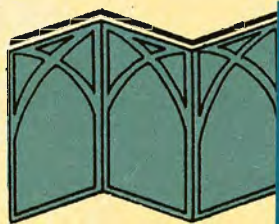
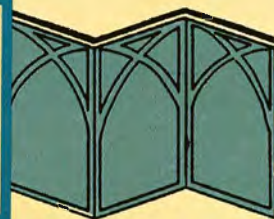


BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



# THE BAHHA NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2013

HOUSE TOUR NUMBER

NO. 141

*Explore*

*the hills above the Claremont Hotel*

*on the May 19*

*House Tour*



*inside: The Story of the Campus Theater*



Radston's Building entrance

# THE BAHA NEWSLETTER

NO. 141

SPRING 2013



City Council Chamber

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COVER: Alvarado Road seen from Claremont Hotel tower in early 1920s. BAHA Archives, gift of Bart White.

### WEBSITES YOU SHOULD KNOW

- BAHA's website includes notices of coming events, a complete list of Berkeley landmarks, illustrated essays, and much more: <http://berkeleyheritage.com/>
- BAHA also maintains a blog where stories and notices of immediate interest are posted in a timely manner: <http://baha-news.blogspot.com/>
- Look for BAHA on facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/berkeley.architectural.heritage?ref=hl>
- The Berkeley Historical Plaque Project's website that was inaugurated last year is geared to the historical plaques you see on buildings around Berkeley. You will find photos and essays on these noteworthy buildings: <http://www.berkeleyplaques.org>

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### NEW BOOK ON BAY AREA SHINGLED HOUSES

*Shingle Style: Living in San Francisco's Brown Shingles* by Lucia Howard and David Weingarten is a richly photographed presentation of some of the most iconic shingled houses of the San Francisco Bay Area. The late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century works of such legendary architects as Bernard Maybeck, Willis Polk, Ernest Coxhead, and Julia Morgan are shown in all their redwood splendor in the magnificent photographs by David Duncan Livingston. Fully half the selection of houses are in Berkeley, the city most known for its brown-shingle houses. Finally, a book on our signature architectural style, both lovingly photographed and knowledgeably written!



The authors are principals at Ace Architects and have written several books on local architecture. Included in *Shingle Style* is a special memorial tribute to architectural historian and founding BAHA board member John Beach. The foreword is by Daniel P. Gregory. *Shingle Style* will be available at the publications table at BAHA's Spring House Tour.

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Produced February-April 2013. Contributing writers this issue: Anthony Bruce, Daniella Thompson

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT

Dear BAHA Members,

Much attention has been focused on Downtown Berkeley in recent years. But one crucial edge of Downtown sits almost entirely neglected by civic leaders. This is Berkeley's Civic Center, a trove of architecturally and historically important buildings and spaces.

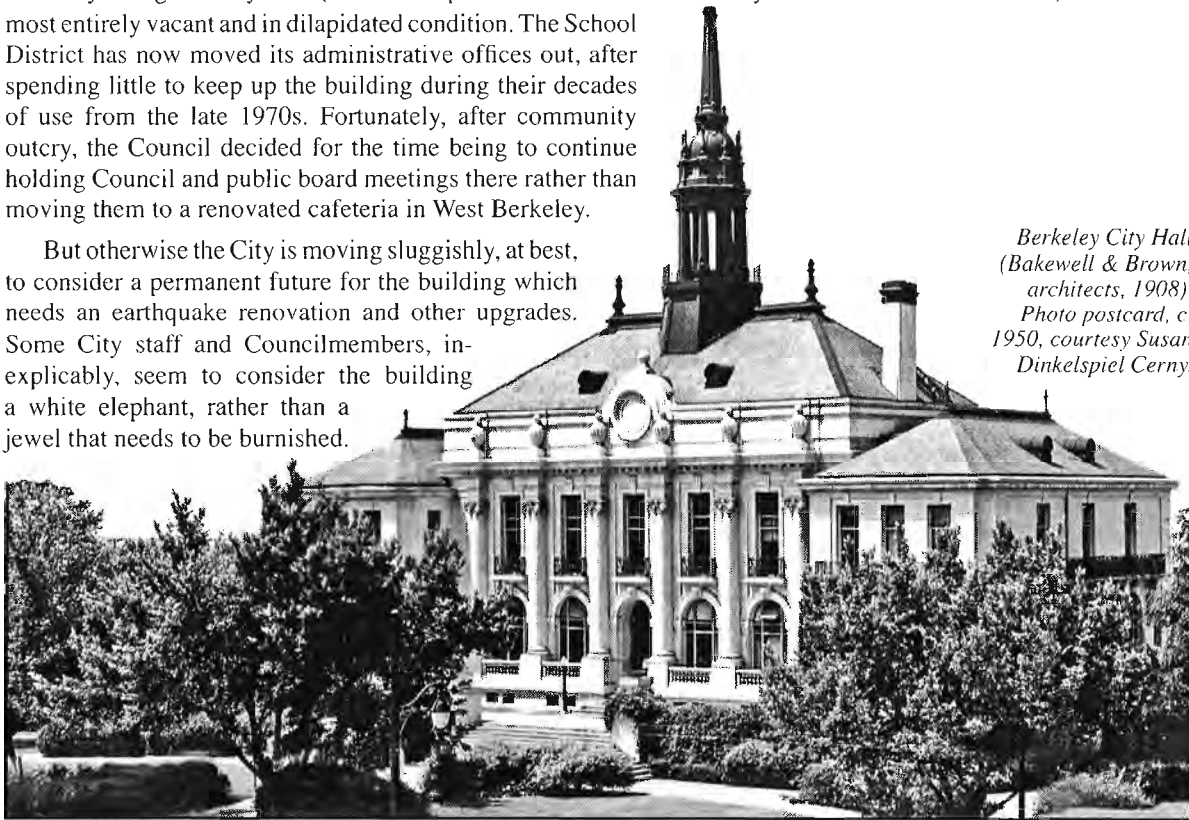
Several years ago, through the leadership of BAHA volunteers, our Civic Center was declared a National Register Historic District. This recognized the importance of key buildings such as our "old" City Hall (now the Maudelle Shirek Building), the Veteran's Memorial, the Community Theatre and older buildings at the Berkeley High School campus, Civic Center Park (later renamed to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.), and the Berkeley Post Office.

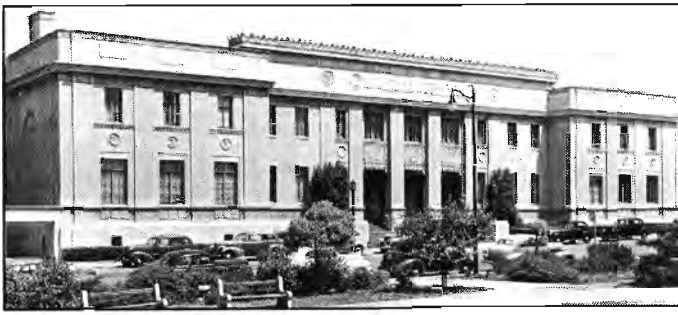
No less than four of those historic district elements are now seriously threatened. First, the United States Postal Service is planning to sell off our historic, century-old, main Post Office for short term profit. Rumors swirl of well-connected developers waiting in the wings to buy and tear down much or all of the building. A vigorous community campaign is underway to resist that misguided move.

On the other side of the park the picture is also discouraging, although it hasn't been grabbing headlines. Berkeley's original City Hall (which was preceded on the same site by the old wooden Town Hall) now sits almost entirely vacant and in dilapidated condition. The School District has now moved its administrative offices out, after spending little to keep up the building during their decades of use from the late 1970s. Fortunately, after community outcry, the Council decided for the time being to continue holding Council and public board meetings there rather than moving them to a renovated cafeteria in West Berkeley.

But otherwise the City is moving sluggishly, at best, to consider a permanent future for the building which needs an earthquake renovation and other upgrades. Some City staff and Councilmembers, inexplicably, seem to consider the building a white elephant, rather than a jewel that needs to be burnished.

*Berkeley City Hall  
(Bakewell & Brown,  
architects, 1908).  
Photo postcard, c.  
1950, courtesy Susan  
Dinkelspiel Cerny.*





*The Veterans' Memorial Building (Henry H. Meyers, architect, 1928), 1931 Center Street. Photo postcard courtesy Anthony Bruce.*

*below: Civic Center Park (Henry H. Gutterson, John Gregg, Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, Baldwin Woods, designers, 1940), showing fountain and flagstone terrace. 1947 photo from a Chamber of Commerce brochure, BAHA Archives.*

Across the street, the Veteran's Memorial has also been in moldering condition for decades. The upstairs with its largely forgotten complex of handsome meeting rooms is closed to use because of seismic hazards. The large auditorium, which used to be an active center of Berkeley community life and civic celebrations, is occupied by a hasty patchwork of office cubicles for a social service organization that should be better housed elsewhere.

And in the center of it all the park itself, although it was partially refurbished some years ago, has an unfinished core where Berkeley's glorious Art Deco fountain should be splashing. Time and again the City has considered funding for the fountain restoration, then diverted the money to other uses.

All this is not as it should be. The Berkeley community struggled for four decades, through boom times and bad times including two wars, to create our civic center in the first half of the 20th century.

Beginning with Berkeley High School on the south side, then the City Hall on the west, then the Post Office to the southeast, the Veteran's Building on the north and, finally, the creation of the park in the center and the Community Theater in the 1940s, Berkeley pursued a wonderful vision of a community center adorned with both functional and stately architecture ranging from Beaux Arts to Deco and active publicly owned, publicly used, spaces indoors and out.

We've now almost lost that vision. We need to revive it or a combination of the next earthquake and continuing "deferred maintenance" will thoroughly ruin our civic core and considerably diminish both the town and the Downtown. It would be a tragedy, since these buildings and spaces contain not only so much history, but vast potential for the future.

For example, a thoughtful restoration of the Veterans Building and old City Hall would bring back into active use tens of thousands of square feet of Berkeley-owned buildings for community events and celebrations, arts, meeting, museum use, and other activities.

Please use every opportunity to tell your City Councilmembers to make a priority of planning and advocating for the prompt restoration of the old City Hall and the Veteran's Memorial building in continued public ownership and public use, as well as finally funding the historic renovation of the Civic Center Park fountain. And please let the BAHA office know if you'd like to add your volunteer energy to an organized effort to promote this goal.

*Steven Finacom, Vice President*

*Carrie Olson, President*





*The Berg House (in the middle) at 2517 Regent Street in 1939. Donogh File, BAHA Archives.*

## HISTORIC SOUTHSIDE HOUSE FACES UNCERTAIN FUTURE

ON May 21, 2013, the Berkeley City Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing (date may change) on the appeal of a designation of the Mary J. Berg House, a 1901 Colonial Revival at 2517 Regent Street. The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated this building a Structure of Merit on November 1, 2012.

The Berg House, which had been converted to five apartments for wartime housing in 1943, was acquired in late 2011 by a landlord developer who planned to demolish it and build two new apartment buildings on the lot.

The Berg House is the oldest surviving house on its block (between Dwight Way and Parker Street, half a block east of Telegraph Avenue). This is a particularly vulnerable neighborhood. Close to half of the houses that stood on the 2500 block of Regent Street in 1911 were demolished to make way for apartment buildings, most of them unsightly. There are now ten apartment buildings on the block, of which seven were constructed between 1958 and 1966. A row of six large apartment buildings stands directly to the south of the

Berg House, dominating the east side of the block.



*The wide steps and broad lawn of the Berg House were good spots for neighborhood children to pose for photographs. Hughson family collection.*

The Berg House stands at the end of a row of four Colonial Revival houses that also includes 2503, 2509, and 2511 Regent Street, all designed by the notable architect Albert Dodge Coplin and built in 1902 and 1903. In the rear of 2511 stands 2515 Regent Street, a 1902 Colonial Revival Brown Shingle. The Berg House has the least altered façade in the row.

The general criterion in considering a building for designation as a Structure of Merit is that it be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings that includes landmarks. The Berg House meets all these criteria.

Directly across the street, at 2512–2516 Regent Street, is the Needham-Obata Building (1907), a City of Berkeley Landmark that has a second street façade at 2525 Telegraph Avenue. Adjacent to 2503 Regent



*The "Bonnet Box," at Regent Street and Dwight Way. Courtesy Faye Joyce, who resurrected this once-derelict building as the showroom for her millinery business in the 1940s.*

Street stands an additional City of Berkeley Landmark, the Alexander C. Stuart House (Pissis & Moore, 1891) at 2524 Dwight Way, and next to it the landmark George Edwards House (A.H. Broad, 1886) at 2530 Dwight Way. Visible across the street from 2503 Regent Street, at 2502 Dwight Way and Telegraph Ave.,



*The Regent & Dwight  
Neighborhood*

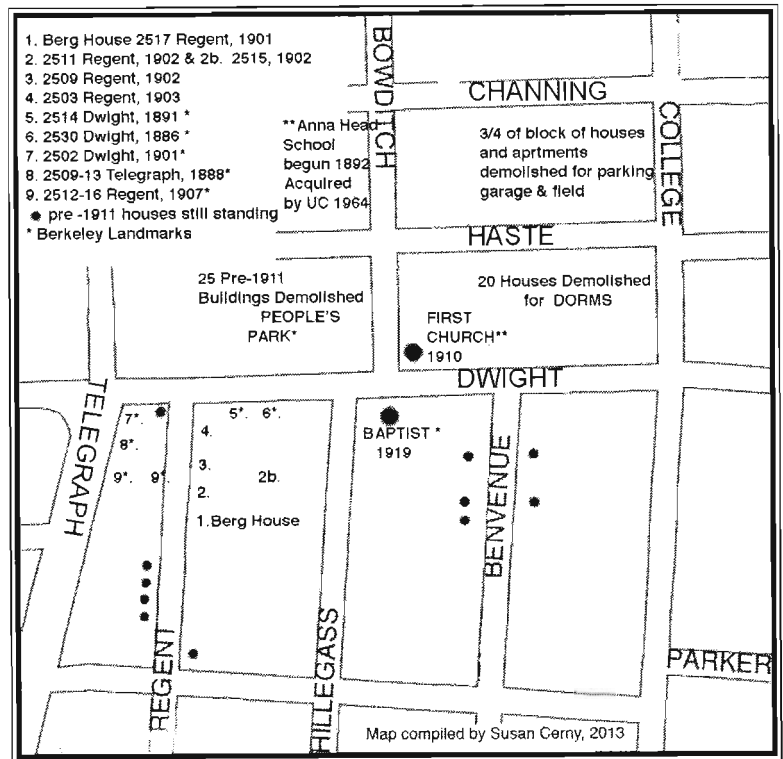


*clockwise from top left: Wm. Wilkinson House (A. Dodge Coplin, 1903), 2511 Regent, courtesy Pusey Real Estate, 1920s; house at 2515 Regent (seen at left of Berg House), 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA; Alexander Stuart House (Pissis & Moore, 1891), 2524 Dwight, Elizabeth Crews photo, 1974; Lucinda Reames House (A. Dodge Coplin, 1902), 2503 Regent, 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA; firehouse (Hose Company No. 45, built 1906) that stood at 2540 Regent, 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA.*

is the King Building (Albert Dodge Coplin, 1901), a fourth City of Berkeley Landmark. At 2506 Dwight Way stands a diminutive store (Joji Yokoi Designs) that dates from 1903 or earlier. Two more landmarks, the John Woolley House (1876) and the Ellen Blood House (R. Gray Frise, 1891), are likely to be transferred to the corner of Dwight and Regent.

All these buildings as a collection qualify for designation as a Historic District and should also be preserved individually, since each of them makes a vital contribution to the historic fabric that survives in this embattled neighborhood.

*The First Church of Christ, Scientist (Bernard Maybeck, 1910), Berkeley's only National Landmark, was constructed in 1910 as part of a fully built residential neighborhood. All that remains of this neighborhood within one and a half blocks of the church are about a dozen houses, three mixed commercial-residential buildings, and the Anna Head School buildings.*



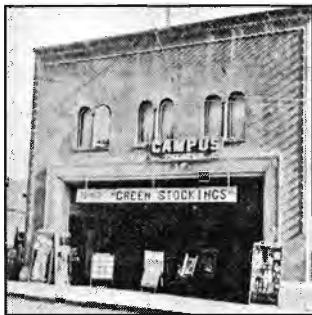
*Map of the Dwight and Regent neighborhood prepared by Susan Cerny. Early postcard of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, from BAHAs Archives.*



**THANKS FOR GIFTS TO BAHAs**



BAHAs received several very special books recently for the office library. Trish Hawthorne gave a copy of *Radford's Architectural Drawings* by William A. Radford, 1912. It is billed as a "complete guide to work of architect's office," and, as such, is profusely illustrated with plans and sketches. Jerry Sulliger surprised us with a collection of city directories from the late 1920s to early 1940s. Directories are one of the most useful research tools, and these years were missing from the archives.



*The Campus on Durant. The Moving Picture World, 1915.*

# THE TWO CAMPUS THEATERS

by

DANIELLA THOMPSON

**I**N A UNIVERSITY TOWN, the existence of a cinema called Campus Theater is natural enough, but Berkeley went one further in having two such establishments succeed one another in close order. Both are long gone, although their buildings still stand.

The earlier of the two was built in 1914 for John Arthur Elston and George Clark, law partners who had purchased Louis Titus's estate on the southeast corner of Telegraph and Durant avenues. The partners replaced the Titus mansion that stood at 2500 Durant Avenue with the five-story Cambridge Apartments, designed by Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr. The Titus garage on the eastern portion of the estate gave way to a cinema, also designed by Ratcliff.

The building permit of August 18, 1914 specified a two-story "motion picture theatre," to be built at a cost of \$10,000. The lessee was the Iris Motion Picture Company, which ran the cinema as the Majestic Theatre.

While no interior photos of the Majestic are at hand, we get a fair idea of what it looked like from a detailed description in *The Moving Picture World* of August 5, 1916:

The theater was erected about two years ago and is of tile construction, being practically fireproof. It covers a lot 40 by 130 feet in size and has a seating capacity of five hundred. If the chairs were arranged as they are in many other houses at least six hundred persons could be accommodated but comfort has been considered above all things and no crowding has been permitted. Twenty-two inch chairs are used and an unusually wide space has been left between the rows. [...]

One of the most interesting features of the theater is the lobby, which faces the university grounds. This is about 15 by 35 feet in size, with a red tile floor, and has been fitted up in an unusually attractive

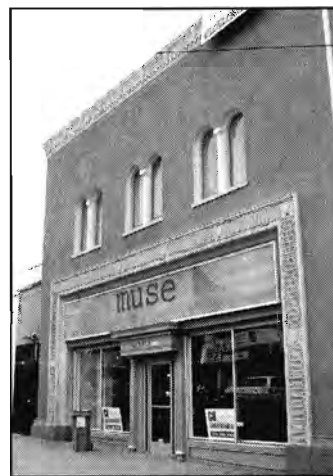
manner. Here are tables, old hickory furniture, potted plants and hanging baskets, affording a splendid setting for the posters which are hung in neat frames from the walls and shown on attractive easels. In its general appearance the lobby reminds one of a broad home veranda and is not much different from the entrances to some of the fine sorority houses in the neighborhood.

Above the lobby, reached by a stairway from the inside, is a beautiful parlor, furnished with wicker furniture, rest rooms for patrons, an office, sign and storage room and the operating room. In the latter are installed two Power's Cameragraphs No. 6A and a General Electric Compensarc. The picture projected is a little larger than is usually found in a house of this size, being 14 by 19 feet. A gold fiber screen is used with good success.

Music is furnished by a Fotoplayer installed at a cost of \$5,000 and this is becoming a feature of the theater, the musician being an expert performer. The price of admission at all times is ten cents for adults and five cents for children.



*The Campus on Bancroft. Berkeley Gazette, 1926.*



*The Campus (Majestic) on Durant today. Daniella Thompson, 2004.*



The Majestic operated for less than a year. There may have been several reasons for its early demise, but one of them was spelled out in the *Moving Picture World* article:

When the house was first opened under a different management there was no heating plant and the cement floor was a source of great discomfort, but the new proprietors have installed a heating system and the place is now comfortable at all times.

The new proprietors were the Campus Motion Picture Company, under the management of R.M. Gilman. On August 21, 1915, *The Moving Picture World* reported that “[t]he Campus theater, Berkeley, Calif., formerly known as the Majestic, opened during the summer school at the University.”

Under the new management, the program changed daily. Paramount movies were screened four days a week, V-L-S-E films on two days, and Metro or Pathé productions on the remaining day. A regular monthly program calendar was mailed to patrons.

An ongoing challenge in running the Campus Theater was the fact that it drew 60% of its patronage from the student body and faculty, which reduced attendance drastically during the summer vacation. “...it is likely that the theater will always be closed during this period, as is the case this year,” reported *The Moving Picture World* in August 1916.

The theater succumbed shortly thereafter (it wasn't listed in the 1917 and 1918 directories) and was turned into a store. Its reincarnation began on February 24, 1925, when the theatrical impresario Frank Atkins, then living at 724 Spruce Street, took out a building permit for a 50-foot-high theater building, to be constructed on Bancroft Way. James T. Narbett of Richmond was the theater's architect, and F. W. Maurice of Oakland, its builder.

Largely forgotten now, the British-born Narbett (1874–1936) was in his day one of the the busiest architects in Northern California. Brought up in Benicia and Crockett, Narbett attended the Vander Naillen School of Engineering in San Francisco before taking up contracting. In 1907, he began

**RAH-RAH-RAH!**  
**JANUARY 20, 1926**  
 AT 6:30 P.M. THE DOORS WILL BE  
**OPEN**

**GALA OPENING**  
 WEDNESDAY  
 JANUARY 20  
 1926

**REGINALD DENNY**  
 IN  
**"CALIFORNIA STRAIGHT AHEAD"**  
 BEGINS SUNDAY, JANUARY 24  
 AND FOR 2 DAYS  
*The Epic of the Barbicid*  
**"Kentucky Pride"**  
 The greatest stepchild of the Blue Grass  
 Men of War, America, Fair Play  
 swing their way through a love story of  
 supreme interest.  
**CAMPUS**  
 BANCROFT AT UNION

**Berkeley's Showplace**  
**CAMPUS**  
 BANCROFT AT UNION  
 4 DAYS, STARTING WEDNESDAY

**Laura La Plante**  
 in **"THE TEASER"**  
 with **PAT O'MALLEY**

A sippy comedy-drama in which  
 love tangles, jealousies and  
 lessons in etiquette all mingle in  
 a merry medley of laughter.

**WALTER D. BEATON**, eminent Scotch  
 baritone; **Hoffman** at the organ.

**Added Attraction Extraordinary**  
 Movie picture taken of the Oak opening of the Campus  
 Theater. "Woe for Woe!" Then see yourself on the screen.

CONTINUED SHOW FROM 1 P. M. TO 11 P. M. DAILY  
 PHONE BERKELEY 11 FOR STARTING HOUR

Newspaper advertisements for the opening of the Campus Theater on Bancroft in January, 1926, from the Berkeley Gazette and Courier (Courier ad courtesy Berkeley Historical Society). A few weeks later, the Laura La Plante film

featured an "Added Attraction Extraordinary" — "Motion pictures taken of the Gala Opening of the Campus Theater. Were you there? Then see yourself on the screen."



*The Campus Theater on Bancroft Way. Courtesy Jack Tillmany. Two newspaper advertisements announcing the second "grand opening," after it became a Fox West Coast theater.*

private architecture studies and obtained his state license. Living in Chico, he designed Masonic Temples for that town and Oroville, as well as buildings in Chico, Orland, Willows, Dunsmuir, and Sacramento. In 1911 he moved to Richmond, where he designed major commercial buildings, the Elks' Lodge, Richmond City Hall, the fire stations, and all but two public schools. In addition, he designed many school buildings throughout Contra Costa County. During World War I, Narbett was in charge of the expansion of the Hercules Powder plant.

An almost plain box, the Campus Theater building escaped dullness through the judicious application of decorative details such as bas-reliefs, tile panels, and windows at the mezzanine level. The design was described as "reminiscent of the period of the Moorish invasion of Spain." Flanking the marquee were two storefronts. Within, the luxurious cinema featured a large stage, frescoes, a "Mighty Wurlitzer" organ, and "deep opera chairs" for 1,400 patrons, arranged stadium-style.

Under the management of Golden State Theatre Corporation, the Campus opened on January 20, 1926 as "Berkeley's Showplace," with a gala evening that included live music and dignitary speeches in addition to the feature film, *California Straight Ahead* starring Reginald Denny. The gala was filmed, and screened as part of the program that opened on February 3rd.

Golden State's reign at the Campus was brief. Apparently, the theater's programming was not on par with the facilities. Still billed as "Berkeley's Showplace De Luxe," it closed for a few days in late August 1927, reopening on September 3rd as a Fox West Coast property. Fox renovated the theater, enlarging the stage to accommodate vaudeville numbers and outfitting the usherettes with snappy new uniforms. "It is my sincere ambition to make the Campus Theater Berkeley's leading playhouse," stated the manager, Clarence L. Laws, formerly of Fox's California Theater. Bandleader Horace Heidt and his orchestra were a daily attraction at the reopened theater.

The Campus continued to falter under Fox management. In February 1931, it was advertised as “Berkeley’s Only De Luxe Theatre Offering Extended Engagements!,” yet film programs ran for only two days each, while the Fox California and the Fox U.C. ran films for a whole week and had more prominent ads. The Fox Campus was closed in December 1932 “because of a shortage of suitable product,” reopening in September 1933 under a new policy, “in view of the discriminating taste of its former audience.” First-run movie programs were to change three times a week (no different than before). This scheme, too, was short-lived.

By 1935, the Campus had ceased to offer a regular movie program and was rented to independent promoters for individual spectacles. In March of that year, journalist Anna Louise Strong lectured on “Dictatorship and Democracy in the Soviet Union.” In April, William E. Chamberlain presented a dance recital by Caroline Chew, “America’s only Chinese woman dancer.” In May, the film *Three Songs about Lenin* was screened, followed in June by G.W. Pabst’s film *Don Quixote*, starring Feodor Chaliapin.

In October 1935, Chamberlain began presenting regularly scheduled foreign and revival films at the Campus, beginning with the Russian film *Chapayev*, followed by Noel Coward’s *The Scoundrel*; *Mädchen in Uniform*; *Sanders of the River* starring Paul Robeson; and Noel Coward’s *Bitter Sweet*. In December 1935, the Campus Theater was the venue for a benefit performance by the celebrated tenor Tito Schipa.

William Edwin Chamberlain (1880–1966) was a classically trained baritone, voice teacher, and concert promoter. He acted as president of the Alameda County Music Teachers’ Association, officer of the Berkeley Music Association, and founded the California Music League. Chamberlain directed young people concerts at Berkeley High School and was a major force in the musical life of Berkeley. An Easterner, Chamberlain married Berkeleyan Eugenia Loy, the daughter of a printer and typographer who owned one of Berkeley’s most beautiful houses, designed by

Ernest Coxhead, at 2431 Ellsworth Street. Chamberlain moved to Berkeley in 1907, raised a family and resided for the rest of his life in the Loy family house. In the rear yard, Chamberlain built a voice studio designed by Maybeck in 1923.

Chamberlain’s reign at the Campus may have been the only time when the theater enjoyed decent programming and a steady patronage. That reign approached its end when Fox announced in August 1941 that it was taking its theater back. In July 1942, Chamberlain was appointed manager of the Berkeley Theater, owned by the Blumenfeld chain.

Fox kept the Campus in operation through the late 1950s, but the theater was relegated to a lowly status, screening reruns. Meanwhile, its former role as an art house had been assumed by the Cinema Guild, which opened on Telegraph Avenue in 1952.

In 1958, Frank Atkins’ widow, who still owned the Campus Theater building, sold it to the Camping Construction Company of Oakland. The latter gutted the cinema in January 1959, converting it to an office building.

William Chamberlain lived to see the Campus Theater gutted. He died in 1966, aged 86. Within two years, the beautiful Loy-Chamberlain House was demolished after a desperate fight by preservationists who mounted the barricades in an effort to save it. The house was replaced by a large apartment building. Only Chamberlain’s Maybeck-designed studio was spared and moved to the Claremont district.



*The Campus Theater Building as it looks today after its remodel in 1959. Daniella Thompson, 2013.*

# SPRING HOUSE TOUR ON SUNDAY, MAY 19



# CLAREMONT HILLS



THE 2013 House Tour Committee has had a lot of fun visiting the ten houses that will be open on BAHA's May 19th House Tour. We can assure you that the houses are of varied architecture and are full of delightful surprises! House Tour chair, Julie Nachtwey, who lives in the tour neighborhood and knows all the houses inside and out, has been an invaluable resource. The theme of the tour was Julie's idea and she has successfully sought the gracious and generous participation of her friends and neighbors. All of the houses are located in the hills above the Claremont Hotel and are part of a 1906 Mason-McDuffie subdivision appropriately named "The Hotel Claremont Tract."

The story of the tour neighborhood begins at the beginning of the 20th century where, along the gentle rise of the East Bay Hills where the Claremont Hotel and the Claremont district are now located, the land was open country dotted by farms, ranches, and Victorian country estates. As early as 1864, when Frederick Law Olmsted, popularly known as the father of American landscape architecture, was asked to lay out Oakland's Mountain

View Cemetery and the early College of California property in Berkeley, he wrote of riding his horse across the ridges of the same terrain, envisioning a "pleasure drive" from Oakland into Berkeley that "... would lay open a most desirable region for residences all along the foot of the mountains."

It wasn't until 1903, after huge fortunes had been made in mining and land investments, that the idea was born to link the East Bay with San Francisco by an inter-urban electric train and ferry system—the Key Route—that would service picturesque subdivisions comprising fine homes situated along contoured garden parkways. The advancement of the idea was later successfully brokered by including plans for a splendid tourist hotel perched high on a 14-acre landscaped garden, "... long spoken of as one of the most beautiful private holdings in Alameda County," to be called the Claremont Hotel.

Following an architectural competition, ground was broken in 1906 for the Claremont Hotel, designed by Charles W. Dickey. It was not only to be a glorious destination site, seen from all points around the Bay, but it was also to be a large park, enhancing the environment for the building of beautiful homes.

Olmsted did not have the opportunity to apply his suburban planning ideas to the Claremont, although he had formulated them while laying out the Berkeley Property tract (1865), to be followed by twenty subdivisions he designed in other states. All were based on the same principles, sited around a park or an open public space that integrated a natural setting with spacious lots for elegant residences with ample garden setbacks. Within this park-like setting, the particular characteristics of the local terrain were reflected along planted roadways aligned with the contours of the landscape, as well as in central transit parkways that connected to town centers.



*Two entry details.  
Daniella Thompson, 2013.*



*The Claremont Hotel with the tour area off to the right in this detail from an early 1920s postcard. Courtesy Anthony Bruce.*

It was Duncan McDuffie, the young, capable real estate developer and partner of Joseph J. Mason, who possessed the background and the personal qualities needed to assemble the many pieces of land for establishing the residential subdivisions of the Claremont district. McDuffie was also attuned to nature, being an intrepid mountaineer and an active member of the Sierra Club.

Following in Olmsted's footsteps, McDuffie was the one who could muster the resources to complete the grand idea of laying out a suburban neighborhood that enhanced the spectacular Claremont Hotel and its gardens and made the Key Route lines built out beyond the centers of Berkeley and Oakland pay back the capital invested in them. It was Duncan McDuffie who was able to convince the various owners of the large land holdings to sell, persuade prospective investors to join real estate ventures, hire away the essential talent of the City of Berkeley Engineer, Charles Huggins, for laying out subdivision plans, and point prospective homebuilders to the best local architects.

The first subdivision to open around the Claremont Hotel was Claremont (1905), built upon the Edson Adams land that included The Uplands, Domingo Avenue, and The Plaza Drive. Next came the Hotel

#### **TOUR VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

*Please contact BAHA if you would like to volunteer the day of the tour. Call 510-841-2242 or send an e-mail to [baha@berkeleyheritage.com](mailto:baha@berkeleyheritage.com) (include your address and telephone number if you have not volunteered before). Volunteers are assigned one of two shifts and receive complimentary admission to the houses during the other two hours.*

Claremont and Oak Ridge tracts (1906), including Alvarado Road, The Tunnel Road, and Oak Ridge Road. In 1907, the Garber and Palache property was developed as Claremont Court, including Avalon Avenue and Claremont Boulevard. The first house was built in the fall of 1905, and by the late 1920s the area reached its present form.

The houses that will be open on this year's BAHA tour are all survivors of the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire. They were built between 1909 and 1941 by leading architects and designers of their day, including Albert Farr; Louis Christian Mullgardt; William C. Hays; William R. Yelland; Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr.; Vickery, Atkins & Torrey; Clarence Tantau; William E. Schirmer; Archie Newsom; and Louis Engler.

Please be aware that this is a hillside neighborhood and, although narrow, winding Alvarado Road climbs the hill above the Claremont Hotel gently, several of the houses can be reached from the road only by steep stairways or steep paths. Keep this in mind and wear appropriate walking shoes.

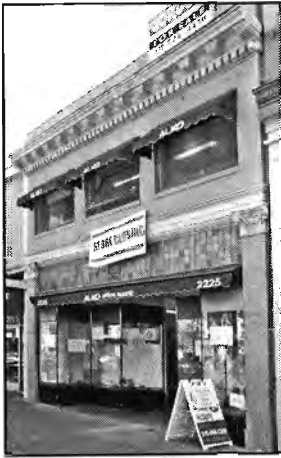
As usual, tour tickets will be available for purchase the day of the tour. The location for the ticket booth has not been determined. If you plan to buy tickets that day, please check the BAHA website closer to May 19 ([berkeleyheritage.com](http://berkeleyheritage.com)).

*Latticed opening.  
Daniella Thompson,  
2013*



# LONG-STANDING DOWNTOWN BUSINESS CLOSES

## ALKO OFFICE SUPPLY (1908–2013)



FOR the past thirty-five years, whenever the BAHA office ran low on supplies, someone would make a short trip to the small two-story brick building at 2225 Shattuck Avenue. Once there, passing the bronze-framed display windows; pushing open the sturdy front door, with its distinctive brass hardware; and treading across the four points of the com-

pass inlaid in the time-worn linoleum floor, one would be greeted by a brightly lit interior. Daylight pours through the skylights, passes through the great elliptical opening in the mezzanine, and floods the space, revealing an array of pens, paper, notebooks, file folders—in fact, everything needed to equip a well-run office. This is Alko Office Supply, which, sadly, closes on April 30.

Alko is one of Berkeley's longest running businesses. Although its history is a bit complicated, with name changes and change of owners that are best explained in the official history on the Alko website, it can be stated that the present-day business traces its roots to the stationery store opened by Clifford and Beatrice Straus Radston at this site in 1908.

The business and the building have been interconnected since the beginning. That year, the Berkeley Electric Lighting Company sold their small building to Lucy (Mrs. Wallace) MacGregor, who leased it to the Radstons. The success of the growing retail establishment soon necessitated changes. In 1913 Mrs. MacGregor built a new one-story structure (William Porter, designer) expressly for Radston's, and in 1922, Radston's, by then owner of the building, expanded

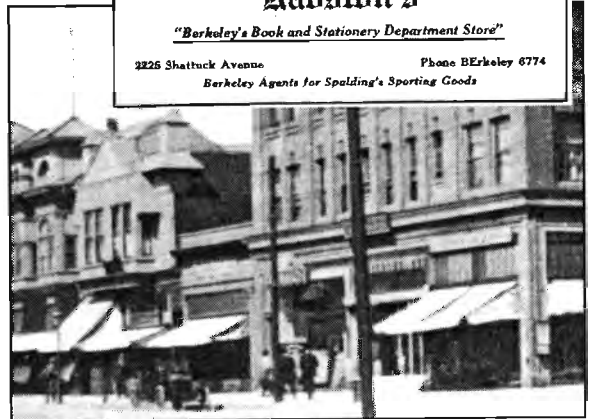
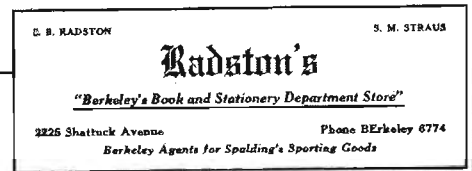
*Right: 1928 display ad for Radston's "book and stationery department store." The one-story Radston's Building of 1913 can be seen in this contemporary view where it is dwarfed by its taller neighbors. Postcard courtesy Anthony Bruce.*



*Andrew Allen, Gary Shows, Claudia Erne, and Jonah Peele at work behind the counter at Alko, a week before the store's closing. Anthony Bruce, April 23, 2013.*

once again. The height of the 1913 building was increased to allow a mezzanine and the building was extended south to bring it flush with the building next door. The facade that we know today combines the design and ornament of 1913 (classical cornice, pilaster capitals) with a new shopfront ensemble and large, pivoting mezzanine windows from the 1922 remodel.

The Radston's Building, wrote Betty Marvin in the Historic Resources Inventory form prepared in 1979, "is one of the most turn-of-the-century 'Main Street'-looking buildings on Shattuck Avenue." And this was written even before owner Gary Shows uncovered the



intricate small-paned clerestory window and painted the building to accentuate its classic features.

With the imminent closing of Alko Office Supply, Downtown Berkeley loses yet another long-established and iconic business (think of Hink's, Edy's, and Tupper and Reed, to name a few). Also lost with the closing of Alko, is one more reason to visit downtown to shop for the necessities of daily life.

Those of us at the BAHA office will miss the years-long relationship we enjoyed with Alko and its pleasant and knowledgeable owner and staff. After 100 years, a new chapter in the story of the Radston's-Alko Building is about to begin.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

*BAHA welcomes the following people who have joined BAHA since the last Newsletter went out. Tell your friends about BAHA and encourage them to join, too!*

Susan Aberg  
Christina Ahlstrand  
Sue Arendt  
Greg Baldwin  
David Baruch  
Emily Bergfeld  
Varol Breslin  
Patricia & Jeff  
Chandler  
Foster Curry &  
Mandy Aftel  
Steven Dyke  
Bobbi Feyerabend  
Judith Frisk  
Gantt P. Galloway

Stacy Hall  
Matt Heafey  
Matthew Hughes  
Eliza Khuner  
Tom Krem  
Ken Krug  
Ronald Kyle &  
Doris Balabanian  
Monica Ley  
Michael Lindemann  
Matthew Madison  
Katherine Miller  
Janice Mithaler

Phillip Moss  
John Newton  
Ellen B. North  
Colby Olds  
Christian Olson  
Mark Peters  
Rachel & Dean Prater  
David Ratoosh  
Mary Beth Ray  
Gayle Richardson  
Patricia Roberts  
Will Rogan  
Noah Schreck

Benjamin C. Sigman  
Kenyatta Monroe Sinkler  
Sandhya Sood  
Stephen Stine  
Pam Vaolis & Lloyd Lindford

Susan Wester  
David Stark Wilson  
Moe Wright

### CONTRIBUTING

Cyndi & Scott Stanfield

### SUSTAINING

Angela & Nathan George

### HONORARY

Casa Joaquin Murrieta  
Chi Psi

### ... AND MEMBERS RENEWED!

Julie Nachtwey, Doris Nassiry, J. Neilands, Karen Nelsen, Karen & Guy Nelson Benveniste, William Newton, Carland Nicholson, Gretchen Nicholson, Martha Nicoloff, Burt Norall, Frank A. Norick, Jim Novosel:

### CONTRIBUTING

Acc Architects/Lucia Howard, Tamlyn Schafer Bright, Zeldia Bronstein, Barbara & Henrik Bull, Lorna & Warren Byrne, Eunice Childs, Matthew Delaney, Candice Economides & David Hill, Ted Feldsher & Sally McLaughlin, Bruce A. Fodiman, Dr. Sarah Gill, John Gordon & Janis Mitchell, Michael Gray, Trish & Tony Hawthorne, Dr. J. Pearce Hurley, Steve Hyland, Debbie & Ann Jenkins, Jason Kaldis Architect, Inc., Michael Kreps, Juliet Lamont & Phil Price, Nora & Paul Land, Sally Levinson & Doug Daniels, Keith Miller & Jacqueline Beth,

John & Mary Lee Noonan, Barbara Oliver, George O. Petty, Jean K. Reilly, Barbara Robben, Paul Roberts, Ruth & Y.H. Rutenberg, Marjorie & Ken Sauer, Jack Sawyer, Susin Schwartz, Sally & Bernard Sklar, David Snippen, Molly Sullivan & Philip Monrad, Connie & Kevin Sutton, Paul Teicholz, Bill Turner, Searle Whitney.

### SUSTAINING

David Bigham & Howard Arendtson, Carl Bunch, Carina & James Grandison, Pat Kelly & Jennifer Doebler, Deborah Finch, Kathie & John Longinotti, Joan & Donald Mastronarde, Mara Melandry, Judy & Fred Porta, Elsie Revenaugh, Paul Templeton, Ann K.U. Tussing, John Underhill.

### HONORARY

Bancroft Hotel, Davis Hall, J.R.K. Kantor.

### IN MEMORIAM

Laura L. Anderson  
Steve L. Drobinsky  
Ellen Gunther  
Wallace Matson  
David Morris  
Fran Packard  
Jane Powell  
Thomas V. Roland  
Carol D. Soc

## You can join BAHA —

Send completed form and payment to P.O. Box 1137, Berkeley, California 94701

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I want to be ACTIVE!

*Special interests or talents:*

### \$35 Individual

Right to cast 1 vote per election. Receipt of quarterly *Newsletter*. Member discount on 2 tickets to spring House Tour. Discount on most books bought through BAHA.

### \$50 Household

Right to cast 2 votes per election. Receipt of quarterly *Newsletter*. Member discount on 4 tickets to spring House Tour. Discount on most books bought through BAHA.

### \$100 Contributing

Same benefits as Individual and Household categories, plus member discount on 6 tickets to spring House Tour.

### \$250 Sustaining

Same benefits as Contributing, plus member discount on 8 tickets to spring House Tour.

*You may now join BAHA over the Internet! Go to the BAHA Website at this address: <http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/membership>.*

### \$500 Patron

Same benefits as Contributing, plus member discount on 10 tickets to spring House Tour.

### \$1000 Benefactor

Same benefits as Contributing, plus member discount on all tickets to spring House Tour.

### \$15 Student/Low-Income

Same benefits as Individual and Household categories.



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



*Daniella Thompson, 2013*

### **MAY 19—BAHA HOUSE TOUR**

“Claremont Hills.” Ten houses will be open from 1 to 5 pm, with light refreshments in one of the gardens. \$30/\$40. See page 12 for more information or go to [berkeleyheritage.com](http://berkeleyheritage.com)

### **MAY 30—BAHA ANNUAL MEETING AND PRESERVATION AWARDS PRESENTATION**

Hillside Club, in the evening. Announcement will be mailed in May, or check the BAHA website for updates: [berkeleyheritage.com](http://berkeleyheritage.com)

### **JUN 5—BAHA OUTING**

Dunsmuir-Hellman Historic Estate, Oakland. On acres of landscaped grounds, the mansion (J. Eugene Freeman, 1899) includes a Tiffany-style dome, paneling, 10 fireplaces, and parquet floors. \$15 by advance reservation. NB: a Wednesday.

### **JUN 28—BAHA FILM SCREENING**

Premier screening of Paul Bockhorst’s documentary: *Pursuing Beauty: The Architecture of Bernard Maybeck* at the Town and Gown Club. Part of the Maybeck Legacy Weekend. Watch for announcement early June, or check website.

### **JUN 30—OPEN HOUSE**

Open House at Maybeck’s First Church of Christ, Scientist, 3 to 5pm. Maybeck Legacy Weekend. For details, go to: [www.friendsoffirstchurch.org/#](http://www.friendsoffirstchurch.org/#)

### **AUG—BAHA LECTURE AND BOOK-SIGNING**

Lucia Howard will talk on Bay Area shingled houses and sign copies of the new book, *Shingle Style: Living in San Francisco’s Brown Shingles*. Date and place to be announced.