawn, financing may be harder to secure, stalling the project even further. -- Annalee Allen

#### ■ TREASURE ISLAND TREASURE THREATENED

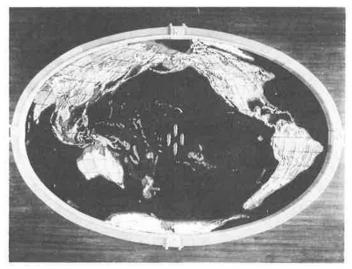
A unique piece of Bay Area history is in jeopardy. Antonio Sotomayor's Pacific Basin Fountain, one of a handful of original artworks remaining on Treasure Island from the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939-40, is interfering with construction plans. The base wants it out of the way. The colorful, glazed relief map of the

Pacific Basin (approximately 50' x 30') was the centerpiece of "Pacific House," demolished in the early 1940s, at which time base officials had the fountain moved to an outdoor location. Because it has been moved from its original site, the fountain may not now be eligible for protection by listing on the National Register.

The Fountain is encircled by 16 original Art Deco "Pacific Unity" statues, designed by local artists. The artworks represent the architectural and political theme of "The Pageant of the Pacific," which ended, ironically, as the United States prepared to enter the Pacific war.

Sotomayor, who died in 1985, was called "San Francisco's Artist Laureate" by the Chronicle. His widow, Grace, says that the fountain was designed to remain on Treasure Island permanently as a public monument. The Treasure Island Museum hopes to create a garden setting for the fountain and the statues in front of the museum building, the only public space on the island. The cost of moving the fountain has been estimated at \$100,000 or more.

The garden would commemorate the "Magic City" of fifty years ago, before Treasure Island was loaned to the military to provide a "temporary" local base for the emergency in the Pacific. After a battle with San Francisco's City Hall, in 1943 the military took permanent possession of the island. Persons interested in saving the fountain may contact the writer at (415)524-2015. —Anne Schnoebelen



Antonio Sotomayor's Pacific Basin Fountain, seen from the roof of Pacific House. The four brass whales at the center spouted jets of water. (courtesy of Grace Sotomayor)



# **OHA** Update

#### ■ PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

OHA celebrated an outstanding year at its annual meeting on October 20 at the Park Place Restaurant in Lakeside Park. Scott Stoller presented a slide lecture on the work of the Lake Merritt Community Assistance Team, a group affiliated with the Northern California Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. As a special ASLA project, the team has been studying ways to improve Lakeside Park and the lake environment, focusing on traffic patterns, design amenities, natural forces, and more. The study will be presented to the City Council in 1989. OHA members at the meeting were asked for their input.

As OHA enters its ninth year, I am proud to see how much the organization has accomplished. A successful spring house tour in Crocker Highlands and a well-coordinated effort to protect the Christian Science church on Lake Merritt are just two examples of how dedicated OHA members have made a positive impact upon our city's cultural image this past year.

Much credit belongs to outgoing president Les Hausrath and the leadership he has shown during the past three years. The church effort in particular took many hours of conferences with city staff, councilmembers and their aides, and church representatives. Les and other Preservation Action committee members sought a workable solution. Although the building may not be saved, the fight demonstrated conclusively the need for preservation issues to be fully incorporated in Oakland's comprehensive plan. Les brought his professional courtroom talents to bear when speaking before the City Council that memorable evening. Though retiring as president, Les remains on the board and will continue to represent OHA on the City Assets Committee. One of the strengths of this organization has been the willingness of past officers to stay on and advise new board members.

The three board members who are stepping down, Ed Phillips, Randolph Langenbach, and Deborah Shefler, have all made significant contributions to OHA and I sincerely hope



Lake Merritt about 1920: Community Assistance Team's study of lake amenities was featured at Annual Meeting.

they will continue to advise us. Randolph's particular expertise with reinforced concrete and seismic stability insured our credibility on the church issue. Deborah's program ideas and assistance with the house tour and summer walks have been invaluable. Ed Phillips contributed graciousness and maturity to our efforts. The Fernwood house tour's success was largely his doing. His presence at board meetings will be missed.

Our current board is made up of hard workers and I look forward to serving as president, knowing that Bill McLetchie is guarding the bank account, Fred Mitchell is recording the history, and Julie Barron is the intrepid VP. Once again Mary Jane Mc-Conville is chairing the house tour, and Sally Nielsen as program chair has already begun planning informative programs for the coming year. Watch for announcement of a holiday party at Preservation Park, and plan now to attend or volunteer at the 1989 spring house tour.

One of the things I am most proud of is the OHA News. Thanks to editor Betty Marvin, photographer Phil Bellman, and editorial board members Dean Yabuki and Carolyn Douthat, the quarterly News continues to be an outstanding publication. We always welcome your contributions—history, preservation issues, correspondence, controversy, news of OHA members and their doings.

Our two incoming board members, Claudia Albano and Kirk Peterson, will be valuable additions to OHA. Claudia is an aide to Supervisor Don Perata and a longtime Fruitvale neighborhood activist. Kirk is an architect whose work with OHA dates back to the first phase of the Cohen House project.

We have really come to depend on Helen



Lore, an administrator and publicist without equal. Thanks to her publicity and coordination, the 1988 summer walking tours broke all records for attendance. Helen's staff support enables the board to carry out the many ambitious plans we have to further the goals of OHA.

More than 150 new members have joined this year, and we thank Lynn Fonfa for guiding us in this essential effort. For all of you who have joined OHA for the first time this year, a sincere welcome, and thank you for your support. As you receive renewal notices, I hope you will take a few minutes to let us know how you think we're doing by filling in the member questionnaire. It will enable the board to be responsive to you—the members. Don't hesitate to become more involved: this is your preservation organization, the one that is making a difference in Oakland.

——Annalee Allen

#### ■ OHA AND HISTORIC HOUSES AT ARTS EXPLOSION

OHA hosted a table at the Arts Explosion at Estuary Park on Labor Day weekend, along with representatives from Dunsmuir, Camron-Stanford House, and Peralta Hacienda. Fairgoers received a new handout on Oakland's Historic Houses. This is the first joint effort of the new Oakland Association of Historic Houses. The group's purpose is to publicize the fact that Oakland owns several historically significant properties exemplifying the city's diverse architectural heritage. They range in style from the 1864 Gothic Revival Mosswood Cottage, to the 1899 Classical Revival Dunsmuir Mansion. The city's other properties include the DeFremery House in West Oakland, 1864 Italianate, and the Talbot House, an 1890 vernacular farmhouse located at Knowland Park Zoo.

Camron-Stanford and Dunsmuir are house museums maintained by their own nonprofit organizations. Both are popular sites for weddings and other special event rentals. Mosswood and DeFremery are maintained by Parks and Recreation and used for classes and youth activities. Peralta Hacienda is a community center. The East Bay Zoological Society plans to renovate the Talbot farmhouse and use it as an interpretive center. Although the purpose and activities at the

properties vary, all are intended to be used and enjoyed by the people of Oakland.

The group hopes to organize more joint activities in the future, including a guided bus tour to all the houses next spring during Preservation week.

For a copy of the information sheet which lists the phone numbers and addresses of Oakland's Historic Houses, call the OHA office, 763-9218. --Annalee Allen

#### ■ BAY AREA PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

Mosswood Cottage was the location for a Bay Area preservation group meeting cosponsored by the California Preservation Foundation and OHA. The workshop took place Sunday, August 14, in conjunction with the CPF board meeting in Oakland that weekend. Representatives from Bay Area preservation organizations compared ways that their city governments deal with preservation, land use, zoning, design review, etc., and discussed other preservation topics.

Special arrangements were made with the Office of Parks and Recreation to open the Mosswood Cottage, and participants took an informal tour of the 1864 Gothic cottage. In A Living Legacy, Mark Wilson calls Mosswood "by far the most splendid and impressive example of Gothic Revival in the East Bay." Built for civic leader J. Mora Moss, the house and gardens were purchased by the City of Oakland in 1911 and have been used as a park and arts center since then. (See "Mosswood Cottage: A History," by William Sturm, OHA News, Vol. 2, No. 5.)

--Annalee Allen



Mosswood Cottage, an 1864 Gothic gem, is one of six cityowned Historic Houses, and site of a recent preservation workshop. (Marijan Pooshs)



# City Landmarks Board Actions

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

One new Board appointment has been made (and one vacancy remains) since resumes of new appointees were last published. Joining Gordon Henderson, Bert Bertolero, Jean Spees, Marji Shaw, and Frederick Hertz is:

Anthony Pegram, who was born and raised in Washington, D.C., and studied civil engineering at the Indiana Institute of Technology at Fort Wayne. Following graduation he came to California and was associated with several small firms in the Bay Area. He is now an engineer with American President Lines. As vice-president of a consulting firm, he was involved in the project of moving the Herrick House from Pill Hill to Preservation Park. His interest in landmarks is a result of this work. He was appointed in August.

#### JULY

Regular meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum. (There were then two vacancies.)

#### AUGUST

Board reviewed recent alterations at Macky Hall at California College of Arts and Crafts (see May LPAB report, in Summer OHA News). A 1920s addition was removed, and architect Tim Andersen proposed to restore the building's 1880s appearance. Since there is no complete documentation of the original design, one condition of approval was that no construction begin until staff (i.e. Chris Buckley) reviewed fabric exposed by removal of the addition to see what could be learned about the original from it. Because this condition was not observed during work on the northeast corner, Board required disassembly of a partly constructed roof and cornice. (Staff determined that the original roof was 6 to 8 inches lower than the one being built, and

brackets and soffit were different from the Andersen proposal.) Proposed paint colors, somewhat modified at staff's suggestion, were approved by the Board.

Frederick Hertz reported on the Historic Preservation Task Force, including representatives from the Landmarks Board, the City Planning Commission, historic preservation and neighborhood groups, the business community, and city staff. Its purpose is to draft a Historic Preservation Element for the Oakland Comprehensive Plan which reflects the concerns of all interested groups when the proposal emerges in approximately one year. Frederick Hertz, Marji Shaw, and Bert Bertolero represent the Landmarks Board on the Task Force (see p.6).

Secretary Chris Buckley updated the Board on continuing landmark issues (see Summer OHA News). Dedesignation of the Fricke Building and Wetmore House Group (565 to 577 11th Street) was completed by the City Council, and demolition of the buildings allowed. The house at 3148 Fruitvale Avenue was sold to Kirk Castor, who planned to restore it and live in it. Efforts to move the Simpson House (524 23rd St.) were continuing, but the process appeared to be taking longer than it should. The house built for Jack London's wife at 519 31st Street was to be demolished; an ad offering it for moving received 10 or 12 responses but none feasible, releasing the owner from the Planning Department's condition that the building be moved.

Board noted that the California Hotel at 35th and San Pablo has been added to the National Register, and that the Preservation Fair was not being held this year.



California Hotel (Clay Burrell, architect, 1929), placed on the National Register. Oakland Community Housing Inc. is rehabilitating it as low-income housing. (Survey photo)



#### SEPTEMBER

Design review of alterations to the land-mark Liberty Hall Building and Annex (1483 8th Street at Chester, formerly the Western Market Building: see March 1987 OHA News) was continued to October, in order to have questions answered by a representative of the owner, Jubilee West, Inc.

Board began design review of a project by architect Henry Chang, Jr., for a seven-unit apartment building at 686 10th Street in the S-7 Preservation Combining Zone, Preservation Park District. The site is a vacant lot between two Victorian houses.

Board heard a presentation by Susanne Hirshen of Bramalea Pacific, the new developers of Preservation Park, indicating that work may resume in about three months. The exteriors of the remaining buildings will be restored as accurately as possible but interiors will be done in the "most cost effective" way. Around 60% of the space will be rented to nonprofit and cultural organizations and 40% to businesses. They hope for completion by Spring 1990. The Board was invited on a walking tour of the project, including interiors (see Briefing).

Frederick Hertz requested that the Board be informed before any demolition occurs at the Grove Street Campus (University High School, old Merritt College: see Briefing); Buckley assured them that they would be.

#### OCTOBER

Board reviewed proposed storefronts for two of the Victorian Row buildings. Because the developers are using the historic preservation tax credits, the work had to conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines, which require that rebuilt portions be "contemporary compatible" rather than neo-historic in design. Board approved these designs, and colors for one of the buildings, but requested further staff review of paint colors for the other, which they were seeing for the first time.

Review of Henry Chang's project on 10th Street continued. Materials, roof form, and porch treatments were modified to fit the building into the historic district.

Architect Larry Mortimer, representing Jubilee West, explained the work to be done at Liberty Hall. Restoration of the main building would be conservative - "reattach things that are loose, replace things we



Liberty Hall, at 8th and Chester Streets, housed Marcus Garvey and Father Divine movements in the 1920s. Nominated to National Register, and being rehabbed by Jubilee West.

know are missing." The one-story annex needed an off-street wall replaced, and Board was concerned about the high-security design proposed, but approved the project.

Buckley reported on some landmarks issues related to the Planning Department's draft West Oakland Redevelopment Plan, and Board members added others. These included the need for design standards for city-sponsored rehab or new construction; provision for city acquisition of vacant buildings for rehabilitation or moving to vacant lots; security for vacant structures; and a process for abating code violations other than condemning the buildings. Board would communicate these concerns to the Planning Commission.

In its capacity as a Certified Local Government, Board reviewed and endorsed National Register nominations for three Oakland properties, the Locke House at 3911 Harrison, Liberty Hall, and Kahn's Department Store (The Rotunda), the first two already city landmarks. Board discussed why the Rotunda wasn't a landmark: the owner was a known supporter of preservation, but wanted to finish the project without having to go through additional design review, which Board acknowledged was cumbersome.

Officers were elected for the coming year: Frederick Hertz, chair, and Marji Shaw, vice chair. Outgoing chair Gordon Henderson congratulated the Board on having achieved "greater respect for who we are and what we're about."

--Kathy Olson & Betty Marvin



# **OHA** Calendar

The OHA Calendar lists events, activities, and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to OHA members. To submit items for listings, contact Oakland Heritage Alliance.

# **Upcoming Activities**

- Through Wed 30 Nov M/W/Th/Sat 10-6, Tu/F 12-9, Sun 1-5 On the Campaign Trail in San Francisco: 19th Century Political Cartoons From the Satirical Journal The Wasp Exhibit. Phelan Hall, San Francisco Main Library, Civic Center, San Francisco. Free. 558-3191
- Through Thurs 15 Dec Tu/Th Noon-8, W/F 10-5:30, Sat 1-5:30. Die Oaklander: Oakland's German Community Exhibit. Oakland History Room, Oakland Main Library, second floor, 125 14th St. at Oak, Free.OHR, 273-3222.
- Sun 6 Nov 1:00-3:30pm Sidewalks of Berkeley Walking Tour. Ken Duffy, Sidewalk Historian & Betty Marvin, Architectural Historian. California Historical Society. 2620 Piedmont Ave. between Derby & Parker Sts., Berkeley. \$10/CHS member, \$13/General. CHS, 567-1848.
- Thurs 10 Nov 7:00pm-9:00pm Boom, Bust, and the Coming Storm: Interwar Years, 1915-1940. Gray Brechin, Architectural Historian. San Francisco Heritage Lecture Series. UCSF, Laurel Heights Campus, 3333 California St. at Presidio, S F. \$12.50/Heritage member, \$15/General. Contact Heritage, 441-3000.
- Sat 12 Nov 10:00-11:30am <u>Presidio Tree Tour</u>. Friends of the Urban Forest. Meet at the Presidio Gate, Pacific & Presidio Streets, San Francisco. Free. FUF, 543-5000.
- 2:30-4:30pm Redress Forum: Recognition & Update on 12 NOV 2:30-4:30pm Redress Forum: Recognition & Update on House Resolution 442. Japanese American Citizens League. Internment redress info, handouts, and applications. Issei Memorial Hall, Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Northern California, 1840 Sutter St., San Francisco. Contact George Kondo, 921-5225. Sat 12 Nov
- Thurs 17 Nov 7:00pm-8:00pm The Growing Dilemmas of Growth:

  Postwar. 1940-1988. Gray Brechin, Architectural Historian. San
  Francisco Heritage Lecture Series. UCSF, Laurel Heights Campus,
  3333 California St. at Presidio, San Francisco. \$12.50/Heritage
  member, \$15/General Public. Contact Heritage, 441-3000.
- s 17 Nov 8:00pm The Architecture of Yoknapatawpha: The Bui Environment of William Faulkner's World. Thomas Hines, Historian, School of Architecture and Urban Planning, UCLA. College of Environmental Design Lecture Series. 112 Wurster Hall, UC Berkeley. Free. Thurs 17 Nov 8:00pm
- Sat 19 Nov 2-4pm Redress Forum: Recognition & Update on House Resolution 442. Japanese American Citizens League. Internment redress info and applications. James Moore Theatre, Oakland Museum, 1000 Oak St. For info. contact Tony Yokomizo, 530-7850 (evenings).
- 7-9pm Redress Forum: Recognition & Update on House Sat 19 Nov Resolution 442. Japanese American Citizens League. Internment redress info and applications. South Alameda Buddhist Church, 32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd., Union City. For info. contact Ted Inouye, 797-3075.
- Sun 20 Nov 1-3pm <u>Berkeley Art Deco Walking Tour</u>. Michael Crowe, Architectural Historian. Art Deco Society of California. Meet in front of United Artists Theater, 2274 Shattuck, Berkeley. \$3.00/ADSC member, \$5.00/General Public. ADSC, 552-DECO.
- ov-18 Dec Fri/Sat/Sun 10am~7pm Christmas At Dunsmuir.

  Dunsmuir House. Holiday tradition with open house, exhibits, marketplace, and shops. \$9/General, \$8/Senior, \$3/6-16. 26 Nov-18 Dec Dunsmuir House, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. 562-0328.
- Wed 30 Nov 8pm Recent Works, William DiNapoli & Miles Berger Architects, Berkeley. College of Environmental Design Lecture Series. 112 Wurster Hall, UCB. Free.
- Sat 3 Dec-Sun 4 Dec 10-4. 3 Dec-Sun 4 Dec 10-4. <u>Luther Burbank Home and Gardens Holiday</u> <u>Open House</u>. Luther Burbank House, Santa Rosa Av. at Sonoma Av., Santa Rosa. Free. 707-576-5115.
- 10 Dec 9-5 <u>Sacred Places of San Francisco</u> Tour II. Ruth Hendricks Willard, Author. Calif. Historical Society. Meet at Whittier Mansion, 2090 Jackson, San Francisco. Transportation & lunch included. Reservations required. CHS, 2090 Jackson St., S.F. 94109, 567-1848.

Sat 10 Dec 10am-Noon Bernal Heights Tree Tour. Friends of the Urban Forest. Meet at Triangle Park, Coleridge & Coso Streets, S.F.. Free. FUF, 543-5000.

Thurs 15 December, 5-7 pm, Preservation Park, details TBA.

KLAND OHA Holiday Party. Oakland Heritage Alliance, 763-9218.

- OHA Holiday Party. Oakland Heritage Annual Party. Oakland Heri reservations essential. GraceAnn Walden, The Grand Tour Company,
  - Sat/Sun 11-12 Feb.1989 10-5 <u>San Francisco Postcard Sale</u>. Sheraton Airport Hotel, Highway 101 (Broadway exit below SF International Airport), San Mateo County. \$3.50.
  - Sat 18 Feb Evening 5th Annual Art Deco Preservation Ball. Art Deco Society of California. Paramount Theatre, 21st Street at Broadway, Oakland. Celebrating 50th anniversary of opening of the Treasure Island Fair. Cost TBA. Reservations required. ADSC, 109 Minna St. Suite 399, San Francisco, 94105, 552-DECO.

Sunday in April, TBA, Oakland Heritage Alliance House Tour. Watch for announcement, or volunteer now: 763-9218. HERITAGE ALLIANCE

Watch for announcements of other 1989 OHA activities: tentative plans include Bill Sturm's slide show on Mayor Davie, Port boat tour with Charles Wollenberg, lecture by Richard Orsi of Hayward State on public history and preservation, and MUCH MORE.

Fri 9 June-Sun 11 June Art Deco Weekend By the Bay. Society of California. Walking tours, Art Deco Sale, and Event. ADSC, 109 Minna St, Suite 399, San Francisco, 94105, 552-DECO.

### Regularly Scheduled Tours

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

# Regularly Scheduled Meetings

Oakland Heritage Alliance. OHA Board of Directors meets on the first Monday of the month, 7:30 pm; for agenda and location, contact Annalee Allen, 654-6791. OAKLAND HERITAGE Preservation Action Committee: contact Carolyn Douthat, 763-5370, for time, place, and agenda. Publications Committee, working on guidebook/history The Broadway Book: Fred Mitchell, 655-4920.

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. 2nd Monday, 4 pm, Room 221, City Hall. Contact City Planning, 273-3941.

- City Planning Commission. Every other Wednesday, 3:30 pm, Room 115, City Hall. Agenda & dates, 273-3941.
- City Council. Every Tuesday evening, 7:30, Council Chambers, City Hall. City Clerk, 273-3611.



# Oakland Heritage Alliance

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

Oakland Heritage Alliance, 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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\*Back issues available from OHA, \$2 each.\*

# **New OHA Members**

The Officers and Board of Directors of Oakland Heritage Alliance wish to welcome and thank all those concerned citizens who have shown their interest in Oakland's history and preservation by joining OHA. OHA's new members (June 15 through September) are as follows:

Barbara Ackerman, Elizabeth Olney Anderson, Gloria Anson, Gwen Becker, Mrs. A. Brooks Berlin, Margit Birge, Jose Blackstone, Irene Bonawit, Bramalea Pacific, Darby Brandli, Wm. Earl Briner, Yvonne Byron, Richard Colvig, Chuck Conlin, Bette Orvis Cooper, John & Karma Dewitt, Gladys Eaton, Claudia Ellinghaus, Helen Ferguson, Karen Friedman, Gary Fry, Carolyn Gee, Bob Graham, Bruce Grant, John J. Guidici, Nona Hamilton, J. C. Hayes, Winchell T. Hayward, Louis Hexter II, Dave & Jane Holland, Sheila B. Huston, Wm. J. Iracki, Polly Jacobsen, Elizabeth Johnson, Gracie E. Johnson, Leslie C. Jones, Mary M. Joyce, Peter Katz, Elizabeth Kennedy, Ruth Kuftin.

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(Oakland History Room)

# Oakland History Notes: Laurel School

One sunny day in July 1959, I passed the elementary school from which I had graduated the year before. The building was now a mountain of huge wooden splinters, smashed to bits to make way for a new structure. To a young child, the building had appeared massive, hoary and crinkly with age, and not a little intimidating. With its cracked Corinthian columns, mammoth windows, and rusty bell long unused, Laurel School (or LAVREL, as emblazoned in old Roman letters over the portico) seemed to me to have been there forever, housing innumerable school children through a long vista of time.

The school, in fact, had only reached its half-century mark when it met the fate of the wrecker's ball. It was constructed by the Fruitvale School District in 1909 shortly before Fruitvale was annexed to Oakland. Designed by Thomas Smith (also architect of the original Fremont High School), Laurel held 93 students and 3 teachers when it became part of the Oakland Public School system. Located in a sparsely settled tract of land called Key Route Heights, the school was built in anticipation of further residential development along the streetcar route. Key Route Heights was owned by the ubiquitous Realty Syndicate, and in 1909 the former dairyland was being touted for its cheap lots, accessibility to transit, and closeness to the new school. The area around the school was very muddy and, initially, innocent of



sidewalks or drains. An account of early Laurel School indicates that "Mr. William Cogley, the custodian, used to go out and encourage the children to wade across the slippery school yard. He carried the little girls across the worst places. Afterwards, in the basement, the children hung out their wet little socks and dried their shoes under Mr. Cogley's watchful care."

Key Route Heights developed quickly in the flush of post-World War I prosperity. In the 1920s, new buildings were added for kindergarten through third grade. The "big" kids, fourth to sixth grades, had classes in the elder building. The bell rang out at the beginning and end of the school day, resounding through the neighborhood. (I remember the brass-ringed hole for the bell cord in the supply room.) This bell--the last Oakland public school bell--was eventually placed on a pedestal in the lobby of the new building, a reminder of the early days of the Laurel district and the school --William Sturm which gave it its name.

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

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