

## Remembering Five Young West Berkeley Men

By Judy Ziajka



Monument outside the Veterans Memorial Building on Center St. in downtown Berkeley. Photo by J. Ziajka.

Obscured amid the sidewalk clutter and enclosed in iron fencing right outside the Berkeley Historical Society and Museum building's front door, a marble marker memorializes five young West Berkeley men who died during the Korean War. Installed in 1997, it was until recently surrounded by a small garden maintained by a BHSM volunteer. But for forty-five years before that, it stood near the places where the young men had lived: in the patio of the Mobilized

Women of Berkeley building at 1007 University Ave. That location was chosen, according to Berkeley patrolman A. Stanley Anderson, a member of the committee to honor the young men (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, Nov. 28, 1951, p. 3), "because it was a favorite spot of these kids," and "the patio is out where people will be able to see the monument." The memorial was conceived by Ruben de Alba, brother of one of the young war casualties. Tony Cianciarulo, who owned a service station at 2300 San Pablo Ave. (still visible at the back of the East Bay Nursery parking lot), collected donations, aided by Ian Lochhead of the Berkeley Recreation Department. Funded by private contributions from the local community, the monument was dedicated on Memorial Day 1952.

In 1952, West Berkeley was still the city's industrial district, broadening Berkeley's tax base and providing jobs that offered a foothold to many groups of immigrants, including Berkeley's Latino community, with pay that supported the rental, and sometimes ownership, of the small and multi-family homes that filled the neighborhoods surrounding the factories. More recent development has altered this part of Berkeley dramatically, but this marker, now across town from its original location, serves as a reminder of this earlier community as well as a memorial to Frederico de

Alba, Miguel Pozos, Jose Martinez, and Salvador Romero, four American-born sons of Mexican immigrants, and to Edward Leneve, Ruben de Alba's Berkeley High School classmate and neighbor.

In 1950, Frederico de Alba (b. Nov. 17, 1930) lived at 915 Virginia St. with his father, Pascasio, and his mother, Matilda, both born in Mexico. The household also included three of his five siblings, all, like Frederico, born in California.



Patio of the Mobilized Women of Berkeley building. The monument was originally installed to the left of the door. Photo by J. Ziajka.

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# President's Message

I am very grateful to Judy Ziajka, a retired book editor as well as a Berkeley history enthusiast, for taking over as the editor of this publication, which is more than a mere newsletter—we'll be thinking about changing the subtitle. Judy has developed so much interesting content that we've had to expand to sixteen pages this time. She even detected an overarching theme of community involvement throughout many of the articles in this issue.

And we all owe many thanks to John Aronovici for the extensive design and layout efforts he has put into it for many years, as well as making all the arrangements for printing and mailing. John continues to serve as our volunteer History Center manager at age ninety-two.

We have just welcomed two new Board of Directors members by unanimous vote of the Board: Arlene Makita-Acuña and Gary Tominaga, whom you will hear from later in this issue as members of the curatorial team for the current exhibit. Longtime Board member John Hammond has resigned due to health issues and to make room for new additions, and we are now at capacity.

At the June 17th Berkeley City Council meeting, District 4 Councilmember Igor Tregub promised to donate \$500 of his discretionary funds to our Berkeley Historical Plaque Project and challenged other members to also contribute. I was thrilled that we received another \$1300 in pledges from Mayor Ishii and Councilmembers Bartlett, Blackaby, Humbert, Kesarwani, and O'Keefe. This will allow us to make two necessary replacements of plaques in the Civic Center area.

We are partnering with other community groups in various ways. We contributed to the Hillside Club building restoration fund and held our annual meeting in the clubhouse with a talk by the club historian. We will have an event there on Sunday, August 3, at 3 pm: an author talk by Peter Goodman on *Eclair Pastries: Growing Up in My Family's Iconic Berkeley Bakery 1947-1973*. Please sign up on Eventbrite.

Our display case in the Veterans Building lobby has been empty for some months. Our tentative plan now is to make it available for two-month periods for groups to create their own history displays, especially if they are celebrating a landmark anniversary. We will begin with the Indigenous People's Day Committee in September-October. Email info@berkhistory.org if you would like to reserve a future time slot, or if you have any other comments or questions for me or for others I could pass the word along to.

Our collections continue to grow through generous donations of all kinds of materials relating to Berkeley history. Please keep us in mind if you decide it's time to do some clearing out of Berkeley (not UC) posters, flyers, mementos, etc., or if you are digitizing old family photos that would help fill out the Berkeley story for future generations. We would also like to receive personal reminiscences of Berkeley in earlier decades (500 words or less).

And, as always, help spread the word about a local gem of a historical society and museum that some people who have lived in and around Berkeley for years say they never knew existed.

Ann Harlow

(Five Young Men - continued from page 1)

His father worked at the Pacific Guano Company at Second and Hearst streets, a short walk from home. One brother worked as a laborer in a fertilizer company, possibly alongside his father, and another brother, Joe, was in the Army at Fort Ord. Frederico himself, by then a Berkeley High graduate, worked as a laborer for a small-parts manufacturer. In 1940, the family had lived at 828 Delaware St., where they paid \$15 a month rent. Their house, now gone, was next door to one of Berkeley's oldest surviving structures, once a grocery store owned by Berkeley mayor Samuel Heywood (this building, at 834 Delaware Ave., is the subject of a Berkeley Historical Plaque). The 1940 census also reported that Frederico's father earned \$1100 for the year as a sack sewer at a fertilizer company, possibly the same company he worked for in 1950. On October 3, 1951, U.S. Army Private Frederico de Alba, age twenty, was killed in action in North Korea.



FREDERICO F. DE ALBA . . .  
—Berkeleyan reported killed in Korea.

### Local Youth Dies in Korea

Frederico de Alba,  
*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1951.

Another brother worked as a laborer for an asphalt and tar manufacturer. The family had moved to Fifth St. from a house a few blocks farther south, at 833 Anthony St. (now the backside of Berkeley Bowl West), which the 1940 census reported they rented for \$10 a month. The same census listed Jose's father as a laborer earning \$450 for the year. U.S. Army Private Jose Martinez was killed in action in North Korea on January 14, 1951.

In 1950, Alfonso Salvador Romero, also a teenager (b. Nov. 16, 1931), was living at 1456 Fifth St., several blocks away from Jose Martinez. He lived with his parents, Jose and Carmen, and six siblings. The 1930 Oakland City Directory lists Salvador's family at 325 Castro St., about a block west of where I-880 now slices through West Oakland. The directory lists his father as a laborer. U.S. Army Private Alfonso Salvador Romero died on January 13, 1950, at Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), Georgia. He was killed while on the ground when an airborne infantry cargo glider plane crashed on the runway.

By 1950, Edward Leneve Jr. (b. Oct. 25, 1929) was twenty-one and married. He and his wife, Leta, nineteen, lived at 906D Pierce St., next door to Frederico's brother Ruben and his wife, who lived at 906A. Edward and Ruben had also played baseball together for the 1946 Berkeley High team (along with neighborhood kid and future Major Leaguer Billy Martin; see the article "Never Back Down: Billy Martin and His West Berkeley Childhood" in this newsletter). The 1950 census lists Edward as a gas station attendant and his wife as a long-distance telephone operator, but Edward had aspired to play Major League Baseball and in 1948 applied to the American Baseball Bureau in Chicago, while living with his parents at 1329 Gilman St. His application reports that he had played for the Phoenix Senators in the Arizona-Texas League in 1947 and for the Berkeley American Legion post in 1943-1946. The 1940 census shows Edward living at 730 Channing St. with his parents, Edward Sr. and Bertha, and his grandmother, Ella Cozad. It also shows his father working as an equipment

Miguel "Mike" Pozos (b. Nov. 6, 1930) in 1950 lived several blocks south of Frederico, at 2423 Eighth St., with his widowed mother, Matilda Savedra, who worked as an iron operator for a laundry. As was common in the community, he and his four siblings also contributed to the household income. One sister worked as a secretary for a welfare agency, one brother worked as a sander for a furniture manufacturer, and another brother worked as a janitor for a hotel. Miguel, like Frederico a Berkeley



Miguel Pozos, Berkeley High School yearbook, 1949.

High graduate, was employed as a hod carrier—carrying bricks and other materials—for a construction company. In 1940, the family had lived across the street, at 2330 Eighth St. (now replaced by an apartment building), where they paid \$25 a month rent. At that time, his father, Miguel Sr., worked as a laborer for an oil works company, earning \$1200 a year. Both parents had been born in Mexico, but, as with Frederico's family, all the children had been born in California. On October 11, 1951, U.S. Army Private First Class Miguel Pozos, age twenty, was killed in action in North Korea.

José "Joseph" A. Martinez (b. 1933) was only seventeen in 1950. By March of that year, he was already enlisted in the Army. He had been living at 2421 Fifth St. with his father, Andres, who worked as a warehouseman for a linoleum manufacturer; his mother, Angela; seven siblings; and his oldest brother's wife. Both of his parents and his oldest brother, Paul, had been born in Mexico, and another brother had been born in Arizona. The rest of the family, including Jose, were born in California. Paul worked as a machine winder, making roofing rolls for a linoleum manufacturer, perhaps working alongside his father.



Berkeley High School baseball teammates Edward Leneve (bottom, far left) and Ruben de Alba (bottom, fifth from the right), 1946 BHS yearbook.

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De Alba home on Virginia St. Photo by J. Ziajka.



Pozos home on Eighth St. Photo by J. Ziajka.



Martinez home on Fifth St. Photo by J. Ziajka.

operator for the City of Berkeley, earning \$1500 a year, and his mother working as a sorter in a food packing company, where she earned \$20 for the year. Unlike the families of Frederico, Miguel, Jose, and Salvador, in Berkeley Edward's family were home owners. In 1940, their home on Channing St. was valued at \$900. His parents, wife, and grandmother were born in the U.S., as was Edward, who was born in California. Marine Private First-Class Edward Leneve was killed while fighting at Chosin Reservoir, North Korea, on December 2, 1950. His body was never recovered.

On Memorial Day 1952, several hundred people gathered in West Berkeley as these young men were memorialized by County Supervisor Kent Pursel, who knew all of them. Their local priest, Father John Garcia of St. Joseph's Church, offered prayers. Their families stood among their neighbors as the monument they had bestowed was unveiled.

On that same Memorial Day, the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* (May 30, 1952, p. 8) included this editorial commentary about the Korean War: "We see young men making sacrifices while the Nation for the first time in history makes no comparable sacrifice on the homefront. We see that young men are dying in a foreign war that has no prospect of victory, little prospect of peace." Indeed, no peace treaty has ever been signed, and Korea remains a divided land.

The Mobilized Women of Berkeley building was sold around 1970, and over time, disregard and neglect encumbered the monument that West Berkeley families and neighbors had funded and consecrated. But not everyone forgot it. On Veterans Day 1997, under Mayor Shirley Dean and with the encouragement of Dr. Salvador Murillo, longtime Berkeley educator and community leader who grew up alongside the young men noted on the monument, it was installed in its present location. Musician and Berkeley resident Country Joe McDonald, both a Navy veteran and a prominent Vietnam War protester who came to see honoring the war dead as a means of promoting healing, helped rededicate the memorial. Joe de Alba, younger brother of Frederico and a Korean War veteran himself, told the history of the monument that his brother Ruben had helped



Friends and family gathered for the installation of the monument at the Veterans Building in 1997. Photo courtesy the Murillo family. Dr. Murillo died in December, before identifying the community members in this photo. BHSM would welcome hearing from you if you can help us identify them.

raise to honor Frederico and his fellow West Berkeley soldiers. Latino music by Amor Indio commemorated the Mexican heritage of four of the young men and the connection of the fifth to the Latino community. In subsequent years, a metal fence was installed to protect the monument. But passersby who choose to stop can still view the inscribed marble and honor the lives and community of these young men.

### Notes

- Many of the individuals behind the original drive to erect the monument belonged to other immigrant communities in addition to the Latino community. For instance, A. Stanley Anderson was the son of Swedish immigrants, Tony Cianciarulo was the son of Italian immigrants, and Ian Lochhead immigrated from Scotland.
- Edward Leneve's mother, Bertha, was pictured in *Life* magazine on March 15, 1951 (p. 38). A photo shows her, alone, descending the gangway of a ship of returning Marines, where she had tried to discover the fate of her son.
- For more information about the Mobilized Women of Berkeley, see the Summer 2024 issue of this newsletter at the BHSM website.

## Dedicated to the Young Men of West Berkeley

**Frederico de Alba** received the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and Republic of Korea War Service Medal. He is buried in Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno.

**Miguel Pozos** received the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Korean War Service Medal. Like Frederico, he is buried in Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno.

**Jose Martinez** served in the Army as a light weapons infantryman. We have been unable to locate any additional information about his service record or burial.

**Alfonso Salvador Romero** was killed in an accident at Fort Benning while still in training. Like Frederico and Miguel, he is buried in Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno.

**Edward Leneve** was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and Republic of Korea War Service Medal. On April 9, 1951, the Chicago Cubs reported the death of "Catcher Leneve" of the Visalia team of the California League and noted that he "may be professional baseball's first combat death in [the] Korean War." Edward's body was never returned, but his death is noted on a marker in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

# Never Back Down: Billy Martin and His West Berkeley Childhood

By Rufus Silber

Billy Martin was born in West Berkeley, in the upstairs bedroom of his mother's family home at 1632 Seventh St. on May 16, 1928, and circumcised on the kitchen table. The Martins were poor. As an infant Billy drank milk out of beer bottles, and he grew up taking mustard sandwiches to school. Billy had to wear the same clothes to school every day, which embarrassed him. He was bullied for his large nose and ears and called "Pinocchio," but he had many close companions from the neighborhood, including lifelong friend Ruben de Alba (see the article "Remembering Five Young West Berkeley Men" in this newsletter).

His mother, Jenny Martin, the daughter of Italian immigrants, was his biggest influence in early life and taught him to always stick up for himself, giving him his defiance and determination, his combativeness. He was ardently loyal to her. Billy's father, Alfred Manuel Martin Sr., the son of Portuguese immigrants and a truck driver for the City of Berkeley, was largely absent from his son's life. In 1929, after leaving Billy's father, Jenny remarried, this time to a ferryboat worker named Jack Downey, a Canadian immigrant, whom Billy loved and considered to be his father. Religion was important to Billy, even as a child, and he regularly attended St. Ambrose Church at 1145 Gilman St. Before Mass on Sunday mornings, he would show up at his cousins' house and hound them about coming with him.

West Berkeley in the 1930s and 1940s was working class, gritty, and crowded. Many Italian, Portuguese, Eastern European, and Mexican immigrants had settled in West Berkeley, especially

after the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, and Berkeley's population rose dramatically, from 13,214 in 1900, to 56,036 in 1920, to around 82,000 the year that Billy was born. Factories and fish canneries filled the neighborhood, and the air often smelled of processed seafood. As a kid, Billy nabbed crabs left out to cool behind Spenger's Fish Grotto at 1919 Fourth St. Many West Berkeley kids at that time carried an insecurity that all could be taken away at any moment, and neighborhood fights were common. There was racial tension, too—Billy grew up seeing signs that read "No Italians Allowed" and "We Do Not Serve the Irish." World War II brought added pressure as new workers from around California, Mexico, and the Deep South arrived with their families to work the shipyards and munitions factories—new families, new kids, new fights.



Berkeley High baseball teammates and "West Berkeley Boys" Billy Martin (top, sixth from left) and Ruben de Alba (top, seventh from left), 1946 BHS Yearbook. Ruben also went on to play baseball, in the Minor Leagues, as did another BHS teammate, Edward Leneve.

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Billy Martin's childhood home on Seventh St.  
Photo by J. Ziajka.

Billy entered Berkeley High School in 1942. There he saw how kids from the Berkeley Hills, the “Goats,” dominated the school. Billy resented the Goats and considered them spoiled and privileged. His group of friends from the neighborhood, who used to maraud around town as the “West Berkeley Boys” (with Billy as the de facto leader), were now known as “shop boys” because of their placement in vocational classes.

James Kenney Park stood at Seventh St. and Delaware, only blocks from Billy's home, and it was an ideal place to spend time if you were serious about baseball. It had a Major League-sized baseball diamond with a 380-foot outfield, batter's boxes, and a pitching mound made of real red clay. Professional baseball players from around the region made it their offseason training ground: Augie Galan, Bill Rigney, Les Scarsella, Ernie Lombardi. Galan was an outfielder for the Chicago Cubs who respected Billy and became his unofficial baseball tutor. Through his talent and his tutelage at Kenney Park, Billy enjoyed athletic success at Berkeley High, playing both basketball and baseball, and made the varsity baseball squad in his freshman year. As a senior, he batted .450 and was voted all-county despite fighting an opposing player during a game against Hayward High. The principal suspended him from the team for the rest of the season, which Billy found deeply unfair.

Northern California had a thriving Minor League Baseball system, and scouts had been watching Billy play. The Oakland Oaks eventually offered Billy a contract, but because of his senior year suspension and fiery reputation, it included a “misbehavior” clause, declaring that the contract could be nullified for fighting or other transgressions. Even though playing professional baseball was Billy's childhood dream, he refused to sign the contract—not the first, nor the last, time that Billy would refuse to back down no matter the consequences. The Oaks soon gave in and removed the contract's “misbehavior” clause. The day after signing, Billy was bound for Idaho Falls to play in his first professional game and begin his life outside of Berkeley.

Billy Martin went on to play second base for the championship Yankees teams of the 1950s and later managed various teams throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including the Oakland Athletics from 1980 to 1982. Billy was killed in a car crash on Christmas night in 1989.

### Sources

Bill Pennington, *Billy Martin: Baseball's Flawed Genius*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

Dale Tafoya, *Billy Ball: Billy Martin and the Resurrection of the Oakland A's*, Lyons Press, 2020.

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## New Exhibit Coming in September

By Ana Fernandez

The Berkeley Historical Society and Museum is proud to announce our next exhibit, opening in September. This powerful exhibit will trace the rich and often overlooked contributions of Latino communities to the cultural, political, and labor landscape of Berkeley from the early twentieth century to today. Through photographs, oral histories, archival documents, and community artifacts, the exhibit will highlight stories of migration, activism, resilience, and identity that have helped shape the city's vibrant history.

Join us in honoring the generations who built, enriched, and continue to transform Berkeley. The exhibit will run from September 21, 2025, through March 21, 2026. There will be an opening-day celebration and additional events during the duration of the exhibit. Be sure you are on our email list to stay informed.



Ricky Reyna, student of Casa de La Raza, circa spring 1972.

# Urban Care, Part 2: The Waterfront

By Mitch Fleischer

In 1959 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released a study showing the area of San Francisco Bay that might feasibly be filled in by the year 2020 (Figure 1). In that map, all that remained of the bay was a narrow shipping channel. While that was just a feasibility study, in 1961 Berkeley city government began work on a proposal to fill more than 2,000 acres of the city's waterfront, doubling the size of the city, so that the new city boundary would stretch about two miles out into the bay. But none of that took place. Today, Berkeley's waterfront contains a string of public parks and a bayfront trail for walkers and cyclists to enjoy. This didn't just happen by itself; Berkeley's Urban Care organization was central to the effort to save the waterfront from commercial development. Part 1 of this series showed how Urban Care



Figure 1. San Francisco Bay potential fill by 2020 (Oakland Tribune, April 23, 1961).

was founded in 1966 to improve the quality of life in the city. This Part 2 of the series discusses Urban Care's efforts to protect the city's waterfront.

As a direct result of the Berkeley city proposal to fill the bay, three Berkeley women—Sylvia McLaughlin, Esther Gulick, and Kay Kerr—formed the Save San Francisco Bay Association, which, true to its name, actually did save the bay by working to get state legislation passed in 1965 and 1969 that effectively prevented almost any further fill. What Save the Bay didn't do, however, was control how the waterfront would be developed. For decades, it was unclear whether Berkeley's waterfront would be developed with industry or shopping malls or parks, or whether it would be open to public access at all.

With Sylvia McLaughlin an active member of Urban Care's board, the organization supported Save the Bay's legislative efforts and lawsuits to prevent bay fill, but it wasn't until 1971 that Urban Care shifted to a serious focus on Berkeley's waterfront. That year saw a proposal by private landowners of 177 acres of private land and 553 acres of tidewater lands to build a major regional shopping mall ("Park Marina Center") at the waterfront. The private owners were the Santa Fe Land Improvement Co. and a Hawaii resident named George Murphy (Figure 2). While city planning efforts during the late 1960s had recommended that property be reserved for public access and recreational uses, the property was zoned as "Unclassified," meaning the city reserved, in theory, the ability to classify it for any use at all. Although the city might like to create a park there, to do so it would have to buy the property

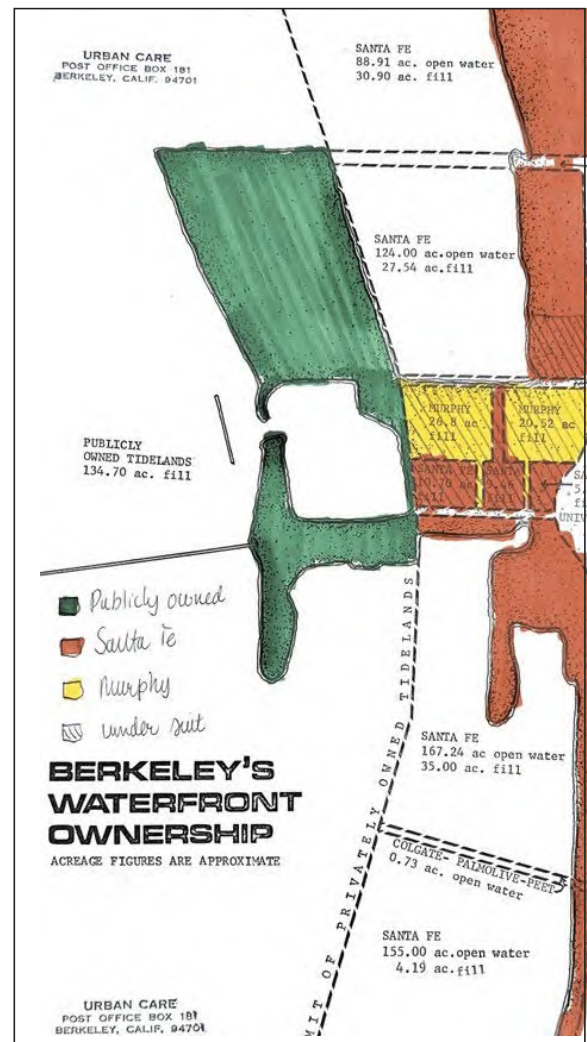


Figure 2. Berkeley waterfront ownership map, 1971 (Urban Care).

from the private landowners, with money the city didn't have. Thus, the owners could and did propose private uses for the property and seek to get the city to change the zoning to meet their needs.

Urban Care's response to the shopping mall proposal was to form a coalition of local activist organizations ("Citizens Against a Waterfront Shopping Center") to oppose the project. The coalition included the American Institute of Architects (East Bay Chapter), the Ecology Center, National Audubon Society (Golden Gate Chapter), Save San Francisco Bay Association, and the Sierra Club. Roz Lepawsky of Urban Care served as coordinator of the effort and authored many of its documents. The coalition organized a highly effective presentation at the city Planning Commission hearing (attended by more than 300 people) and produced an attractive report titled "Land Use on Berkeley's Waterfront: A Citizen View," which influenced discussion throughout the city. Urban Care's argument was that

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# Ranger Tim Gordon and the Never-Ending Bridge Around Jewel Lake

By Fred Etzel

Jewel Lake is a small man-made lake located at the Tilden Nature Area in Berkeley's Tilden Park in the East Bay hills. In 1921, the People's Water District, precursor to the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), created a drinking-water reservoir by transporting earth from the slope above what is now known as Jewel Lake to build a dam across Wildcat Creek, a small stream in Wildcat Canyon between the Berkeley Hills and Sbrante Ridge Hills. Over time, the dam trapped large quantities of sediment, reducing the lake's depth and volume, and thus its effectiveness as a reservoir. In 1933, a year before the birth of East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), EBMUD transferred the reservoir to EBRPD for recreational use. The dam and abandoned flood-control machinery are visible at the north end of the lake. Jewel Lake has been dredged twice since 1921: in 1967 and 1991. According to a 2016 study by Flow West for EBRPD, "Jewel Lake has almost re-filled with sediment." EBRPD continues to assess options for improving Jewel Lake and the Wildcat Creek watershed.



Jewel Lake loop trail and the Never-Ending Bridge.

Longtime EBRPD ranger Tim Gordon was born April 20, 1935, in Cherokee, Iowa. In 1945, his father, Max, a reporter for a local newspaper, was hired by the *Salinas Californian*, bringing the Gordon family to the West Coast, traveling in their 1934 Ford sedan. In 1953, Tim moved to Berkeley to attend the university, where he majored in geology and took classes in painting. In 1966, he heard about a job at the Nature Center in Tilden Park. He applied and was hired as a naturalist. At Tilden, Ranger Tim discovered his gift for educating children through storytelling while in the natural environment. He delighted in showing the children banana slugs, eucalyptus trees, and how to talk with owls as they



Ranger Tim teaches Junior Rangers at Jewel Lake, Tilden Park.

went on night hikes searching for the ever-elusive "door in the forest." For thirty-four years, until his retirement, Ranger Tim led children, parents, families, and other Nature Center visitors on hikes, adventures, and explorations around Jewel Lake.

In the 1970s, EBRPD built a 750-foot-long raised wooden walkway around Jewel Lake, and many Berkeley children who visited Tilden Park remember Ranger Tim leading them over the boardwalk and teaching them "hands-on" about the natural environment of the lake. Midway around the lake, Ranger Tim would jokingly try to convince them that the boardwalk was, in fact, a bridge that had no end and sadly they would be on this hike forever. The hikers caught on to the joke almost immediately, and for the remainder of the hike they enjoyed laughing and teasing Ranger Tim because yes, the bridge did end.

Ranger Tim Gordon and his family lived at 2926 Fulton St. in Berkeley. Not long after he retired in 2000, Tim was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. According to his wife and daughter, "At first it seemed to overwhelm him, but before long he had connected with others that had P.D. and were building a community around exercise and mutual support." On January 19, 2017, Tim was interviewed by Cristina Kim of the Bancroft Library's Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. (Through Ms. Kim, Tim's daughter, Megan Gordon, connected with the director of the Bancroft Library, who provided her with the

audio of her father's interview. In an email dated March 3, 2025, Ms. Gordon commented, "Hearing my dad's voice again is a real gift.")

On September 20, 2021, at age eighty-six, Ranger Tim passed onto his never-ending bridge. Among his writings is the booklet *Out on a Limb with Tim: Selections from the Writings of Tim Gordon*, compiled on his eightieth birthday. Tim's family donated a copy of the booklet to the History Room of the Berkeley Public Library. His family hopes that someday the EBRPD names the elevated boardwalk around Jewel Lake "The Tim Gordon Never-Ending Bridge" in his honor.

## Sources

Donna Mickleson and Megan Turner, "Remembering Tilden's 'Ranger Tim,' Who Hooted at Owls and Bent Eucalyptus into Jungle Gyms," *Berkeleyside*, Oct. 11, 2021.

Tim Gordon obituary, *San Francisco Chronicle*, published Oct. 6 to Oct. 10, 2021.

"The People's Ranger': Tim Gordon, Naturalist Emeritus, Tilden Nature Area, East Bay Regional Park District," interview conducted by Cristina Kim in 2017, Oral History Center, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 2017.

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(Urban Care, continued from page 7)

the mall would devastate downtown Berkeley while resulting in no added revenue to the city, generate a huge traffic mess, and gentrify the city's westside. As a result of Urban Care's efforts, and despite the expensive efforts of the project's developers, the Planning Commission voted 10 to 1 against the project. The shopping center also became a major issue in the 1971 city elections, with opponents winning all five open council seats, as well as the mayoral election. An appeal by the developers to the City Council resulted in their 5-to-2 defeat. The developers then moved their shopping center to Richmond, where it became the Hilltop Mall, which opened in 1976 and closed in 2021.

After the shopping center victory, Urban Care began to focus more on the waterfront and, in particular, encouraged the city to engage in a more comprehensive planning process that considered the whole waterfront, rather than making piecemeal decisions about different parts. In 1973, Urban Care proposed that the city form a Waterfront Advisory Board, which would replace a number of commissions and boards that were concerned with different parts of the waterfront. This proposal was readily accepted, and the Waterfront Advisory Board became the city's focus for decision making about the waterfront. In 1976 Urban Care devoted a whole issue of its quarterly newsletter, *Urban Care Concerns*, to "The Bayfront," laying out in great detail the concerns involved in how the area could be used and what actions people could take to push decisions along. That same issue announced the formation of a new spinoff from Urban Care, the Berkeley Bayfront Council, which then took a leadership role in efforts to acquire the private landholdings.

Central to creating recreational uses of the waterfront was Berkeley's inability to purchase the property from Santa Fe and George Murphy. Murphy and Santa Fe sued the city in 1972 for "inverse condemnation," arguing that the city was preventing them making use of their property because of its failure to zone for any use and the city's rejection of every proposal made for developing it. With support from Urban Care, the city fought the lawsuit for years, winning at the State Supreme Court in 1980, although Santa Fe still managed to drag things out until 1984.

By the late 1970s, Urban Care was running out of steam as an organization. Having spun off several of its major issues to other organizations, such as the Bayfront Council and Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, Urban Care lost membership and momentum. In significantly reduced form, Urban Care continued to push for recreational uses of the waterfront until 1986, after which the organization disbanded.

For more than twenty years, the Bayfront Council, and later the Sierra Club and Citizens for an Eastshore State Park, sought help from the state and federal governments and from the East Bay Regional Parks District for support in acquiring the private landholdings. Only in 1996, primarily with funds from multiple state bond issues, was the land acquired for the new Eastshore State Park (renamed in 2012 for Sylvia McLaughlin). Today, the Berkeley waterfront is completely open to the public, a combination of the Bay Trail, the Berkeley Marina, Cesar Chavez Park (owned by the city), and the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

*This is the second of a three-part series on Urban Care. The third part will inquire into what happened to the memory of Urban Care and why it seems to have been all but lost.*

# Local History Group Celebrates 25th Anniversary

By Hal Reynolds for MSHHIG

The McGee-Spaulding-Hardy Historic Interest Group (MSHHIG) is celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding and the twentieth anniversary of one of its major projects: the creation of California Island. This is how it all started.

It was the late 1990s, and residents of the 2400 block of California St. in the Berkeley flatlands had long admired the house at 2418 with the carefully manicured landscape. They didn't know much about it, but it looked very old and elegant, and the lot it sat on was much larger than the others on the block. They even imagined that it might one day become an official Berkeley Landmark, and after they mentioned landmarking to the elderly owner, Mr. Stone, he showed some interest.

By the end of 1999, however, the owner had been moved to a nursing home, and the property had been placed under conservatorship. The house was deteriorating badly, with raccoons inhabiting the second story and a fire that had broken out in the basement. The residents became concerned that the house might be sold off to a developer who could have it torn down or irreparably converted.

It was at this point that three neighbors, Michael and Patricia Edwards and Anna Marie Taylor, decided to try to save the house and property by having it landmarked, which would protect it from any proposed alteration or destruction, a protection guaranteed in the Berkeley Municipal Code.

They had no idea what was involved. They quickly put together an application, based largely on interviews with older neighbors and stories they remembered from the elderly owner. At the hearing before the Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission, they faced opposition from the owner's family, who contradicted the residents' information and claimed that landmarking would seriously reduce the sales value of the

house. A split Commission turned down the application but told them to return in a month with a better-researched application.

Then came a period of intense research, with special aid and support from Lesley Emmington of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA), including visits and consultations with the Berkeley Historical Society and Museum (BHSM), BAHA, the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley, building records, city directories, tax assessment rolls, and century-old issues of the *Berkeley Gazette* and the *Berkeley Advocate*. When was the house built and by whom? Had anyone of historical importance lived there? The group was able to establish some additional facts: The house was built in 1895, it was a Queen Anne Victorian on a traditional Victorian mini-farm, and a John Hunter was the original owner. They prepared a heavily revised application for the Commission, which was nevertheless rejected, but they were told to return again with an improved application.

The three residents renewed their efforts: more visits and consultations, more research and reading, more combing through old newspapers. Finally, on the day before the application was due, they discovered in both a *Gazette* and an *Advocate* from 1895 that John Hunter had been the vice president of the Parker Match Company, a large new enterprise that promised to bring significant benefit to the economy of the city.

On June 5, 2000, after an intense hearing, the Commission, by a vote of 5 to 3, officially landmarked the house, but not the property, declaring the house a Structure of Merit (1895, Landmark #231). Shortly thereafter, a neighbor bought it and then sold it to well-known Berkeley architect James Novosel, who has carefully and lovingly maintained the house, perfectly preserving its landmark status.

Partly as a result of the success of landmarking and partly due to encouragement of other neighborhood preservationists, residents



Hunter House, 2000, with some MSHHIG members (l to r, Paul Grunland, Lynne Davis, Pat Edwards, Michael Edwards, Anna Marie Taylor, and Carrie Sprague). Photo by Allen Stross.



Hunter House, 2025, after refurbishing by Berkeley architect James Novosel. Photo by Hal Reynolds.

then met to raise awareness about the history of the district and came up with the group name MSHHIG. The original group included Carrie Sprague (Allston Way); Lynne Davis (Roosevelt Ave.); and Pat and Michael Edwards, Anna Marie Taylor, and Dick Lerner (California St.). Later, Paul Grunland (from BHSM), Alice Sheeler (Roosevelt Ave.), Linda Keilch (Jefferson St.), and Hal Reynolds (McGee Ave.) joined.

Since landmarking the Hunter House, MSHHIG has conducted four walking tours, which included an 80-page booklet; compiled an inventory of all the buildings in the district; collaborated with BAHA to provide two District walking tours for the 2009 edition of *41 Berkeley Walking Tours*; created four Berkeley Historical Plaques; landmarked the Fish-Clarke House (1883, Landmark #310); and curated an exhibit, *The Heart of Berkeley: The Historic McGee-Spaulding District*, at BHSM from 2013 to 2014 ([www.mcgeespauldingexhibit.org](http://www.mcgeespauldingexhibit.org)).

The group, now diminished in numbers, continues to meet most Wednesday mornings and continues to have projects that they hope to complete one day.

The group also successfully transformed a once bleak intersection into an urban green space known today as California Island, which this year celebrates its twentieth anniversary. This project began in response to a City of Berkeley memorandum of June 2002 sent out to residents proposing “traffic calming measures.” Neighbors on the 2400 block of California St., noting that the proposed projects did not mention the vast triangular expanse of asphalt at the corner of California St. and Dwight Way, began



Intersection of California St. and Dwight Way, 2004 (above) and 2025 (right). Photos by Pat Edwards and Hal Reynolds.

discussing whether to request that the city place a landscaped traffic island on that corner for the purpose of traffic control, safety, and neighborhood beautification.

In mid-July, Patricia and Michael Edwards, together with Anna Marie Taylor, the same three who had initiated the Hunter House landmarking, began researching Berkeley’s existing traffic islands. At the same time, they circulated a petition of support for their proposed landscaped traffic island to other neighbors and received thirty signatures. They then forwarded these with a cover letter to Assistant City Manager for Transportation Peter Hillier detailing their reasons for requesting the island.

By February 2003 they had not received a response, so they enlisted the help of their councilmember, Dona Spring, who liked the idea but did not know how to finance it. More time passed. In July they once again turned to Spring, emphasizing their wish that the landscaping include a design and plantings, not just

barriers and bollards. They also stressed that neighbors wanted to be involved in the process, have a say in the planning and design, and were willing to take responsibility for some of the maintenance.

On October 18, Spring met with residents to discuss potential design options, and in November the city approved the idea of the island. Next, the city sent out a packet showing the layout of the intersection and included four beautification plans drawn to scale. Finally, on November 25, residents met to discuss the plans, and a majority voted for a variation of a triangle concept that would also address the safety issues raised by bicyclists and other stakeholders.

After several more meetings of the residents’ work group in early January 2004, the group unanimously signed off on a revised design devised by James Novosel, and in early February it was delivered to Hillier’s office. Over the next four months, he received input from various city groups. At last, at its meeting on June 17, the Transportation Commission unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the neighborhood proposal, with the added stipulation that the city pay for striping and signage.

After the City Council approved the proposal in August, a request for bids was sent out by the purchasing manager, and in October the contract was awarded to AW Construction, with construction scheduled to begin in early November. In addition, the city agreed to provide the island with topsoil and mulch, and neighbors agreed to take responsibility for planting and maintenance and for providing water.

By January 2005, a planting committee had been formed; there were more volunteers as well as monetary contributions. Residents enlisted the help of a neighbor, Glen Schneider, a native plant specialist, who drew a scale drawing of the plan with a detailed list of plants and trees and their specific locations. At the suggestion of Spring, neighbors planned a planting party for February 27, when more than twenty neighbors turned out to begin the planting.

Just three years later, in 2008, MSHHIG, collaborating with the Berkeley Historical Plaque Project and the City of Berkeley, installed an historic plaque at the south end of the Island. The plaque describes the gradual development of the district from a Spanish land grant to Irish farms to a suburban community and displays a photo of a steam locomotive laying track at this intersection in 1911.

Today, twenty years later, California Island continues to thrive, is much admired, and stands as an example of neighborhood initiative, which in collaboration with city government, transformed an ugly asphalt patch into a beautiful green area.

## Sources

“Three Novice Researchers (eventually) Find Enough Evidence,” published in the Fall 2001–Winter 2002 BAHA Newsletter, Patricia and J. Michael Edwards and Anna Marie Taylor.

“Edwards Family Oral History,” Patricia Edwards (unpublished).

Hunter House Landmark Application of June 5, 2000.

# Roots, Removal, and Resistance: A Year in Reflection

By Nancy Ukai

When a group of five community curators met sixteen months ago, we didn't know that the Berkeley Historical Society and Museum's plan for a Japanese American history exhibition would have such appropriate timing.

It was the first time in thirty years that our community's history would be displayed. BHSM was offering an opportunity to reflect on the grit of our immigrant ancestors and the trauma we had endured during the mass round up and incarceration of World War II, as well as our resistance, resilience, and vitality.



Michael Several in front of the "Here Lived" wall. Photo by David Ushijima.

We didn't know that BHSM board member Michael Several's two-year research project, to create a database of the names and addresses of every Nikkei person removed by the military in 1942—nearly 1,200—would dovetail with the exhibit.

Then George Petty, another board member, formatted every name and address of the "Here Lived" database on twenty-seven panels for the museum display. Elina Juvonen, Berkeley High Class of 2018, neatly converted the memorial into an online, interactive map.



Karen Korematsu (far right) at the opening event, with Judy Fujimoto (far left) and Judy and Alan Ziajka. Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.

Mayor Ishii stamping the names of family members in the *Ireichō* book, with her family and Rev. Duncan Ryūken Williams, director of The Irei Project, at the ceremony on June 3. Photo by Fox Nakai, Irei Project.



Berkeley's first Asian American mayor, a fourth-generation Nikkei, attended the October exhibit opening and was elected a few weeks later. In June, Mayor Adena Ishii spoke at a ceremony at the museum in which Japanese American area residents stamped a *hanko* seal next to their ancestors' names in the

sacred *Ireichō* book of more than 125,000 names, the number of persons of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in U.S. concentration camps during World War II. We also did not foresee that the invocation of the 1798 Alien Enemies Act—the same law that was used to round up our immigrant ancestors without due process—would be used again to disappear immigrants from the streets.



Kazuko "Kaz" Iwahashi in the exhibit. Photo by David Ushijima.

We have a deeper appreciation for history. We have been moved by community members, some from five-generation families, who have spoken at programs. Kazuko Iwahashi, ninety-four, reminds us to stay strong. BHSM's steady dedication to preserving local history reminds us that we are strong together.

## Reflections on a Year of Curation

The *Roots, Removal, and Resistance* exhibit was curated by five volunteer curators: Nancy Ukai, Arlene Makita-Acuña, Kathryn Lucchese, Gary Tominaga, and David Ushijima. What follows are reflections from each of the curators looking back on the past year's work.

### Nancy Ukai

Working on this project brought to the surface unexpected emotions: delight in learning the stories behind photos of immigrant families, sorrow that the disappearance of Japanese American students from Berkeley High went unmentioned in the 1942 spring yearbook, thoughts about my grandfather.

But Michael Several's digital *Stolpersteine* (stumbling stones) project astounded me. He researched every single name and street address of our ancestors who had been ripped from their Berkeley homes in 1942.

The database started small. Each day, during the Covid pandemic, he began by researching 10 names. The list grew to 1194. He got excited when community members added stories to the "Here Lived" memorial. "These memories are filling the void, are giving life to these people. They are becoming people in my life, too."

Thank you, Michael, for your empathy and drive, and BHSM for helping to preserve the precious memory of names and places that, too, are a part of our city's history.

## Arlene Makita-Acuña

Curating the exhibit on the history of Japanese Americans in Berkeley was a very deepening experience for me. Digging for information, past and present, searching for artifacts as well as interviewing members in our community, made me realize that I was and am still part of a significant group in Berkeley history.

Growing up, I had never actually examined the community nor thought much about what we contributed nor how separated we were because of the redlining that existed in our neighborhoods, even affecting the racial makeup of our schools.

And although I witnessed day to day how hard my parents worked at making a life after three and a half years incarcerated behind barbed wire, now nearly sixty years later I came to realize the heavy toll it took upon them and the Japanese American community as a whole.

Most significantly, this exhibit has brought together people from my childhood Berkeley Japanese community—many families who had moved far away returned to add to and share their stories. It was while working on this exhibit that memories that had long been forgotten once again surfaced. The rekindling of old friendships and the creation of new ones has been a wonderful outcome. And working together with such a dedicated and hardworking curation team has been a gift in itself.

## Kathryn Lucchese

In February 2024, in my Berkeley-Sakai Association inbox, I found a call for volunteers for an upcoming exhibition on Japanese Americans in Berkeley. Coincidentally, I was on the 150th Anniversary Committee of the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, and I hoped to learn more about my church's involvement in the registration of Japanese Americans after Executive Order 9066.

In March, Arlene Makita-Acuña, John Takeuchi, Nancy Ukai, and I formed the Incarceration Wall subcommittee, gathering interviews, documents, photos, and artifacts to display, creating a grid that we shared with other “walls” to design their layout.

Interviewing Arlene Makita-Acuña and Jim Furuichi were eye-opening, wonderful experiences for me, and I found it fascinating to learn so much about this harrowing time in Berkeley history as well as the whole process of printing and mounting the exhibit materials. While transcribing the diary of then-FCCB secretary Eleanor Breed, I was inspired to write a play about the evacuation process and evolving empathy of its church staff and congregation. The result was *A Cup of Cold Water*, performed on April 26, 2025. It encapsulates my own deep learnings and friendships, formed while working with the exhibition.

## Gary T. Tominaga 富永

I am truly honored to be a curator for *Roots, Removal, and Resistance: Japanese Americans in Berkeley*. Many have unselfishly contributed their intellectual knowledge, accurate recollections, and ability to forego *enryo* for everyone's benefit, which truly ensured the relevance and success of exhibiting our own true stories.

So many of our dear departed would be amazed that anyone would care about, learn from, and not marginalize, minimize, nor warp our narratives. Each of their lives was so relevant, interesting, and inspiring for all of us.

We hope to add to this history online and continue to learn by recognizing more of the unsung whose true stories are yet to be exhibited.

## David Ushijima

Nearly twenty years ago, at the Satsuki Bazaar and Festival held annually at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and named after the ritual rice planting ceremonies in Japan, I came across a map that revealed a thriving Japanese community in the heart of 1940s Downtown Berkeley. The map, which had been created by researchers Jill Shiraki and Donna Graves along with cartographer Ben Pease, was the seed that became my starting point in working on the Berkeley Historical Society & Museum exhibit.

The rare opportunity to reconstruct the history of a community that was obliterated by the injustice of wartime evacuation has been an unexpected gift and opportunity for me to reflect and revisit what my parents and grandparents had to endure, a subject which they rarely ever spoke of and for me an ethnic trauma that after fifty years I felt I had finally overcome.

But in the past year, while sharing family histories and serendipitous conversations with museum visitors and ninety-year-old survivors, I came to realize an even deeper appreciation and gratitude for the sacrifices that were made. Much has changed since I first learned the history of the evacuation as a young student in the newly formed Asian American Studies Program at Cal. In place of anger, I now find solace in shared remembrances.



Dr. Lenore Setsuko Uyeyama Kakita (left) and George Petty during a Uyeyama family visit to the museum. Photo courtesy Dr. Lenore Kakita.

# Images from *Roots, Removal, and Resistance: Japanese Americans in Berkeley*, October 13, 2024 – August 30, 2025



Camp survivors at opening event, from left to right: Toru Saito, Kaz Iwahashi. Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.



Opening-day visitors Mary Tominaga Lindquist, Dennis Makishima, Joanne Makishima, Leslie Tsukamoto. Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.



Community faith leaders at the *Ireichō* welcoming ceremony, from left to right: Rev. Michael Yoshii, Pastor Emeritus, Buena Vista Methodist Church; Rev. Pamela Kurtz, Pastor, Berkeley Methodist United Church; Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Resident Minister, Berkeley Buddhist Temple; Rev. Ken Yamada, former minister, Berkeley Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.



Mayor Adena Ishii with Nikkei curators at the *Ireichō* welcoming ceremony, from left to right: David Ushijima, Arlene Makita-Acuña, Mayor Adena Ishii, Nancy Ukai, Gary Tominaga. Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.



Camp survivors at the *Ireichō* welcoming ceremony, from left to right: Alice Kazuyo (Furuzawa) Neishi (97), Eizo Kobayashi (93), Maru Hiratzka (101). Photo courtesy Nancy Ukai.



Leslie Tsukamoto (left) and Joseph Nishimura at the opening reception. Photo courtesy David Ushijima.

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If you received this newsletter by mail, please check your mailing label, and if your membership has expired, we hope to hear from you soon! If you are not yet a member or your membership has lapsed, please consider joining the Berkeley Historical Society and Museum! Membership dues are the primary support for our many activities. Members receive the quarterly newsletter and discounts on our walking tours and book purchases. All dues and donations are tax deductible as provided by law. BHSM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, federal tax ID #94-2619129. We are always looking for new members, so we invite you to share your newsletter with friends who might be interested in Berkeley history, or bring a friend to visit the History Center.

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Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



Gaviota Fertilizer, Pacific Guano Co., sack filling, 2nd and Hearst Streets, ca. 1930



Hall-Scott Motor Car Co., airplane engine assembly, 5th and Snyder (now Heinz), 1914



Carriage painting, wagon work, blacksmithing, Addison St. and San Pablo Ave., 1895



Byron Iron Works, turbine pumps, Carlton St., 1900



Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Co., soap and toothpaste, 7th St., ca. 1950



Raspiller Brewing Co., Delaware St. and San Pablo Ave., 1893



Berkeley Ready-Mix Co., concrete, 7th St., 1950



H.J. Heinz Co., food processing, San Pablo Ave., 1940



Durkee's Famous Foods, assembly line, 5th St., 1942



Pacific Steel Casting, 2nd St., ca. 1930s (Pacific Steel Casting archives)



H.C. Macaulay Foundry Co., metal casting, Carlton St., closed 1937 (photo 2002)



Manasse-Block Tanning Co., boot and shoe leather, 4th St., ca. 1900s (BAHA photo)



West Berkeley Lumber Co., University Ave., 1890



Standard Soap Co. and wharf, Addison St., Allston Way, 2nd St., and 3rd St., 1900

## West Berkeley Early Industries

All photos BHSM unless otherwise noted.  
Page compiled and designed by John Aronovici.

From the late 19th century well into the 20th, West Berkeley was home to numerous industrial shops, often involving the labor of the many immigrant communities that also called West Berkeley home.