



Alameda Museum

Quarterly



Rows of newly finished Arts & Crafts cottages stretch back from the street at 453-455 Central Avenue, one of a pair of side-by-side courts erected in 1910 for vaudevillian Max Dill. West End builder G.G. Kneppeler worked from plans by the noted San Francisco firm of Rousseau & Rousseau. (Alameda, California; Sunset Magazine Home-seekers' Bureau, 1911).

WORKS FROM A REPERTOIRE by Woody Minor

BUNGALOW COURTS made their Alameda debut in 1910, toward the end of the post-earthquake boom, and they enjoyed a respectable run. One set piece followed another in the manic 1920s, dwindled in the depressive 1930s, and exited the stage at the end of the 1940s with the onset of war and explosive growth. Artifacts of an in-between era when the city began to transition from single-family to multi-family dwellings, they have aged well by virtue of planning, design, and sheer charm. Their fans are legion.

The classic court is a group of rental cottages with shared landscaping and communal walks or drives. This

concept—clustered housing in an off-street setting, like today’s planned unit development—represented a new approach to residential expansion, a creative response to demand. The period’s other response was the apartment building. Following the adoption of the city’s first comprehensive zoning ordinance in 1919, in the aftermath of the World War I housing crisis, the first wave of large multi-unit structures swept across the island in the 1920s. These highly profitable, high-density developments hastened the end of the court as an investment option.

Famed for its houses in the Arts & Crafts (Craftsman) tradition, its scenic setting and halcyon climate,

Pasadena was an early incubator of the bungalow and the likely birthplace of the bungalow court. The honor usually goes to St. Francis Court (1909): eleven rustic dwellings arrayed around a drive and screened from the street by river-stone walls and entrance pylons. Similar developments followed in quick succession. Marketed as getaways for retirees and escapees in search of satori, they became popular up and down the coast.

West End Retreats

Alameda, a resort in her own right, embraced the concept at an early date, though here the courts tended to be

Continued on page 2 . . .



Works . . . Continued from page 1

modest in finish with the air of beach cottages. The first, built in 1910, were side-by-side courts of tiny Arts & Crafts houses by the San Francisco firm of Rousseau & Rousseau. Facing Sunny Cove Baths at 453-461 Central Avenue, the shingled huts (16 in four rows) and trellised archways were set off by brick and stone trim. The owner, a well-known vaudeville comedian named Max Dill, lived next door. Altered over the years and now individually owned, the cottages of this historically important complex are being restored one by one.

On the next block, at 527-529 Central, we find Palace Court—a dozen bungalows that went up in 1926-28 near the Cottage Baths. Covering the site of the 1885 Palace Brewery, the cottage rows and central green extend back two blocks to a triplex on Taylor Avenue. Peaked parapets and stucco veneer exemplify the work of M.H. Fish, a third-generation designer-builder and grandson of the city's pioneer gold rush contractor, James Millington.

Among Neptune Beach's amenities were rows of attached bungalows on the esplanade, but of courts we have no record. The phantom resort's sole surviving structure is the alluring Neptune Court (1925) at 600 Central. As its name suggests it is a hybrid: a 39-unit apartment building that conveys the feeling of a bungalow court with its open plan (a hollow rectangle), shared interior green, and individuated units. The flip side of this kind of functional blending was the early adaptation of the bungalow court to apartment use. In this model, the court became an assemblage of duplexes or multi-unit dwellings instead of single-family residences.

The finest example of the type is Marina Court (1918), a pristine survivor from the environs of Neptune Beach. Adjoining the outfield fence at Washington Park, this garden group



Marion Court (1920), 1500 block Fourth Street. George H. Noble (owner and builder). Images by author.

of six four-unit apartments displays sleek stucco styling and low-slung silhouettes common to bungalows of the period. The architect, Carl Werner, went on to design Alameda High School and other civic monuments of the 1920s and 1930s.

The West End also lays claim to the finest court by George H. Noble, the city's most prolific bungalow builder. Situated on Fourth Street around the corner from the Dill cottages, Marion

Court went up in 1920 and took its name from the baby daughter of Noble's partner. The petite houses are arrayed like two chorus lines, nine per side, pert porches and parapets directing the eye to a jazzy duplex at the end of the drive—an evocative period piece of the resort era.

A wide variety of courts grace the streets of the West End. Hoover Court (1912-13) at 511-517 Central is an early example of a cul-de-sac group.



Marina Court (1918), 726-736 Central Avenue. Alfreda Wright (owner); J.F. Rogers (builder); Carl Werner (architect).

Continued on page 3 . . .



Works . . . Continued from page 2



1801-1805 Alameda Avenue (1921). Max Claussenius (owner); William McIntosh (builder); Sidney and Noble Newsom (architect).

Seven twee cottages tucked away at 456-460 Taylor (1927) make up a Spanish court in the classic mold. Less common is the casual grouping of ten brick cottages in Allen Court (1925) at 617-621 Pacific. Another cluster at 636-638 Lincoln (1923) presents an amalgam of duplexes and cottages in minimalist mode. As we head east we encounter many more types.

Center Courts

Our preferred cross-town route is Santa Clara Avenue. The quartet of board-and-batten Ranch houses at 749-751 (1940) demonstrates how styles evolved in court settings. Three stucco cottages form a receding row at 911 Santa Clara (1925) with the characteristic delicacy of Oakland builder Ward Durgin. Next door at 917-919 Santa Clara (1939) we have a pairing of four-unit Ranch apartments with a shared garden, central walk, and styled garage.

Just beyond the bend, near Grand Street, the peerless courts at 1541-1547 Santa Clara come into view. Stonehenge and Stoneleigh went up between 1927 and 1931. Metal letters spell out the names on twin stone archways providing access to 16 fairytale cottages and a pair of duplexes in lush garden settings,

signature works by celebrated Oakland fantasist W.W. Dixon. Owner-builder C.C. Howard went on to add eight units at the rear, facing Lincoln Avenue, in 1941. A late example of revivalism, Locust Lane proved to be the city's last sizable court.

We note other standouts. The tree-shaded group of four duplexes at 1826-1830 Santa Clara (1938) by local developer Sidney Traver owed its Spanish-Ranch styling to Oakland

architect F.H. Slocombe. A short detour leads to another apartment court at 1801-1805 Alameda (1921)—a trio of brick Tudor duplexes by Sidney and Noble Newsom, scions of a famous Bay Area dynasty. Chestnut Gardens (1933; 1940) at 1426 Chestnut is a marvel of storybook design; an archway in a street-front triplex leads to a secluded garden bordered by cottages. Deft styling and fine materials also characterize Tudor Lane (1937), a sequestered pair of duplexes at 2047-2053 Santa Clara. A right turn on Willow takes us to 2116 San Jose (1926), a leafy Spanish court developed by Champlin & Van Vlack with cottage rows and duplex backdrop.

Other specimens crop up around the central business district. Three bungalow duplexes in Craven Court (1924) form a row behind 2249 Central. Lea Court (1924-25) at 2245-2251 Lincoln and 2244-2250 Pacific is not a court but a street; yet the narrow passage and dozen diminutive houses warrant an honorable mention for Italian-born builder Ben Gambarini. Lincoln Court (1926) stands a couple of doors away. This well-preserved hybrid has the appearance of a bungalow court fused together to form an apartment building.



Lincoln Court (1926), 2225-31 Lincoln Avenue. W.C. Dunn (owner and builder).

Continued on page 4 . . .



Works Continued from page 3



1106 Park Avenue (1926). Champlin & Van Vlack (owner); George W. Van Vlack (builder).

We make a final detour at Park Avenue to visit two classic courts. The first, on the 1300 block near the branch post office, is Marti Rae Court (1924). Louis Kaliski, owner of the long-gone Strand Theater on Park Street, commissioned the motley cottages from builder Conrad Roth, residing in a tall duplex at the rear. A couple of blocks south at 1106 Park Avenue, past newly named Chochenyo Park, we come upon a second 10-unit court by Champlin & Van Vlack; also built in 1926, the cottages are sweetened by gumdrop topiary.

Bungalow Land

In the East End, Alameda's prime habitat for bungalows, George H. Noble looms large. A housepainter who took up construction in midlife, he hit his stride in 1915 with a tract of several dozen houses on Broadway, Buena Vista, and Noble Avenue. His premier project created an entire neighborhood south of Encinal Avenue on Pearl, Versailles, San Jose, Washington, and Calhoun—no fewer than 130 bungalows erected between 1917 and 1925. Over the course of his career we see his work evolve from rustic Arts & Crafts to a sleeker stucco idiom influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright, culminating in revivalist cottages in Medieval and Spanish modes.

Bungalow courts played a supporting role in Noble's oeuvre. Unlike Marion Court, his East End courts are standard cul-de-sacs integrated with the surrounding grid for ease of access. Courts of this type, lined with individual lots and houses, responded to the proliferation of the automobile in those years. Since they lack off-street settings and shared landscaping, it might be argued that they aren't really bungalow courts. After all, cul-de-sacs are a feature of tract layouts from the Victorian era to postwar Ranch subdivisions. I think they warrant inclusion.

Noble built four cul-de-sac courts in the East End. St. Margaret Court (1917) adjoins the corner of Broadway and Lincoln a block from Noble Avenue. Six bungalows (half with Prairie styling) share the pocket with an eye-catching duplex accentuated by a trident lamppost. Doris Court (1922), on the 2600 block of Washington, has a dozen houses in a range of styles; like other courts in the neighborhood (and across the island) it retains the old and extremely rare globe-top streetlights.

On the 2700 block is Lewelling Court (1924), a pair of houses leading to three duplexes, and at the other end of the block facing Calhoun we find Grace Court (1924-25). Variations on a Spanish theme, the five houses and cloistered duplex went up as the curtain came down on Noble's second act.

A handful of courts were built during the war and in the years following. Mirror-image duplexes with a shared garage (1831-31 and 1901-03 Pearl) comprise a Sidney Traver project from 1943. Leslie Bruzzone commissioned a similar court from builder Sid Dowling in 1950 at the corner of Third and Lincoln, near Marion Court—the final piece in an iconic 20th century repertoire.



St. Margaret Court (1917), 1528-1536 Broadway. George H. Noble (owner and builder).



BE A MUSEUM DOCENT

MAKE SOME NEW FRIENDS

Please contact the
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The Alameda Museum Quarterly is published four times a year and is available in electronic form on the museum website.

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THANKS TO OUR HERITAGE PARTNER



From the President's Podium

by Valerie Turpen

*I*wish I had great news about a reopening date for the museum, but until our volunteers and the population in general have received a vaccination we continue to be cautious. It is amazing that next month it will mark one entire year that the museum has been closed! Our antique desk calendar (all docents know it well) remains on the counter set at March 15—the last day we were open before the stay-at-home order went into effect.

How is the museum faring during this tough time? The museum pays rent for the space we occupy and we have utility bills, as every business or household. We have tightened our belts on all our bills as best we can. The museum depends greatly on sales from our gift shop and estate sales managed by our team. We have some income from online sales, particularly books. Melissa Marchi is delivering those to Alameda residents. We receive a stipend for archiving historic documents and objects for the City of Alameda.

Your support through donations has always been appreciated and this year so much more. It was amazing to see the prompt and generous response to membership renewal both online and by mail. Please check the mailing label of this newsletter to confirm you have renewed.

As of January the museum has three new board members and seven returning. I'd like to welcome Ron Mooney, Zhidong Hao, and Rasheed Shabazz to our group. I look forward to their fresh insight as we move ahead sharing Alameda's history with our community. Our board has a variety of life experiences and knowledge to contribute to the understanding our past and its place in shaping our future.

The task continues of converting our archives into a digital format. Every week more is accomplished. We received a grant again in 2021 from the Rotary Club that pays for the digital subscription storing the information (see page 8).

A new exhibit is up in the museum gallery window thanks to Myrna van Lunteren, Melissa Marchi, and Melissa Hagaman. Featured is a selection of items from the warehouse. We have a little bit of everything! If you are out for a stroll take a look. The picnic tables are once again available for having lunch at Alameda Avenue and Park Street. You can also check online for more information about these treasures (see back page). We are also changing items for sale in the gift shop display window. If you see something there you would like to purchase, send an email to info@alamedamuseum.org and we can arrange to meet you for pickup.

Valerie Turpen
President, Alameda Museum

A Guide to Alameda's Bungalow Courts

[1] 300-04 Lincoln / 1552-56 Third [1950]
Leslie Bruzzone [o]
S.J. Dowling [b]

[2] 1500 block Fourth [1920] Marion Court
George H. Noble [o] [b]

[3] 453-461 Central [1910] Max Dill [o]
G.G. Kneppler [b]
Rousseau & Rousseau [a]

[4] 456-460 Taylor [1927] Alfred V. Hougard [o]
William Kato [b]

[5] 511-517 Central [1912-13] Hoover Court
W.G. LeBoyd [o] [b]

[6] 527-529 Central [1926-28] Palace Court
G.F. Goerl [o]
M.H. Fish [b]

[7] 600 Central [1925] Neptune Court
R.C. Strehlow [o] [b]
Willis Lowe [a]

[8] 636-638 Lincoln [1923] Hacker Court
H.A. Weichhart [o]
A.S. Holmes [b]

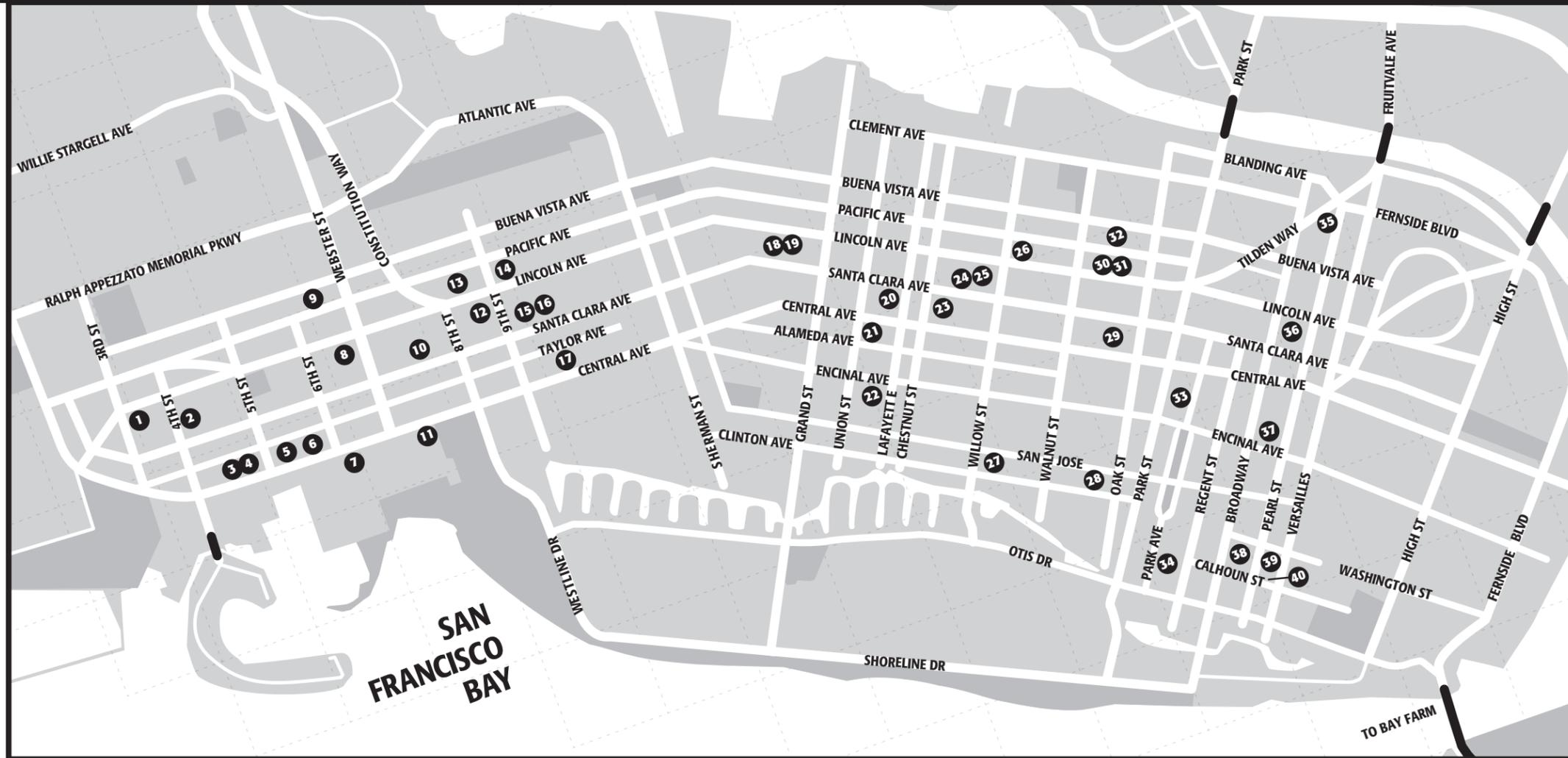
[9] 617-621 Pacific [1925] Allen Court
A.F. Allen [o] [b]

[10] 749-751 Santa Clara [1940] C.C. Howard [o] [b]

[11] 726-736 Central [1918] Marina Court
Alfreda Wright [o]
J.F. Rogers [b]
Carl Werner [a]

[12] 832 Lincoln [1915] Arthur Heydenaber [o] [b]

[13] 829 Lincoln [1930-31] Meta Kroger [o] [b]



[14] 1628 Ninth / 910 Pacific [1927] G.A. Nylander [o]
O. Ommundsen [b]

[15] 911 Santa Clara [1925] Charles M. Miller [o]
F. Ward Durgin [b]

[16] 917-919 Santa Clara [1939] M. Schaupp [o]
James L. Rich [b]

[17] 1010-1014 Taylor [1923-25] Herman Hollenstein [o] [b]

[18] 1541-1547 Santa Clara [1927-31] Stonehenge and Stoneleigh
C.C. Howard [o] [b]
W.W. Dixon [a]

[19] 1562-1566 Lincoln [1941] Locust Lane
C.C. Howard [o] [b]
Clay N. Burrell [a]

[20] 1826-1830 Santa Clara [1938] Sidney Traver [o]
Percy Spaulding [b]
F.H. Slocombe [a]

[21] 1801-1805 Alameda [1921] Max Clausenius [o]
William McIntosh [b]
Sidney and Noble Newsom [a]

[22] 1818-1820 Encinal [1924] Franconia Court
I.F. Randall [o]
C.H. Thrans [b]

[23] 1426 Chestnut [1933; 1940] Chestnut Gardens
W.E. Newton [o]
J.M. Olson [b]
E.T. Foulkes [a]

[24] 2047-2053 Santa Clara [1937] Tudor Lane
Edgar G. Jessen [o] [b]
John H. Geering [a]

[25] 2054-2056 Lincoln [1923] A.A. Boehn [o]
J.F. Perry [b]

[26] 2106 Pacific / 1614 Willow [1925] Homer G. Bishop [o] [b]

[27] 2116 San Jose [1926] Champlin & Van Vlack [o]
George W. Van Vlack [b]

[28] 2260-2262 San Jose [1925] Elmwood Court
Ida Spencer [o]
Ira A. Farringer [b]

[29] 2249 Central [1924] Craven Court
R.G. Craven [o]
C. Tollefsen [b]

[30] 2225-31 Lincoln [1926] Lincoln Court
W.C. Dunn [o] [b]

[31] 2245-2251 Lincoln / 2244-2250 Pacific [1924-25] Lea Court
Ben Gambarini [o] [b]

[32] 2239-2241 Pacific [1939] Jessie P. Pond [o]
H. Pemberthy [b]
F.H. Slocombe [a]

[33] 1300 block Park Ave [1924] Marti Rae Court
Louis Kaliski [o]
Conrad Roth [b]
Attributed to A.A. Cantin [a]

[34] 1106 Park Ave [1926] Champlin & Van Vlack [o]
George W. Van Vlack [b]

[35] 1831-33 + 1901-03 Pearl [1943] Sidney Traver [o] [b]

[36] 1528-1536 Broadway [1917] St. Margaret Court
George H. Noble [o] [b]

[37] 2615-2621 Encinal [1925] Wayne Court
Emma Hembockel [o]
J.H. and F.A. Rockingham [b]

[38] 2614-2618 Washington [1922] Doris Court
George H. Noble [o] [b]

[39] 2708-2712 Washington [1924] Lewelling Court
George H. Noble [o] [b]

[40] 2709-2713 Calhoun [1924-25] Grace Court
George H. Noble [o] [b]

Locations are given for most of the city's courts from first (1910) to last (1950). Entries include off-street sites on single lots, cul-de-sacs with multiple lots, and a few hybrids. Each property has at least three buildings. The date is the year the building permit was issued; a compound date indicates multiple permits. Code letters refer to owner [o], builder [b], and architect [a] – *Woody Minor*



FROM THE COLLECTION

Dorothy Gray Makes a Name for Herself

by Valerie Turpen

A **UNIQUE ITEM** recently photographed for the museum collection is The Dorothy Gray Patter. The narrow cream colored box contains a circular disk of rubber mounted at the end of a slim handle. In the instruction pamphlet women were advised to pat their faces with the device to stimulate circulation, giving cheeks a natural, rosy glow. It was also used for reducing a double chin, making muscles firm, and erasing lines and wrinkles. For added success you should also use various other Dorothy Gray products such as cleansing cream, circulation cream, special mixture tissue cream, orange flower skin tonic, and on...the company cosmetic line was extensive.

The woman behind these beauty secrets was Dorothy Cloudman, born in Gorham, Maine in 1886. She came from humble beginnings being the oldest of five children. Her father was a farmer who died in 1893 leaving her mother to care for the family. In the biography that accompanied her products Dorothy proclaimed herself to be the "daughter of a doctor, scientist and chemist of genius" who came to New York "bearing marvelous prescriptions and ointments, and much enthusiasm and youth".

In 1911, she changed her given name to Dorothy Gray reinventing her story as she embarked on her career. In New York City she found employment as a cosmetologist with Elizabeth

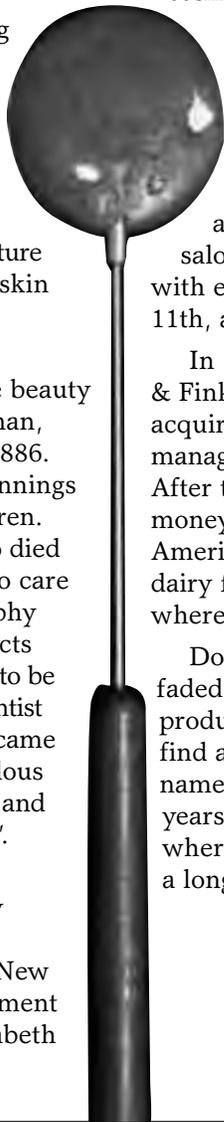
Arden in her newly opened Fifth Avenue salon. However, her association with the company came to an abrupt end in 1915 when Arden became aware Gray was living with a man she was not married to and fired her.

Some mystery surrounds this relationship. It appears the man was a Dr. Gray who actually adopted her when she was 25. Whatever their true relationship was, it may be that his money enabled Dorothy to establish her own business a year after leaving Arden. By 1916 the beauty culture and cosmetic industry reached a level of intense competition in the United States. Gray soon took out a patent for her name in association with beauty salons, perfumes, cosmetics and toiletries.

Dorothy Gray's business thrived as she opened salons in New York, Atlantic City, San Francisco and Washington, DC. Her office operated from the 12-story Dorothy Gray Building at 683 Fifth Avenue, NYC. The salon occupied the second floor with executive offices on the 10th, 11th, and 12th floors.

In 1927 Gray sold out to Lehn & Fink Products Company that was acquiring smaller companies to manage under their corporate entity. After the sale Dorothy used the money to travel in Africa and South America. Then she bought a large dairy farm in Dutchess County, N. Y., where she resided until the 1960s.

Dorothy Gray's name slowly faded from the history of beauty products, but you can still find a face cream carrying her name online today. Her final years were spent in Florida where she died in 1968 after a long and remarkable life.



Museum Receives Rotary Club Grant

On December 17, 2020 the Alameda Museum received a grant from the Rotary Club of Alameda, for our archive digitization project.

A ceremony was held on Zoom with Rotary Club dignitaries and representatives of other organizations awarded grants. VP Myrna van Lunteren, who has headed the project presented a demo of the CatalogIt application holding the digital version of our card filing system.

Two photos from the collection related to Rotary Club history were shown—a "Scotch" party in 1921, one year after the founding of the club; the planting of the "Rotary Tree" in then called Jackson Park in 1922.

Last year, the Rotary Club awarded the museum a grant to start this project. This grant will go towards another year subscription of the software.

We expect to complete the task of adding the location and photo of 20,000 – 25,000 objects in the archive.

Thank you Rotary Club for including us in this year's grant program!



Right: The Rotary Club with costumed members being "Scotch" in 1921. Image: Alameda Museum.



TAKE THE AIR IN THE REALM OF HISTORY

More Bungalow Style: The Burbank-Portola Heritage Area *by Judith Lynch*

Care to exercise amidst remembrances of the past? Try easy ambling through Alameda Heritage Areas, four sections of the island commemorating local lore. The booklets that helped City Council consecrate these unique neighborhoods were written by author-historian Woody Minor for the City Planning Department. One is featured in this issue; the remainder will be in future Quarterlies.

FOR A SATISFYING YET UNUSUAL PROMENADE, try this neighborhood for a concentrated dose of architectural heritage from the teens and twenties. Visible from all over, its towering palm trees are a harbinger of architectural treats to discover. The area is famed for its rich display of bungalows, an unusual *mélange* devoted to one home style. The place features two prominent builders who showcased their wares here. According to Woody Minor, “the neighborhood retains much of its original feeling . . . due to its fine collection of bungalows— one of the best assemblages of such houses in the city of Alameda.”

Following on the well-heeled heels of Victorian, Edwardian, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival buildings, the bungalow was a refreshing change for several reasons. Leaping into popularity following World War I, this new kind of home exhibited visual calm, being low to the ground and scantily clad with natural materials such as stone and clinker bricks. Economical in nature, the style used fewer materials because the ceilings were lower and its plan was more open, no longer composed of cramped rooms off a hall. Bungalow kitchens were of necessity designed for the home maker, because the supply of young women who had sought domestic work was dwindling. As ceilings crouched, furniture followed suit— or perhaps the design of furnishings led the way, often how architectural interior designs become trends.

As pointed out in the City booklet on Burbank-Portola, the development had some exemplary and quite modern features. All lots could be connected to utilities instead of needing inefficient individual connections, and street trees were planted in a pleasing pattern. Deed provisions ensured that each home matched its neighbors in total cost and all had to observe a minimum setback from the street, ensuring a pleasing uniformity.

Those homes were the products of two major builders who were responsible for 36 buildings on the originally laid out 56 land plots.

The *Alameda Times-Star* flattered in 1913, “The Strang brothers are now engaged in building a number of homes in the Bay View tract, (later named B-P)...” The newspaper went on that year to extoll brother Verbal N. Strang, the designer of all; the homes built by the Strang Bros. company. “His plans combine attractive exteriors, artistic, comfortable, and practical exteriors (for buyers) who want the best and the most useful.”

Prominent builder-developer George Noble came a bit late to B-P and his firm built only a scant handful of bungalows here. Elsewhere in Alameda Noble was “responsible for almost 300 similar houses between 1909 and 1925,” according to Minor. Included in this tally are the six in this heritage area.

On the picture-taking jaunt to this Heritage Area, we met Bente and her family, who have lived in a bungalow on Burbank Street for eleven years. “We learned about our neighborhood from a City booklet that detailed the Heritage Area specifics. We enjoy living here because most of our neighbors are a like-minded group who meet in each other’s homes and plan decorating homes and palm trees for holidays. Some are even longtime residents who grew up here!” In these isolated times, being part of a community bound together by history and bungalows and palms can be a blessing!

Getting there: To best appreciate the tasty combination of houses and looming trees, approach the area by way of Otis Street to Portola Avenue. Leave your vehicle and stroll up Burbank Street.

This handsomely appointed home is a lesson in bungalow details: a welcoming front porch flanked by elephantine columns, rustic stucco exterior, and generous broad roof. Image: Bente.





Making Ends Meet During Tough Times

by Ron Ucovich

DURING THE EARLY 1920s, my Grandpa John and Grandma Myrtle Mae ran an almond orchard and managed a fleet of produce trucks in Porterville, California. Everything was going well until one tragic day when a fire erupted, and the whole house and all its contents burned to the ground. John and Myrtle Mae and their two sons had to live in the bunkhouse while they ran the farm and tried to put their lives back together. Then, tragedy struck again in 1929, when the economy went bankrupt. Farmers were not able to sell their produce to local buyers. John found out that, although the Nation was in a serious depression, there was a lot of transportation work available in coastal sea ports to any man owning his own truck. He decided to sell his farm and move his trucking business to Oakland, California.

However, John had a dilemma: he had no money to buy a house, nor property for his business, and no one had money to buy his farm, so John placed an ad in the *Oakland Tribune* offering to trade his almond orchard in Porterville, in exchange for any valuable piece of land in the Oakland vicinity. He had several offers, but only one was judged of equal value to his farm. It was a brand new, three-story, upscale apartment building on Park Street in Alameda.

The man who had commissioned the apartment house to be built lost all his money in the Crash. The owner sent John a photograph of the building saying that he was willing to trade it for the farm. The couple decided to make the trade based upon that one photograph of the building.

John, Myrtle Mae, and their boys packed all their belongings into their produce trucks, and they moved "lock, stock, and barrel" to their new home in Alameda.

The family lived on the first floor of the building until John established his trucking company. They rented out the rest of the apartments until they were able to buy a large house on a spacious lot, which was large enough for Myrtle Mae to grow vegetables and to raise a few animals to keep the family fed throughout the year. Yes, I said farm animals on San Jose Avenue in Alameda.



The Alamo Apartments still stand at 1110 Park Street. The Ucovich family traded their farm for this building in Alameda.

During World War I when many dirt farmers were conscripted into military service, President Woodrow Wilson called for every American household to grow vegetables to alleviate the food shortage. Later, during the Great Depression when food was scarce again, President Franklin Roosevelt appealed to the American citizenry to grow, what he called "relief gardens." After that, in 1942 when World War II broke out, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt had the front lawn and ornamental gardens at the White House uprooted and replanted with vegetables for a "victory garden" to set an example for the Nation to emulate.

Well, Grandma was no stranger to farming, so she wasted no time in planting a Victory Garden which produced crops all year long. In the spring she harvested peas, leeks, artichokes, lettuce and celery. In the summer she had cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers, berries and broccoli. Eggplant, pumpkin, potatoes, beets and squash came in the fall, and carrots, cabbage, spinach, radishes and cauliflower in the winter. And for livestock, she raised chickens and rabbits right in her backyard.

The house was well-suited for Grandma's needs. In those days, the basement was not a storage room for old bicycles and baby furniture. It was a workplace where an industrious housekeeper could do her household chores.

One very important appliance that Grandma had in her basement was her wood-burning stove. The

Continued on page 11. . .



Making Ends Meet . . .Continued from page 10

stove was an incinerator for household refuse made of wood, paper or cardboard. After the trash was burned, the ashes were used to fertilize the vegetable garden. Ashes were also an important element for making lye soap. First, she would run water through the ashes to percolate out the lye. Then the lye water was mixed with lard, and left to simmer on the stove, being stirred frequently with a wooden paddle. After a few hours, the soap was thick enough to be poured into a metal pan to harden. In a couple of weeks, it was dry and ready to cut into soap cakes.

Rabbitry is the art of raising rabbits for food and clothing, and Grandma was a consummate rabbitrist. After she harvested a rabbit, she had to butcher it, cook it for dinner, and cure the pelt for sale. Curing had to be done in the basement in an area which is cool, dark, and dry. The skin was then affixed to a traction frame (like a curtain stretcher), to remove all creases and wrinkles. Fatty deposits were removed with a scraping knife, then, wood ash was rubbed onto the leather to help it dry faster and avoid offensive odors. After a couple of weeks, the pelt was ready to sell to the traveling furrier who would come around periodically to buy pelts from his many customers.

But, rabbit skins were not the only things hanging from the basement ceiling. There were red peppers, which Grandma would grind into chili powder after they had dehydrated. There were strings of onion and garlic bulbs stored for winter cooking. There was sausage, bacon, ham and cheese, all packed in salt so they could cure slowly. And, there were sheets of pasta dough dusted with flour, and drying slowly until Grandma decided to make spaghetti, ravioli, or lasagna noodles.

In another part of the basement, Grandma had crocks where she made pickles and olives. She had a special crock full of water and pickling lime, where she stored fresh eggs in the spring when the hens were laying, and kept them fresh through the winter when the hens didn't lay eggs. Grandma also had kegs full of wine and vinegar. There was a section for dried fruits, like figs, raisins, prunes, and currants. There was another section for canned fruits and vegetables. Grandma also used to make her own jams, jellies, relish, ketchup, and mustard. And, next to the canning stove was Grandma's butter churn.

During the Depression years, nothing went into the garbage can. When you bought something that came in a glass jar, after it was empty you kept it in the basement to store your extra castoffs. Grandma had jars full of used thumbtacks, rubber bands, paperclips, buttons, zippers, safety pins, shoelaces, nails, screws, nuts, bolts, and lock washers. Grandma had to fix anything around the house that broke. She had a shoemaker's last where she could replace the heel from a worn shoe. Or, she could nail taps onto worn soles. When clothes got old and faded, she would throw them into a tub of dye, and boil them on the stove to bring the color back.

She always had a ready supply of baling wire from old hay bales. Broken furniture, a picture frame, the screen door, or a broken rose trellis could all be mended with baling wire. In fact, there was an expression that Grandma always used. She never said that something broke... she always said, "It went haywire."



Containers such as these were used to store a variety of foods. This group resides in the Alameda Museum kitchen exhibit.

	<p>VOLUNTEERS: ALAMEDA MUSEUM & MEYERS HOUSE & GARDEN WE MISS YOU!</p>	<p>Thanks to all our volunteers who have been patiently waiting to return. You are still on our volunteer list and we will let you know as soon as we are able to safely open our doors.</p>	
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**ALAMEDA
MUSEUM**

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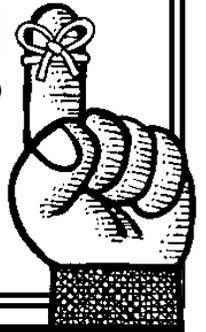
IN THIS ISSUE

- *Works from a Repertoire*
- *From the President's Podium*
- *A Guide to Alameda's Bungalow Courts*
- *From the Collection:*
Dorothy Gray Makes a Name for Herself
- *More Bungalow Style:*
Burbank-Portola Heritage Area
- *Making Ends Meet During Tough Times*

A Little Reminder...

Have you renewed your membership?

Check the mailing label on the envelope your newsletter arrived in.



Put on Your Walking Shoes (& your mask)

Have you visited the island's bungalow courts? How about the Burbank-Portola Heritage Area?

See pages 6 - 7 and page 9

Below: Stonehenge, Locust Lane & Stoneleigh from the letterhead of owner-builder C.C. Howard.



Due to Coronavirus
**ALAMEDA MUSEUM
& MEYERS HOUSE**
are currently closed.

**VISIT OUR
POP-UP EXHIBIT IN THE
MUSEUM STOREFRONT
2324 Alameda Avenue**

VISIT ONLINE AT
[AlamedaMuseum.org/
temporary-exhibitions/
behind-the-scenes-spring-2021/](http://AlamedaMuseum.org/temporary-exhibitions/behind-the-scenes-spring-2021/)

BEHIND THE SCENES

What's
in the
Warehouse?

