

Dec. 2006 Newsletter

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Hall-Scott's Railcars

By Phil Gale

As a follow-up to the article on Hall-Scott's aircraft engines [Spring 2006] here is another aspect of the company's engine business: railcars.

In Northern California, the Yreka Western Railway ran eight miles from the Southern Pacific connection at Montague to Yreka. At times, there was insufficient freight or passengers to run a regular steam trains, so the railroad had purchased a small (2 1/4 ton, 15'6" long) 12 passenger rail bus made by Fairbanks-Morse. This car served its purpose for passengers, but was too light for towing any freight cars.

At this time, directors of the Yreka Western, George Scott (father of Hall-Scott founder, Bert Scott) and William Van Arsdale were looking for something bigger and more powerful. George asked his son and Elbert Hall to check out the McKeen car that was then being used by the

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PHOTO COURTESY OF MRS. LANE

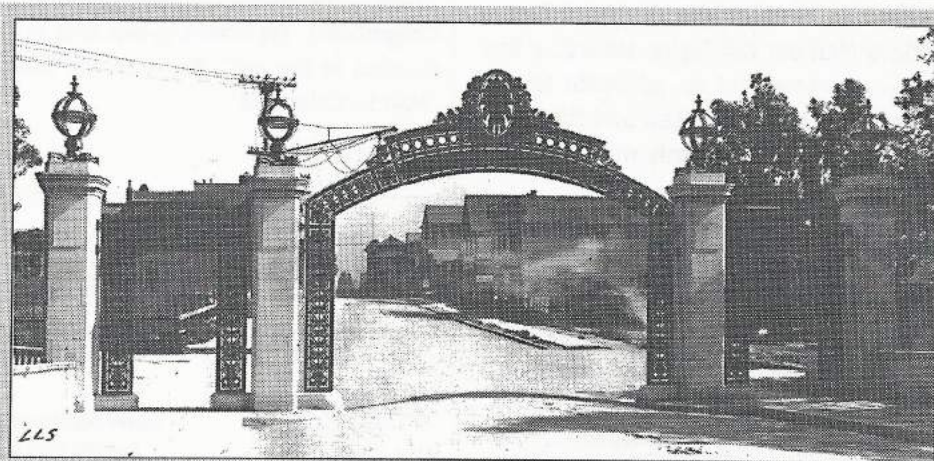
At Camp Ashby: Mrs. Lucile M. Lane and four members of the Camp Ashby Choir (c.1944)

Camp Ashby, Berkeley

Few people remember that the area now occupied by Weatherford BMW and the former Whole Earth Access, among others, was once a military base. On January 1, 1942, thirteen acres in Berkeley were acquired from private owners, the State of California, and the City of Berkeley for the San Francisco Port of Embarcation

in the 6th Army Area. The U.S. government established a military base during World War II to protect our 'target area' city and to quarter and train the 779th Military Police Battalion (Colored) (Zone of the Interior) , which was composed entirely of black troops.

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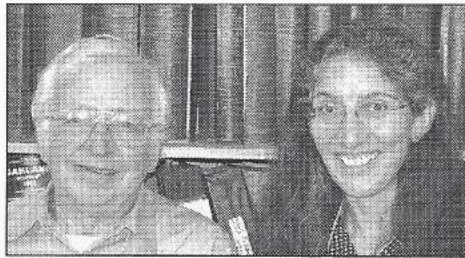
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Telegraph Avenue, early 1920's.

Telegraph Avenue, revisited

The recent departure of Cody's Books from Telegraph Avenue reminds us that our city is constantly changing. Here are a selection of photographs and post-cards showing Telegraph at various stages in its history.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



John Aronovici and AnaLuisa Coplan

President's Report

Hello Berkeley History Center faithful . . .

It's nearly 2007! What a year we had at the History Center. On behalf of the Berkeley Historical Society, we want to express our gratitude for the year's donations, volunteer help and tremendous support from our community. As the organization dedicated to the protection, preservation and sharing of Berkeley's history, we entirely exist because of your interest. Thanks to your help, we are a successful, fun-to-work-with, loveable bunch and we look forward to what 2007 may bring.

- AnaLuisa Coplan and John Aronovici

In Memorium:

Bill Taylor

The Berkeley Historical Society was saddened to hear of the death of former Board Member Bill Taylor. He was a tireless volunteer and an advocate for the poor, the disenfranchised and the abandoned. He will be greatly missed.

Thank You . . .

to Nancy and Peter Bickel for their \$100 membership. Also, many thanks to the following people for their donations:

Eugene and Patricia Angel
Marcia Anderson
Evan Painter
Wendy Polivka
Anonmyous (for a new copy machine)
Anonmyous (for publications)

Letter to the Editor

Regarding Jim Tippet's memories [in the Summer 2006 newsletter]: I was at Cragmont School when Jim Tippet was. I remember Miss Billings and the dashing Mr. Turner. Jim use to ride his jalopy car down steep Marin Ave and make it backfire loudly which we on the playground thought was great. The principal's name, however, was Robert N. Rushforth, and I have a collection of report cards to prove it. On the very hot, warm days that we sometimes get in September or October, Mr Rushforth would come to school dressed entirely in white, from hat to shoes. I had never seen such an outfit and was amazed. One year on Arbor Day Mr Rushforth held a tree planting ceremony. One of my classmates Bill McNab was chosen to assist. The tree may still be there. "Go Cragmont!! Its colors green and purple floating in the air." Sung to the tune of "Hail to California".

John Underhill

Hall-Scott's railcars

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Southern Pacific for branch line service.

The McKeen motor had been built starting in 1905 and featured a torpedo-shaped all-steel body and a marine-type gasoline engine mounted on the front truck. Thus all rail shocks were transmitted directly to the engine which increased its maintenance.

It also had a clutch which, when adjusted so it didn't slip, stalled the enginer upon starting. If the cluth were adjusted so it didn't stall, the clutch would slip and wear out faster. The McKeen could tow a small lightweight trailer, but not regular freight cars.

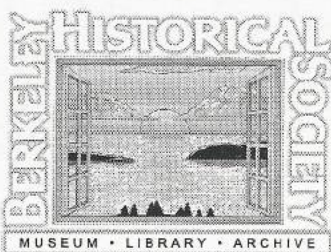
Bart Scott agreed to build a railcar that, if successful, Scott and Van Arsdale would buy for the Yreka Western. Bart Scott ordered the body and truck from Holman Car Co. in San Francisco and Hall-Scott proceeded to design and build the engine and drive system themselves. Three months later it was completed and succesfully tested. It was Number 5 on the Yreka Western and it saved the railroad enough that it paid for itself within several years.

The Hall-Scott engine was a 4-cylinder valve-in-head type with an 8" bore and 10" stroke and a two-piece band clutch mounted in the baggage compartment of the car and connected to a 4-speed transmission in the rear truck by a propeller shaft. Much like an automobile drive system, the engines were offered in 100, 150, and 200 horsepower.

The first 16 railcars were built with a wooden body by Holman, but those built later had an all-steel body built by Hall-Scott.

Production continued at a leisurely pace of two or three cars per year until 1914 when eight cars were ordered. The railcar production slowed to one in 1915, two in 1917, and two in 1921. A total of 23 railcars were built, including an armoured car in 1917 and two for the Kowloon Canton Railway in China in 1921.

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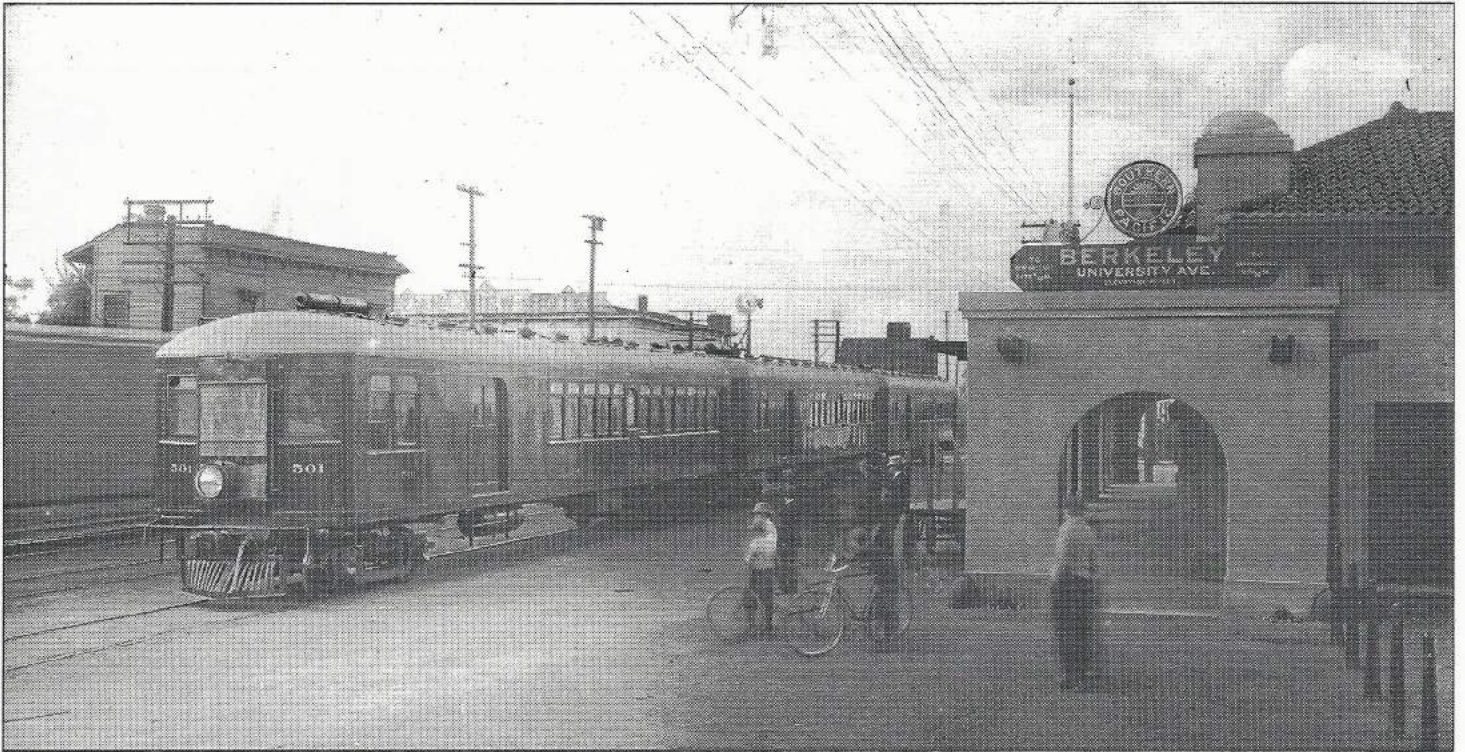
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New Hall-Scott motor cars being tested on the Southern Pacific main line at the Berkeley station. c. 1914.

In 1913, Hall-Scott built eight electric trailers for the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railway. The circumstances surrounding this order is a mystery as all of the other passenger equipment on the line was wood construction. Perhaps it was a desperate move by the railway as Holman built their first six cars and then went bankrupt as an order of steel streetcars was being built for the S.F. Municipal Railway. Wason and Cincinnati built their next twelve cars and the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern needed more cars to complete their line. They apparently persuaded Hall-Scott to build a coach version of their all-steel gas-electric body.

These eight cars served the OA&E, as well as its successors, well until the demise of passenger service in 1941. After that, five cars went to the Western Pacific which used them until 1951.

One car went to the Key System and was in use until 1949, and the remaining two were used by the Sacramento Northern for inspection service and later work-train service. These two cars are now located at the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista.

One of the gas-mechanical cars has

managed to survive intact. It is Nevada Copper Belt Number 21 that was built by Hall-Scott in 1911 and has a wooden Holman body. It is in operating condition at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. The steel body of N.C.B. Number 22 has also survived. It is located at the Nevada Railroad Museum in Carson City.

In 1921, Frank and William Fageol of Oakland instructed the Fageol Safety Coach and commissioned Hall-Scott to design a light, fast and powerful engine for the small buses of the day. This engine was a success. They later became part of the mushrooming bus industry and were acquired by American Car and Foundry and J.B. Brill Company in 1925. Bert Hall and Frank Bageol were among the five vice-presidents of ACF Motor Company. Briefly, Hall-Scott dominated the motor bus market. Its basic engine was a Hall-Scott six of 468 cubic inches in 60 or 90 horsepower versions.

Starting in the late 1920's, Brill also began to offer the Hall-Scott engines in its own line of gas-electric railcars. But, by the early 1930's, the market for railcars had evaporated. Branch lines that used

them either already had them or were being abandoned. Anyway, nobody had any money to buy new equipment.

The highway and transit bus business was also going to the big automotive manufacturers as well: Yellow Coach (General Motors), Mack, and White. ACF-Brill was also exiting the transit vehicle business.

The thing that finally killed Hall-Scott was their lack of a diesel engine. Most of the transit operators after World War II wanted diesel buses and they could not compete. After being shuttled around as a subsidiary of one corporation after another, Hall-Scott did not have any place to go and was closed.

Wanted

Berkeley History
Enthusiasts . . .

To join the Berkeley Historical Society's board of directors, and/or

To join the volunteer crew at the Berkeley History Center.

If interested, please call us at the Center, (510) 848-0181.

Telegraph Avenue

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Telegraph Avenue, late 1910's

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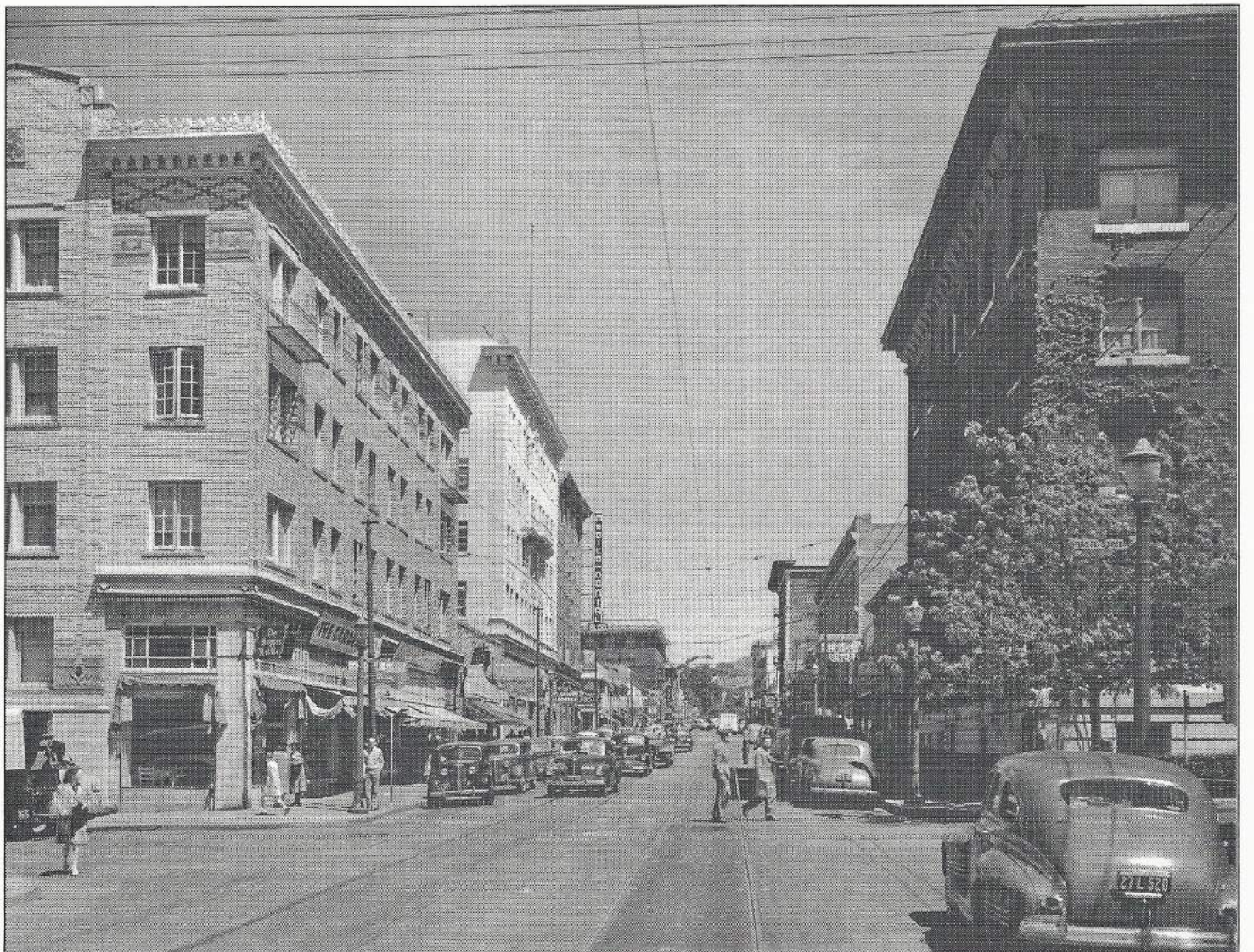
Telegraph Avenue, 1930's.

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Telegraph Avenue, 1940's.

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Telegraph Avenue, 1940's.

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New BHS Exhibit Book

Fermenting Berkeley: A Spirited History

Our popular Spring 2006 exhibit about the history of alcohol consumption and production in our fair City, can now be revisited again in our newest publication, "*Fermenting Berkeley: A Spirited History*."

Authors Susan Austin, Daphne Tooke and Linda Rosen have captured the fun, antics, surprising facts, politics and intrigue presented during the exhibit's run in a publication that is sure to become one of our best sellers.

Read how the California's drinking laws of the 1870s that targeted University of California student morals shaped our city's development geographically and politically, and about the Wets vs. the Drys, the notorious battle that nearly tore Berkeley in half.

Learn about how national Prohibition played out in the already-dry Berkeley. Revel in the amazing story of how Mayor Tom Bates became a hero to vintners and brewpubs.

Enjoy the many photographs, the personal reminiscences, and stories of alcohol and consumption that remind us of our unique past.

"*Fermenting Berkeley: A Spirited History*" makes the perfect gift for your friends and family members during the holiday season. This is a limited run, so please purchase your copies soon.

Books are available at the Berkeley History Center and Museum, 1931 Center Street, Berkeley, CA 94701, on Thursdays through Saturdays, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Books are \$7 for BHS members and \$8 for non-BHS members, and \$12 by mail. Please send your payment to Berkeley Historical Society, P.O. Box 1190, Berkeley, CA 94701 or call (510) 848-0181 for more information.

As a Berkeley History Center supporter . . .

your annual donation supports the Berkeley Historical Society, an all-volunteer organization, to archive and promote Berkeley history. Your annual membership dues entitle you to a 1-year Newsletter subscription and merchandise discounts at the Berkeley History Center. Your contributions are tax-deductible.

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We need your help . . .

We couldn't maintain the Berkeley History Center without the generosity of our volunteers. Join in on the fun by archiving, exhibit planning, hosting events, submitting photographs and staffing the History Center. Learn something new every time and go home smiling knowing that you are helping to preserve a bit of Berkeley's history. Volunteers who donate just three hours a month enable the History Center to thrive. Need the particulars or want to ask a question about the volunteer positions? Give us a call at (510) 848-0181 during the Center's business hours (Thursday through Saturday, from 1 to 4 p.m.) or drop us a note.

Some areas to consider:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filing the archives | <input type="checkbox"/> Cataloguing photos | <input type="checkbox"/> Preparing exhibits |
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THANK YOU FOR PRESERVING BERKELEY'S HISTORY

Visit the Museum in the Veterans Memorial Building.

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Advertising space available

Show your support by purchasing ad space in our next BHS Newsletter:

- Business Card size: 3.5" width x 2" height, one run/\$50, 4 runs/\$150
- Quarter Page size: 3.5" width x 4.5" height, one run/\$75, 4 runs/\$225

SPECIFICATIONS:

1. Black, white, and greyscale Images
2. PDF format
3. 300+ dpi resolution
4. Submit via CD or through e-mail

5. Deadlines are Feb. 15 (for Spring), March 15 (for Summer), Aug. 15 (for Fall), and Nov. 15 (for Winter).

6. Acceptance and placement of the advertisement is at the discretion of the Newsletter editor and publisher.

7. Your advertisement submission and payment must be submitted by deadline. Make check payable to the "Berkeley Historical Society."

8. Send to Margot Lind, Berkeley Historical Society Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1190, Berkeley, CA 94701-1190, or e-mail <mlind@lmi.net>.

Camp Ashby

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Construction was started on February 18, 1942 and the work was completed on March 6, 1942. It was set up by the U.S. Army on May 17, 1942, and was activated at Camp Ashby on July 1, 1942. The term "Zone of the Interior" indicated that the unit was organized and equipped for service in the Continental United States where their mission would have been primarily law and order and physical security missions.

The original plans show that there were two existing houses inside the post's boundary, but on a March 1943 plot plan, those two structures are no longer shown and it is assumed that they were removed.

On April 8, 1943, construction began on additional troop housing at the site. Lewis Construction Company of Oakland was selected as the contractor under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This project added an additional latrine and bachelor officers' quarters. It was completed on May 1, 1943, with the buildings being transferred to the post commander by the Oakland Area Engineer on May 6, 1943

When completed, Camp Ashby had the capacity to house 30 officers and 612 enlisted soldiers and noncommissioned officers. They had white officers as required by the Army's then traditionally segregated framework. Many of the young troops came from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and another large contingent came from the South.

Because of the potential for racial problems connected with the establishment of African-American bases in small towns, the War Department retained Truman Gibson, a civilian agent, to visit base areas to determine how the troops were getting along.

Later in the war, prominent local attorney Walter Gordon introduced Gibson to the City Council. Gibson stated that "The Army of the United States is a people's army and a democratic army for the reason that Negroes are now accepted... and I find that the attitude in this community as good as anywhere and better than in most places."

Actually blacks have been accepted in the armed forces since the Revolutionary War, when several thousand served side by side with white soldiers in the Continental Army; and black regiments also served in the Union Army during the Civil War. During World War I, black divisions under white officers were sent to France, and segregated forces under white leadership continued during World War II.

Walter Dix, who was stationed at the camp, still lives in the area and was recently interviewed by The Daily Planet. While many of his memories of that time have faded, he remembers the special kindness of the residents of Berkeley to the lonely young soldiers.

Dix specifically recalled Byron Rumford's willingness just to talk to him, and a Mr. King, owner of King's Liquors on Sacramento Street, who loaned him \$300 to purchase a printing press that was used

at the camp.

George Harris grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of a bricklayer. In 1942 the army sent him to Berkeley. As a member of the 779th Military Police Battalion, he was stationed at the camp. "Back then, all you had to do was stand on Ashby and girls would say 'Hey, soldier boy' and offer you a ride to San Francisco," he said. "Those were the good old days." The army sent Harris to Burma for the last year of the war, but he liked California so much, he came back to Berkeley for good in 1946.

Mrs. E.A. Sykes of Berkeley, who was responsible for providing entertainment for the Camp Ashby troops, said her "work was made easy by the large highly respected 'colored' population in Berkeley, who were property owners and family people always willing to help." In October 1942, she booked Count Basie and his band.

The camp had an accomplished glee club that performed locally. One such occasion was the first services to be held at the South Berkeley Community Church. In addition to the performance, there were speeches by Dr. Buell G. Gallagher, president of Alabama's Talladega College and Dr. Will Alexander of the U.S. Department of Education. The camp glee club also provided musical entertainment for Navy Day, sponsored by local organizations.

Lt. Col. Reinhold C. Dedi who had been the commanding officer at Camp Ashby, sent a letter to local resident Mrs. Lu-

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Advertising in the newsletter supports the History Center . . .



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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Sat., Dec. 9 & 16, 2006 - 10am to 3pm
Berkeley Farmers' Market
Holiday Crafts Fair

Local craftspeople, handcrafted gifts, Live music
-- Benefits the Ecology Center --

Center St. at MLK Jr. Way Free Admission
Info: 510-548-3333 bfm@ecologycenter.org

Calendar of Events

WALKING TOUR: **DECEMBER 6 - 10 AM**
Cerrito Creek

For more information, call Berkeley Path Wanderers at 848-9358.

WALKING TOUR: **DECEMBER 9 - 10 AM**
Trails Tramp, LaLoma Park

For more info, call Berkeley Path Wanderers at charlie_paths@comcast.net

LECTURE: **DECEMBER 14 - 7:30 PM**

Eric Kos and Dennis Evanosky

will do a presentation of their book, "East Bay Then and Now." They will also talk about their new book "San Francisco in Photographs" and Oakland's surprising role in their latest project California and the Civil War. For more information, call Oakland Heritage Alliance at 510-763-9218.

LECTURE: **JANUARY 11**

Mark Wilson

a Tribute to Julia Morgan, from his forthcoming book. For more info, call Oakland Heritage Alliance at 510-763-9218.

WALKING TOUR: **FEBRUARY 2 - 11 AM**
UC Campus

For more information, call Berkeley Architectural Heritage at 510-841-2242.

Camp Ashby

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cile Lane, dated March 11, 1948. "My thoughts frequently return to those days, when your Red Cross Sewing Group took such a keen interest in my troops. They were good men and good soldiers...We often play the recordings they made for us."

On December 11, 1943, the 779th was selected by the Adjutant General of the War Department to be inactivated and its soldiers dispersed to other units. On January 7, 1944, the battalion was transferred to Fort Ord, California, where



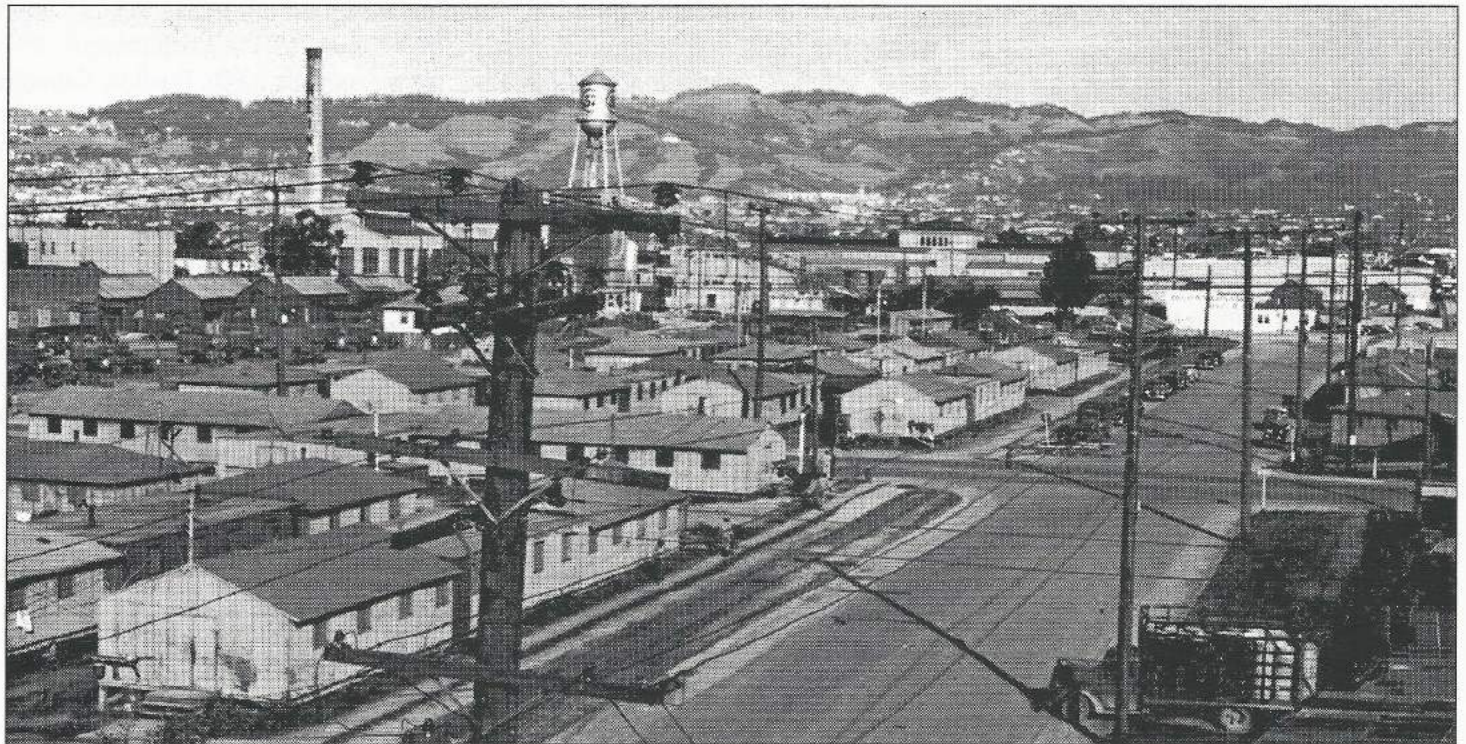
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NATIONAL ARCHIVES PHOTO

Camp Ashby, February 1943. Looking down Potter Street. Sixth Street runs left to right in this picture

it was inactivated on January 10, 1944. It's unclear what the status of the post was between when the 779th left the post and the lease was terminated on

October 11, 1946. As fast as the post was built, it was razed just as fast. A aerial photograph taken on October 28, 1946, shows that all of the buildings had

been removed.

Information in this article came from Careth Reed, The Daily Planet, and www.militarymuseum.org.