



A Walk Through Temescal



A SELF-GUIDED TOUR

COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL
of TEMESCAL'S ANNEXATION TO OAKLAND

1897 - 1997

1897-1997 Centennial



places

A Walk Through Temescal

A joint project of the
Temescal Neighborhood History Project
and the Oakland Heritage Alliance

Oakland Heritage Alliance
Neighborhood History Series
No. 1

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Film output by Get Set! Prepress

Special thanks to Sandra Sher

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It is often easier
to find beauty and
interest in a place
we have never
visited before, to be

moved by an exotic, foreign land, than it is to appreciate in the same way the places where we actually live day in and day out. But what if we could change the lens through which we regard our homes, streets and neighborhoods—would we care for them more, would our lives be richer? We think so, and it is in that spirit that we offer *A Walk Through Temescal*. Hopefully, in pulling back some of the layers of time, we can begin to hear the stories of the past, to appreciate the ways and extent to which our surroundings have changed, and thus to experience the present in new, more meaningful ways.

A Walk Through Temescal describes two walking tours through the Temescal neighborhood of north Oakland. Both tours depart from Temescal Plaza shopping center at 50th Street and Telegraph Avenue, and each takes about one hour to complete.

The sites described in this guide are by no means the only interesting historic places in Temescal. Among the several archives located in the East Bay, the Oakland History Room at the main branch of the Oakland Public Library (125-14th Street, Oakland) is a good place to learn more about Oakland and local Temescal history, or to investigate the history of your own house.

where
we live

For most of us, it is difficult to imagine a time when

the Temescal neighborhood did not have the houses, streets, sidewalks and shade trees that we find here today. What we see now, however, is merely the tail end of two hundred years of immense changes that began when the Spanish mission system radically altered the lives and culture of the Native Americans who lived here.

For at least 2,500 years before Europeans set foot in the Bay Area, the East Bay was home to a number of native “tribelets” that lived quite successfully on the natural resources of the area. While there is little hard evidence to prove it, it is almost certain that these Native Americans—whose descendants today refer to themselves as Ohlone—practiced hunting, fishing and gathering all along Temescal Creek and in what we now call the Temescal neighborhood. (The word “temescal,” used by Spanish missionaries traveling north out of Mexico, derived from the Aztec word for “sweat lodge.”)

In 1820, after the East Bay had been emptied of nearly all indigenous people, the next profound change affecting Temescal’s future came when Luis Peralta, a Spanish soldier in “Alta California,” received a land grant from the King of Spain. His rancho of more than 44,000 acres, which included all of present-day Oakland, stretched from the East Bay hills to the bay, and from San Leandro Creek to Cerritos Creek in the north. In 1836, one of Peralta’s sons, Vicente, built an adobe on Temescal Creek—the first structure erected in present-day north Oakland by a person of European descent. In 1842, Luis Peralta divided the rancho among his four sons, with Vicente Peralta receiving the portion that encompasses today’s Temescal district (along with other parts of Oakland, Piedmont and Emeryville). Less than a decade later, however, with the Gold Rush in full swing, came an army of squatters—and statehood. Struggling to defend his land title, Vicente eventually was forced to sell off nearly all of his estate.

One man who came to own 600 acres of it was Solomon Alden, a Connecticut native who, lured west by the Gold Rush, was among the first Americans to settle in the area. Known as the founder of Temescal, the prosperous Alden in 1868–69



Bridge over Temescal Creek, looking south from Telegraph and 51st St., 1889.

subdivided a portion of his property into two large tracts that he named Alden and Temescal Park.

The relocation of the state university from Oakland to rural Berkeley, and the subsequent building in 1870 of the Oakland Railroad Company’s car barn and stables at 50th Street and Telegraph Avenue (near where Telegraph crossed Temescal Creek), contributed significantly to Temescal’s growth. From this beginning, a convenient network of transportation developed, linking Temescal to downtown Oakland, its neighborhoods and other Bay Area cities. In 1873, the village of Temescal had a hotel, a French restaurant, three groceries, two butcher shops, six drinking saloons, a “snug” school house, a cannery, three blacksmith shops, and a newly completed bridge across Temescal Creek.

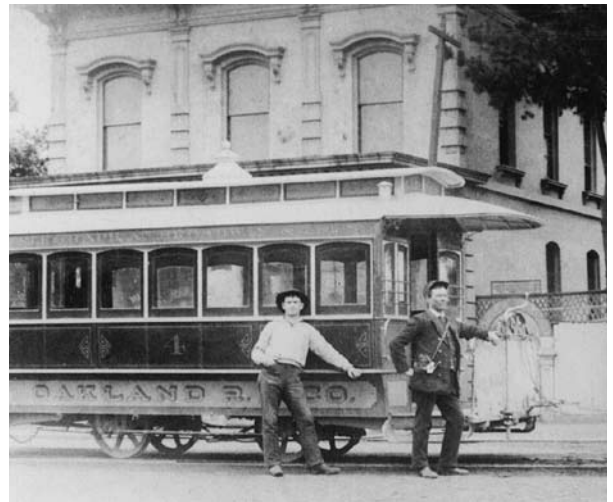
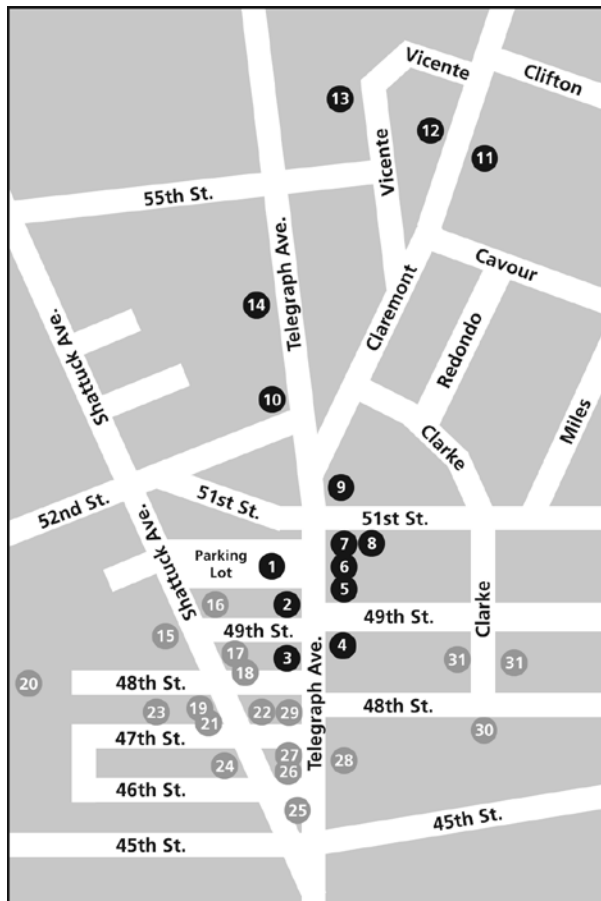
Until 1897, Temescal was an unincorporated suburb of Oakland and had no police protection, street lighting, paved roads, sewer systems, or free postal delivery. Many who settled in the village were merchants and working-class people. From the beginning, Italian Americans were heavily represented among the district’s settlers. Many found employment as quarry workers, gardeners, motormen, and garbage scavengers. The village—just outside the city limits—had a reputation as the dumping ground for Oakland’s saloons. (In reaction to these social conditions, a temperance movement arose in Temescal!)

Most of the old saloons, as well as Solomon Alden’s home (described as “a spacious and tasty dwelling”) and many of the original store buildings in Temescal are gone. However, this guide will acquaint you with the oldest surviving commercial buildings, residences from the 1870s, several historic sites where buildings once stood, and where Temescal Creek, now confined to culverts below ground, once wound through the neighborhood.

Tour One

1. Oakland Railroad Car Barn site
2. Gunnip's Building
3. Bank of America/Swords Store site
4. Pedrini Store site
5. Sanwa Bank
6. Norris Store and dwelling
7. Cattaneo Block (G&G Hardware building)
8. Firehouse
9. Theater and hotel site
10. Temescal Library
11. Lusk Cannery site
12. Colombo Club
13. Peralta Adobe and House site
14. Marshall Steel Cleaners and Rollerland site

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Oakland Railroad streetcar, with Brick House in background, Telegraph near 51st St., 1870.

Begin this tour at the Temescal Plaza (new Genova Deli) parking lot.

I. OAKLAND RAILROAD CAR BARN SITE, 50TH STREET & TELEGRAPH AVENUE.

The Oakland Railroad Co. (later called Oakland Railway, Oakland Traction, Key System, etc.) purchased a one-acre site from Solomon Alden in April 1870. Temescal Creek ran across the rear of the property at the point where 50th Street ends. The company constructed a depot for the extension of its horse-drawn street railway service on Telegraph Avenue from downtown. The railroad was a major source of employment and stimulated the growth of Temescal's business and residential district. In 1875, 109 daily trips were made from 7th Street to Temescal. At one time, 52 horses were kept in its stables. Steam trains connected here to continue the trip to Berkeley beginning in 1887. In 1890, a brick powerhouse was built at Grove (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way) and the creek, and within two years, all 126 miles of the street railway had been electrified. The last electric streetcar on Telegraph made its run in 1948. Many people remember the Fairway Market (later called Vern's) which opened in 1949 in the converted car barn (demolished in 1987).

5

Tour One

Walk south one short block on Telegraph Avenue to...

2. GUNNIP'S SALOON BUILDING, 4901-05 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. This Stick-Italianate store and residential building was built in two stages between 1889 and 1908. It is the only surviving pioneer business on this block. Irish-born John Gunnip operated a saloon in the corner storefront where the Silver Lion is now located. During prohibition, the saloon became a billiard hall. Gunnip resided in the furnished rooms upstairs,

which are now called Hotel Alden after Temescal founder, Solomon Alden. An expansion on the north side of the building added a second, narrower storefront (#4905). The narrow vertical board on the Telegraph side marks where the two sections of the building were joined. Although the ground floor has been extensively modified, the second floor retains its rectangular bays with Stick-style framing. The widowed Gunnip lived in the building for 45 years, until his death at age 80 in 1934. Now painted in the white, red, and green of the Italian flag, the Gunnip building is decorated in appropriate colors for a subsequent owner Giobatta “Baci” Ciarlo who owned the tavern for 41 years.

Across 49th Street is the...

3. BANK OF AMERICA, 488 I TELEGRAPH AVENUE. This building was constructed around 1922 when the Bank of Italy was expanding rapidly into Oakland. The bank had entered the East Bay in 1917 through acquisition of Security National Bank’s four branch offices. By 1928, Bank of Italy had 14 branches in Oakland. A year later, it changed its name to the Bank of America. The building, a small banking temple with Classical styling, is very similar to several other branches constructed in Oakland. It is reinforced concrete scored to mimic stone. The branch was closed in 1997.

Before the bank was built, this corner was the site of Patrick Swords’ market, established in the 1870s. Swords, an Irish immigrant who went door-to-door to collect money for the building of Sacred Heart Church, was no stranger to pranksterism. According to a March 1888 newspaper report, “Last night a number of hoodlums amused themselves by tearing down signs & placing them in front of other business places than the ones they belonged to. The delivery wagon of Swords’ market was taken by these young men and run over the banks of the creek into the stream below. Fortunately there was no damage done it.” Eight years later, there was another incident: “A drunken crowd visited the place of P. Swords on Monday night kicking and pounding the door and raising the neighborhood by their foul outcries. They were told to get out several times or they would be shot. They continued as before and Mr. Swords fired two shots from his rifle, which effectively scared *him* and they took to their heels. There has been a great deal of this kind of business lately and the residents demand effective protection from the officers of the law, which they do not now obtain.”

Cross Telegraph Avenue to the...



Pedrini’s Grocery, and North Temescal Post Office, Telegraph and 49th St. (demolished), 1891.

4. PEDRINI STORE SITE, SOUTHEAST CORNER OF TELEGRAPH & 49TH. Turn your attention to the pocket shopping center at the corner of Telegraph Avenue and 49th Street where the Dollar Cleaners is located. Gone are the buildings where Cipriano Pedrini once operated one of Temescal’s earliest businesses at the corner of Telegraph and Birch. (Birch was renamed Columbus Avenue before becoming 49th Street.) The Swiss-born Pedrini came to San Francisco in 1851 for the Gold Rush. However, he lasted only three weeks as a miner before opening a grocery store in El Dorado County. In 1877, he came to Temescal and opened his grocery, dry goods, and liquor store. His son Joseph continued the business and became a well-known postmaster.

Cross 49th Street to the former site of the...

5. TELEGRAPH AVENUE BANK (SANWA BANK), 4902 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. The Sanwa Bank building was once the site of the Telegraph Avenue Bank, formed in 1908 by a group of merchants and professional men of Temescal. William Thomas, who operated a grocery store next to the bank, was its first president. The bank was acquired by the Central National Bank which in 1921 built the present bank building. It was later remodeled in the Moderne style. The bank is the third building on the site; William Carroll’s saloon predated both banks.

Just next door on Telegraph Avenue once stood the...

6. NORRIS STORE & DWELLING, 4920 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. A store at this location appears on an 1873 map of Temescal. It may be that a core of the original building has survived the numerous 20th Century additions and modernizations made to the building. In the 1880s, Columbus Norris, the postmaster of North Temescal, sold “groceries, fruits, cigars and tobacco, stationery,

etc.” here. The North Temescal post office, founded in 1877, typically was operated by merchants who received a commission on stamps in lieu of salary. The name North Temescal was used to distinguish the post office from one established in 1861 at the Temescal tin mine in San Bernardino County. Because postal mix-ups continued, the post office was eventually renamed Alden on April 6, 1899, after town leaders rejected various other designations, including Marathon and Deweyville. Between 1937 and 1961, the name Temescal was resurrected as an area name on Oakland post office cancellations. In 1947, the merchants voted to officially return to the name Temescal.

For several years in the 1910s, a nickelodeon movie theater operated in the southernmost storefront. Giovanni Zappetini was the proprietor of the theater that went by the names Portola and Deluxe Photoplay. Continuous shows were offered at an admission price of five cents. Directly across the street was the Navajo Theater which was built in 1912. The Portola has been converted to retail use, and the Navajo building was demolished in 1997.

8

Continue a short way up the block to...

7. THE CATTANEO BLOCK (G&G HARDWARE), 5004-5010 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. The building, which houses G&G Hardware (Ghiorso & Graziano), is believed to be one of the oldest surviving commercial structures in the Temescal district. The original owner, Giuseppe Cattaneo, was one of the earliest Swiss-Italians in Temescal. The building, known then as the Brick House, appears to have been constructed between mid-1871 and mid-1872. (The date of “1869” above the second-story window is not supported by recorded history.) The exterior walls are covered with scored stucco to imitate stone. The building originally had a covered sidewalk—in the style sometimes called Gold Rush commercial. It has been expanded by the addition of the far right and two left bays in the same style as the original building. A garden once on the lot to the south of the building included a bocce ball court, a gazebo, and a grove of trees. The smell of wine was said to waft from the garden. Although the storefronts have been modernized, there is a patio at the rear of the building behind Camille’s Cafe where you can still see relatively unaltered first-floor windows. A hardware store has been in this building since 1920. From 1939 to 1983, the popular Buon Gusto bakery operated in the northern storefront at 5010 Telegraph Avenue. In 1983 the building became a city of Oakland landmark.

Continue north on Telegraph Avenue, turn right at the corner onto 51st Street, then up a few doors to...

8. FIRE STATION ENGINE CO. #8, 466-70 51ST STREET. Before annexation in 1897, the people of Temescal had to battle their own fires with the assistance of a group of volunteers known as the Temescal Hose Co. Thereafter, service was provided from various locations, until Temescal’s first permanent station, a two-story, wood frame building, went up in 1901. The present fire station was built in 1950-51 to replace a 1910 structure that had been located directly across the street (demolished in 1972 when 51st Street was widened). The lion on the tank at the front of the station is a memorial to the child of a firefighter.



Claremont Theater (later the Tower, then the Pussycat), Telegraph and 51st St., c. 1925, (adjacent buildings demolished).

9

Head back toward Telegraph Avenue and cross 51st Street to the vacant theater

9. HUMBOLDT PARK HOTEL SITE & MOVIE THEATER, 5114 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. On this 4-1/3 acre site (bounded by Telegraph, Claremont, Clarke and 51st Streets) once stood the Humboldt Park Hotel. Humboldt was once the name for Telegraph Avenue beyond 51st Street. Henry Clay Babcock, a blacksmith and carriage maker from Ohio, and Simon F. Morrill, a carpenter, owned the hotel which they leased to various managers. The gardens were described as “enchantingly lovely, just the place for a picnic, innocent flirtation or moonlight stroll.” In spring, the waters of Temescal Creek ran swiftly through this property. Salmon, unable to jump the dam that had been constructed on the grounds, were easily caught. The Humboldt Park Hotel reportedly burned in the 1890s. The grounds were thickly overgrown with shrubbery and trees up to two hundred fifty feet in height when the horticulturist, Patrick McDonnell, purchased the block and in 1901 subdivided it into lots. A two-story hall torn down in 1913 was the last remnant of Babcock’s enterprise.

The movie theater is one of several commercial buildings that went up on McDonnell’s new

Tower One

tract. (Several of the other buildings constructed in the 1910s on this block have been demolished.) The theater, which last operated as the Pussycat, has had many lives. It has been known as L.D. Purdy theater (1913), Claremont (1916), Tower (1939), and Pussycat. Look up at the marquee to see the shadow of the name "TOWER" under the layers of gray paint. The silent movie theater was built in 1913 for a Temescal merchant named Frank Armanino who had a saloon in the corner building which once stood to the south (and was removed when 51st Street was widened). The building permit identified it as a "nickelodeon" designed by A.W. Smith and built for \$9,000 by the Jones Bros. Lawrence Purdy, who had been working as a salesman for the Franklin Motor Car Co. in Berkeley, operated the theater. Little is left of the original building. In 1939 the theater was completely modernized; only the ceiling and walls were retained.



Telegraph Ave. in foreground, with Claremont Ave. in center, 1890.

Continue north 100 feet to the intersection of Claremont and Telegraph. Look across Telegraph Avenue, and you will see the dark-red brick Tudor-revival library building.

10. TEMESCAL LIBRARY, 5205 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. This branch library has its original name of Alden in incised lettering under the wooden sign that now says Temescal Branch Library. The 1917 library design is the work of architects Charles W. Dickey and John Donovan. Dickey is known locally for his design of the Claremont Hotel and the former University High School. Donovan designed many churches and schools, including St. Mary's College, Oakland Technical High School, and Claremont Junior High School (with Walter Reed). The library was constructed with funds donated to Oakland by Pittsburgh steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, who helped establish more than two-thousand libraries throughout the English-speaking world (including

five in Oakland). The Alden library branch—or reading room—first opened in 1899 and moved three times prior to this building's construction.

One of the moves was made necessary when the landlady suddenly and without notice rented out the library space as a beer saloon. Inside are several early photographs of stores and merchants. The library was designated a city landmark in 1993.

Walk up Claremont Avenue to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

11. LUSK CANNERY SITE, THE BLOCK BOUNDED BY CLAREMONT AVENUE, CLIFTON STREET, MILES AVENUE AND CAVOUR STREET. This was the site of the Lusk Cannery which operated here from 1877 to 1888. Josiah Lusk had been raising fruits and vegetables for the fresh market when he started a small cannery in 1868 originally located on 40th Street several blocks west of Telegraph Avenue. After moving to this site, the plant became the largest cannery west of the Mississippi River. All the cans were manufactured by Lusk using tin shipped from Europe. In addition to cannery buildings, the property included a women's dormitory of twenty-five rooms with four beds each, and a ladies' dining room. An Italian gardener supplied fresh vegetables to the women from the company's garden. The women's room and board cost 35 cents a day. About 800 people worked here in the 1887 season, including several hundred Chinese immigrants and some children.

Lusk took William Coleman on as partner in 1881, but Coleman suffered financial reversals, and the cannery closed in 1888. The property was sold at auction to a syndicate and broken up into pieces. The Lusk home (once located between the Safeway and the DMV buildings) eventually became Bohannon's Pacific Cancer Institute. On the portion of the property adjacent to the Safeway store, the Independent Brewing & Malting Co. was established. That was succeeded during Prohibition by the Keva Mattress Co. In another former Lusk building, Paul Carosso opened an "observatory," furnished rooms, and saloon. In the 1890s, Carosso stirred up considerable controversy due to the "alleged questionable character of the resort."

Walk around to the creek bed between the DMV building and parking lot.

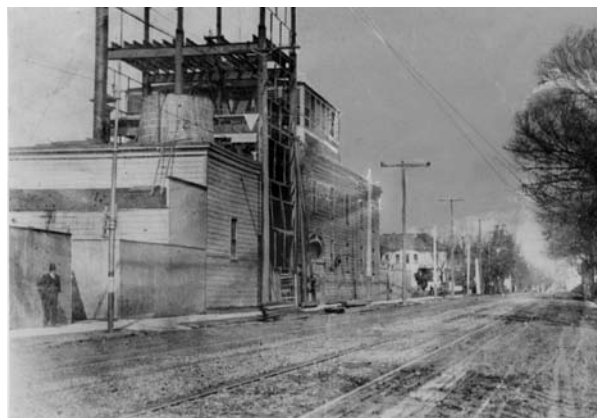
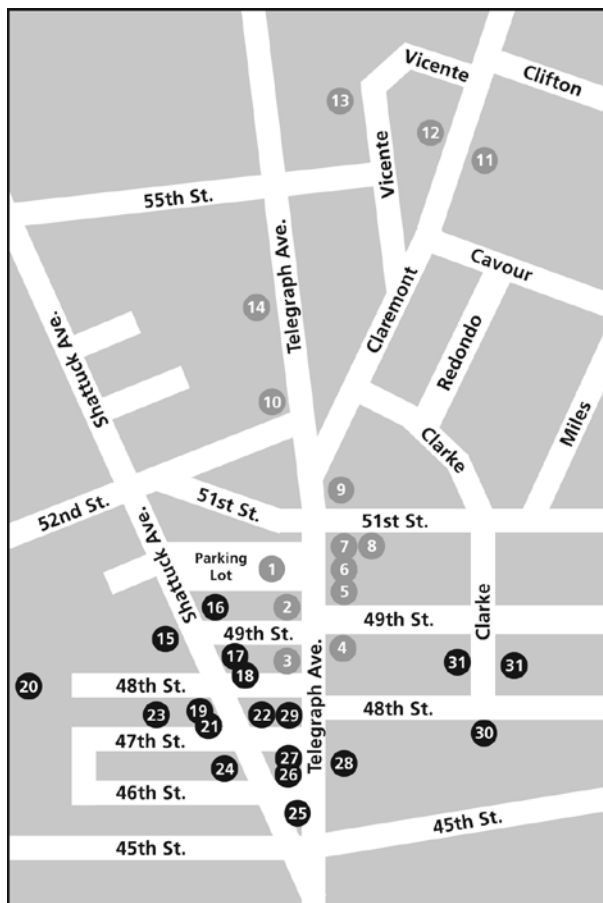
TEMESCAL CREEK EXISTS TODAY AS A "RECONSTITUTED" CREEK. It runs through an underground, concrete culvert and is pumped to the surface here. Even after Lake Temescal was

Tour Two

III

15. Anchor Brewery
16. Puricelli House
17. Doble House
18. Irwin House
19. Ligure Club
20. Grove-Shafter Freeway
21. Armanino store and flats building
22. 4704-06 Shattuck Avenue dwelling
23. Alfieri Club site
24. Casazza Store and dwelling
25. Kasper's Original Hot Dogs
26. Pezzola's Block
27. 4659-95 Telegraph Avenue
28. Hooper's Chocolates
29. Roma Bakery
30. Temescal School
31. Clarke Street houses

14



Kramm's Anchor Brewery (demolished), west side of Shattuck Ave. at 49th St., 1908.

From the Shattuck Avenue (west) side of Temescal Plaza, turn left (south) onto Shattuck Avenue to...

I 5. ANCHOR BREWERY SITE, WEST SIDE OF SHATTUCK NEAR 49TH STREET.

Charles H. Kramm established a brewery on this site in June 1894. (This business is not related to Anchor Brewing in San Francisco.) The Kramms, who were also associated with the Golden West Brewery, had been making beer in Oakland since 1869. They were one of several local brewers who had come from Germany. The brewery property extended from 4845 Shattuck Avenue (office building) to 4921 Shattuck Avenue (mural). Water from Temescal Creek, which wound around the rear of the property, was used in the brewing process. At its peak, twelve employees produced nearly 70,000 barrels per year of steam beer and porter. By 1919, when Prohibition (the Volstead Act) was ratified, the tax assessor noted that only a barn stood on the property. Houses were built on the site in 1924-25, some of which have subsequently been rebuilt.

15

Across Shattuck Avenue at 49th Street is the...

I 6. PURICELLI HOUSE, 4912 SHATTUCK AVENUE.

This was the home of stone mason and plasterer Innocente Puricelli and his wife Madeline. Puricelli built the house in 1932. Next door was the Oakland Railroad car barn which may explain why there are no windows on the north side of the house. The dwelling is in the Italian Renaissance style with stucco walls that imitate stone. However, the perimeter fence, chimney top, and porch look like they were created using remnants of stone and are reminiscent of Watts Towers in Los Angeles, which also was built of scrap materials by an Italian tilesetter. Before the Puricelli house was constructed, a two-story steam laundry building occupied the site.

Head south on Shattuck Avenue to the...

17. DOBLE HOUSE, 4811 SHATTUCK AVENUE. Now called "Casa Bella," the house remains somewhat of a mystery. What is known is that Abner Doble, a San Francisco businessman who imported steel, Swedish iron, and tools, originally owned this house, though using it perhaps only as a weekend home. Doble's grandson, also named Abner Doble (1891-1961) became part of Emeryville history when he manufactured steam automobiles there from 1923 to 1929. By 1901, the house had passed into the hands of the Bank of California, and then became the residence of William F. Martin, electrician. Mrs. Mattie Martin later offered furnished rooms at this location.

Across Shattuck Avenue is the...

18. IRWIN HOUSE, 4810 SHATTUCK AVENUE. One of the first families to reside in this house was the Irwins. Several members of the household worked for the Oakland Railroad, including the Irish-born Michael Irwin who was a stable boss or hostler. Although this part of Shattuck has always been a mixture of residential and light industrial buildings, the original setting for the Irwin house included more nearby residences that have since been demolished. His neighbors included a shoemaker, several saloon keepers and grocers, and many laborers.

Continuing south on Shattuck Avenue, look across 48th Street to view the...

19. LIGURE CLUB, 4733 SHATTUCK AVENUE. This social club was named for Liguria, a coastal province of Italy whose capital, Genoa, was the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. At its peak the Ligure Club had 800 members. The building was constructed in 1934 for \$12,000 by Eugene Campomenosi, and designed by R.C. Schuppert. Facilities once included bocce ball courts and a banquet hall on the western end, a dance hall on the southeastern side, and a large L-shaped oak bar at the corner. Saturday night dances during 1940s-50s were open to the public for 75 cents. In 1981, the club vacated the building. Subsequently, it functioned as a nightclub, first as the White House, then as the Omni. The Ligure Club now meets at the Fratellanza Club building on 66th Street near San Pablo Avenue. (The club's name, set in tile, still can be seen at the corner entrance.)

Crossing 48th Street, observe to your right (west) the...

20. GROVE-SHAFTER FREEWAY. The freeway route was established in 1958, with acquisition of property, demolition, detailed engineering, and construction consuming the next decade. In July 1969,

the section between 24th Street and Claremont Avenue opened. At the dedication ceremonies, where the ribbon was cut by the queen of the Italian-American Federation, Alameda County Supervisor Emanuel Razeto, a native of Genoa, regretted that the Grove-Shafter freeway "trespassed" through the heart of north Oakland. He nevertheless gave the freeway his blessing, for it would also eventually bring BART service to the district.

Continuing south, at the corner of 47th Street is the...

21. ARMANINO STORE AND FLATS BUILDING, 4701 SHATTUCK AVENUE. This building was constructed in 1908 for Giovanni Armanino who operated a saloon in the corner storefront (now a post office branch). The builder was Dominic Ucello. Its architect is not known. The Armaninos owned several large buildings in Rockridge and Temescal in the 1910s and '20s, among them the two commercial buildings that flank Armanino Court (off College Avenue just below Claremont Avenue) which was named for the family.

Across the street is...

22. 4704-06 SHATTUCK AVENUE. This 1870s dwelling originally faced Telegraph Avenue. Around 1909 it was rotated when a store was built on the Telegraph Avenue end of the lot. As one of a pair of houses that fit snugly against each other, it was built without windows on the upper floor of the southern side. Assessor's records show that it belonged to a fruit peddler in the 1880s. The fate of its companion house is unknown.

Turn right (west) on 47th Street, and walk to the rear of the Armanino building to see the...

23. SITE OF THE ALFIERI ATHLETIC AND SOCIAL CLUB, AND SODA WORKS, 538-47TH STREET. All that remains of the hall built on this site for Giovanni Armanino in 1908 is a depression in the ground. The building that once stood here simultaneously housed the Liberty Soda Works and the Italian American Alfieri Athletic and Social Club. (A former soda warehouse still stands next door at #540.) The club, named for Count Vittorio Alfieri, an Italian playwright whose dramas aroused Italy's nationalist spirit and hatred of tyranny, was founded in 1917, and is believed to be the first of Oakland's Italian American clubs (which also included the Liberty, Colombo, Fratellanza, and Ligure clubs). The Alfieri club established a sports rivalry with the San Francisco Italian Athletic Club and competed in an annual footrace called the

Statuto which continues to be held in San Francisco on the first Saturday in June.

Walk back to Shattuck Avenue, and proceed south to the...

24. CASAZZA STORE, 4609 SHATTUCK AVENUE. Italian-born Vincenzo Casazza opened a grocery store in this building around 1894 when he was 49 years old. He lived at the rear. The store was added on to the original dwelling which is best viewed from where the sidewalk crosses the driveway. The Avanzino Bros. later operated the store. Since the store closed, the building has housed a window shade factory, upholstery supply and barber shop.

Across the next intersection to the south, on the "gore" where Shattuck and Telegraph meet, is...

25. THE ORIGINAL KASPER'S HOT DOGS, 452 I TELEGRAPH AVENUE. Originally a Union Oil service station built in 1923, this building was converted into a restaurant by Kasper Koojoolian in 1943. Kasper's son-in-law, Harry Yaglijian, has operated the business since then, though today you are apt to find Harry's son (also Harry) behind the counter. (The "Original" is not affiliated with the other Kasper's and Casper's hot dog restaurants.) The neon sign and exterior have recently been refurbished. Check inside for some photographs and newspaper items that tell the history of the business.

Now turn north on Telegraph Avenue and cross 46th Street to the...

26. PEZZOLA SALOON-TEMESCAL PARK HOUSE SITE, 460 I TELEGRAPH AVENUE. Many people remember Bertola's restaurant. Its first location was the Temescal Park House which once sat where the triangular parking lot is now. The Temescal Park House, a combination hotel, dining room and saloon, was demolished in 1959. Its best-known proprietor was Louis Pezzola, a native of Italy, who had been a miner in Yuba County before coming to Temescal. In 1891, Pezzola augmented his property with picnic gardens, a dance pavilion and bocce ball court. Between 1908 and 1912 Pezzola further developed the block to include a flats building on the corner of Shattuck Avenue & 47th Street, and two store buildings on the Telegraph Avenue frontage.

Continuing north, stroll up the rest of Pezzola's block.

27. 4659-95 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. These are actually two buildings joined by modernization. Bertola's Restaurant moved to the south end of the building after the Temescal Park House was razed



Bertola's Restaurant (demolished), Pezzola's Block, Telegraph and 46th St., 1953.

in 1959. Although the stores have been updated, sections of the original pressed tin ceiling can be seen in the beauty shop (#4679) and entry to the 2nd floor located mid-block. Upstairs was the meeting hall of Knights of Pythias Balilla Lodge No. 109, also called Golden West hall. (It was subsequently used for a time as a rehearsal space for the Oakland Civic Ballet School.) The Knights of Pythias, founded in 1864, was the first fraternal order chartered by Congress (at the urging of President Lincoln). Unlike most of the other Temescal social clubs, this lodge did not have Italian American roots, although many Italian immigrants were members. Among them was Frank Dezutti whose watch and jewelry business at 4691 Telegraph Avenue also served as the distribution office for *L'Italia*, the Italian daily newspaper, published in San Francisco. *L'Italia* once had the largest circulation of any foreign newspaper west of Chicago.

Remain on the west side of Telegraph to view the pink, house-like building across the street.

28. MARGARET BURNHAM'S COTTAGE CANDIES, HOOPER'S CHOCOLATES, 4632 TELEGRAPH AVENUE. Although built to look like a dwelling, the Hooper's building has always been a chocolate factory. It opened in November 1930 as the "production cottage" for a chain of confectionery stores called Margaret Burnham's Cottage Candies under the direction of G.P. Ballachee. The business, founded in Oakland in 1925, grew to a chain of some dozen stores (including one in Reno, Nevada). The Telegraph Avenue store was built for \$50,000 by Vogt & Davidson Ltd. To the rear of the "house" on its deep lot are additions where today's actual candy making occurs. Gordon Hooper acquired the business in the early 1950s. At that time, the building was repainted the pink color that Gordon's wife, Barbara, favored. The store recently reopened after closing in 1995. The new owners are using high-

quality Belgian chocolate just as the Hoopers did. Plans are to market the candy in drug stores, department stores and coffee bars.

Continue north onto the next block of Telegraph Avenue to...

29. 472 I-23 TELEGRAPH AVENUE.

The Pyramid Delicatessen building was originally the Roma Bakery owned by the partnership of Guiseppe and Louis DeBenedetti and A. Ghiglione. Guiseppe, a native of Genoa, was an organizer and the first president of the Ligure Club. This building was constructed in 1914 for him by Mario E. Valente. (The rounded Mission-style parapet characteristic of many commercial buildings of the middle 1910s still peeks above the mural spanning the storefront.) A stable once stood at the rear where DeBenedetti kept his delivery wagon. Note the steel door in the sidewalk that leads to the basement. It was locally made, with a patent date of 1905. The store has also been used as a motorcycle shop and cleaners.

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Cross Telegraph Avenue at the light and proceed east along 48th Street (formerly Temescal Street), stopping opposite Clarke Street (formerly Maple). Now turn to look at the school play ground.

30. TEMESCAL SCHOOL. Several schools have stood on this site now occupied by the Verdese R. Carter Middle School. The two-story Temescal School was constructed in 1887 at the corner of 48th Street and Webster Street (formerly Cherry). Pierce & Ruch were the builders. (Ruch built many structures in Temescal; you will see his house on the tour.) During the 1910s and early 1920s, the school housed the forerunners of University High School and Emerson School. Through bond issues of 1919 and 1924, new buildings facing 48th Street were constructed next to



University High School, 48th and Webster St., c.1915.

the original school house. These went by the name of Mosswood (1923) then Woodrow Wilson (1926). In the 1870s and 1880s, Temescal also had primary schools on Shattuck at 49th Street and on 49th between Telegraph and Maple.

Turn north onto Clarke Street for a zig-zag look at seven houses.

3 I. CLARKE STREET HOUSES.

RUCH DUPLEX, 4820-22 CLARKE STREET.

Although building permits were not issued in Oakland until 1905, clear documentation dates this house at 1889. In 1889, the *Oakland Enquirer* noted that Andrew "Rush" was building a cottage residence on Maple Street (now Clarke Street) at a cost of \$2000. It may have been constructed as a duplex, as Lucy A. Pike was also listed in the 1892 city directory as residing at this address simultaneously with Ruch. A November 1897 newspaper column with news from "North Temescal" noted that Ruch was enlarging and considerably changing the interior of his house on Maple Street. The same column noted that Pike was visiting her daughter in St. Helena (and therefore safely out of the way of the workmen!). The Ohio-born Ruch, a contractor, also built the nearby Temescal School (1887), Piedmont School (1891), the North Temescal Presbyterian Church (1892), a cottage for the Siegriest family at Miles Avenue and Cavour Street (1900), and many other residences and stores (frequently working with his partner, Edward Pierce).

21

Across the block is the...

PINKHAM HOUSE, 4823-1/2 CLARKE STREET

(REAR). An early- to mid-1870s dwelling is at the rear of this lot. Deeds show that George Pinkham purchased the property from Solomon Alden on June 20, 1870, at a cost of \$350, the prevailing price for vacant lots in this tract. Pinkham had a liquor and grocery store on the west side of Telegraph Avenue near 50th Street. The 1880 census reported that Pinkham, his wife Helen and daughter Stella lived here. The house was probably moved to the rear of the property in 1924 when the duplex was built in front for a subsequent owner, Felix Soldati, who worked as a shoemaker on Telegraph Avenue.

Crossing Clarke Street again, on the east side is the...

BAKER HOUSE, 4826 CLARKE STREET (FRONT).

This house was constructed in c.1870 for a house painter named Adam P. Baker. A recorded deed shows that Baker purchased the lot on which this house sits on March 30, 1870, for \$350, the same price paid by

Notes

his neighbor, Pinkham. The plain, small house is sometimes called “pioneer style.” In June 1874 a private sale was held by the Baker estate. Two parties bid on the house and the winning offer of \$1600 was made by John Jefferson Green, also a house painter, who occupied the house with his Irish-born wife, Margaret.

A few doors up the block and across the street is the...

ROETH HOUSES, 4835-43 CLARKE STREET. This row of three houses was built in 1897 and owned by George Roeth, president of Swiss Italian Paste Co. The 1900 Census indicates that all three houses were rentals. They are in the Colonial Revival style which is characterized by a steeply pitched gable, dormers, and shingling on the upper story with wood siding on the lower level. Although various alterations and modernizations have been made, note that #4835 still has its original brick foundation. At the turn of the century, the homes were rented by an Oakland constable (#4835), a copper polisher (#4839), and a physician (#4843). The young physician who lived in the corner house, Charles Alfred Dukes, was just launching his career in Oakland after serving as a transport surgeon in the Spanish-American War. A cancer specialist, he eventually headed the California Medical Association and served as vice-president of the American College of Physicians and Surgeons.

22

Finally, across Clarke Street at the end of the block on the S.E. corner stands the...

MOUSER HOUSE, 449 49TH STREET. This home and carriage house are dated by a building contract notice in the May 20, 1892, issue of *California Architect and Building News*. The notice gives the location as Columbus and Maple, the former names of 49th and Clarke Streets, respectively. Isabel Mouser paid \$2,040 to contractor W.W. Miller who constructed the dwelling from plans by architect C.A. Wedgewood. Mouser, who came from Australia, was married to Dr. Benjamin Mouser, an oculist, aurist, and laryngologist (or eye, ear and throat specialist) and “health officer” for Temescal. This Queen Anne house is distinguished by its curved porch and “candle snuffer”-shaped tower. Note the tulip-shaped column capitals. A separate entrance off the porch opened to the doctor’s examination room. During the short time that he resided here, Dr. Mouser was active in civic affairs, presenting the petition to Oakland for Temescal’s annexation. The Mouser’s house was acquired by Adolph Cavagna, a painter and decorator, who for several decades operated his business out of the rear carriage house.

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Tour Two

Photo Acknowledgments

Cover

Telegraph Express streetcar, c.1940.

*Collection of The Bancroft Library, courtesy
of Ted Wurm.*

Temescal Social Club Band at Ayala Park (later Idora Park),
c.1890.

Albert Lusk Collection, courtesy of Ted Wurm.

Oakland Railroad streetcar, Telegraph Ave., c.1895.

Courtesy of Ted Wurm.

Inside front cover, detail

Vernon Sappers Collection, courtesy of Ray Raineri.

p. 3 *Courtesy of Ted Wurm.*

p. 5 *Courtesy of Ted Wurm.*

p. 7 *Courtesy of Ted Wurm.*

p. 9 *Vernon Sappers Collection, courtesy of the Western
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p. 10 *Vernon Sappers Collection, courtesy of Ray Raineri.*

p. 15 *Albert Lusk Collection, courtesy of Ted Wurm.*

p. 19 *Courtesy of Joe Brignole.*

p. 20 *Courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California.*

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A Walk Through Temescal was produced by the Temescal Neighborhood History Project in conjunction with a history exhibit and neighborhood celebration which it mounted in the fall of 1997. Organized by Temescal residents and community artists, Jeff Norman and Leiko Yamamoto Pech, the project grew to include dozens of neighbors, merchants, local organizations, and City of Oakland staff, all of whom volunteered their time, expertise and resources.

The underlying objective of the Temescal Neighborhood History Project was to encourage a greater awareness of and appreciation for the cultural and natural history of this north Oakland community. It was inspired by the belief that seeing our everyday surroundings in a new, more meaningful way can lead to a deeper connection to this place we call home, and, in turn, to active participation in shaping its future.



Oakland Heritage Alliance is a non-profit citizen's organization dedicated to a sustainable future by appreciating the past and preserving the assets of our history. It is the largest such group in the city. Membership is \$30 per year.

This booklet begins an on-going series of neighborhood histories to be published by the Oakland Heritage Alliance. To assist in our efforts, please contact us at:

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