

# THIS POINT

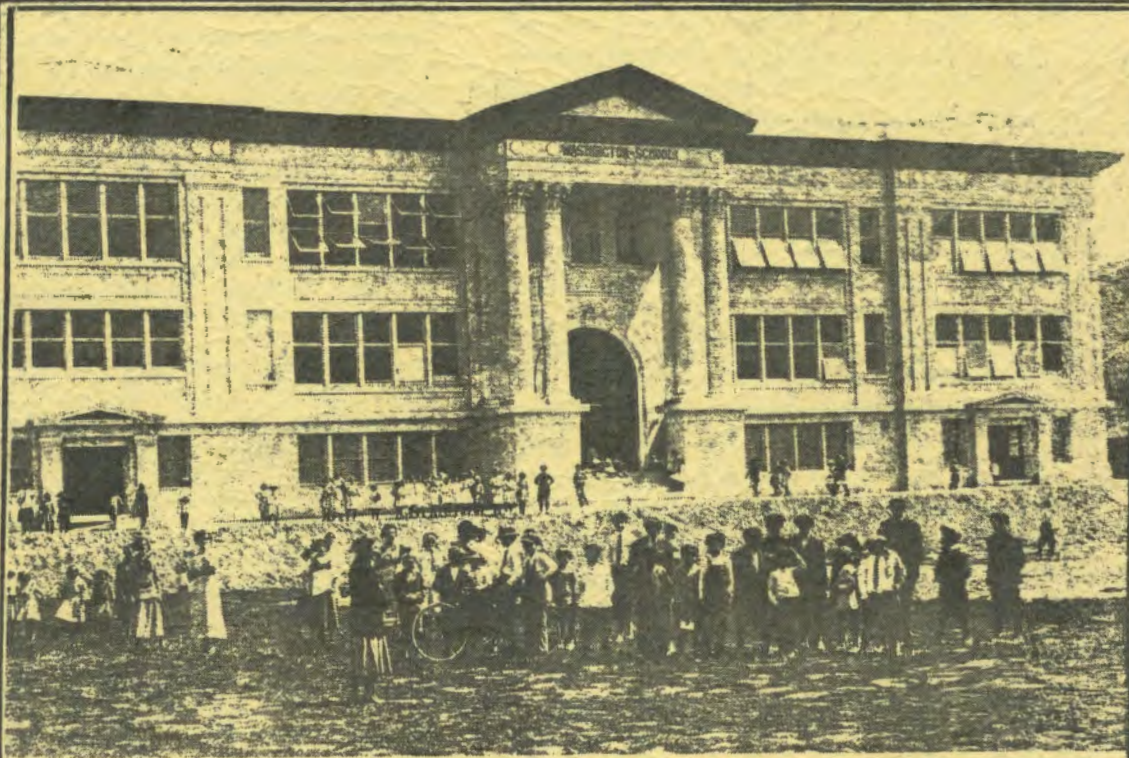
NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Vol. I, No. 6

February, 1983

75 cents



WASHINGTON SCHOOL , 1913

SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY – FEBRUARY 22, 1983

Community Celebration and Barbecue  
(see article for details )

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—in time—

## HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Richmond Museum's excellent slide show, pictorially and verbally describing the evolution of Richmond from the turn of the century to the second World War, was the highlight of our January 27 meeting. Tom Ryan, Museum President and Kathleen Rupley brought the beautifully presented show to us. If you missed the meeting and have never seen the presentation, it will be worth your effort to see it sometime in the future. Mr. Ryan also gave a snappy account of his memories of Richmond's aeronautical history — the adventurous pilots who provided joyrides from the "field" that includes the present Atchison Village area.

An update of the plans for the Indian statue was presented by Kerry Van der Meer and Rod Garrett of Inter Arts. A community meeting Thursday night, February 3, will provide the latest information available on the statue planned for Washington Avenue and Park Place. The meeting is planned for 8:00 p.m. at the Community Center.

### NEXT MEETING: A JOINT CELEBRATION !

We cordially invite everyone to attend Washington School's 70th Birthday Party, February 22, with a barbecue dinner starting at 6:00 p.m.

We will join Washington PTA's celebration of this historic event, as well as their annual Founders Day. Bring your memories and memorabilia to share and plan to have a great time. For details, see the article in this issue about the big celebration.

Since we are meeting in February, there will be no association meeting until the big Annual Meeting in May, tentatively planned

for May 1. We are making special plans now so plan to attend, and bring friends!

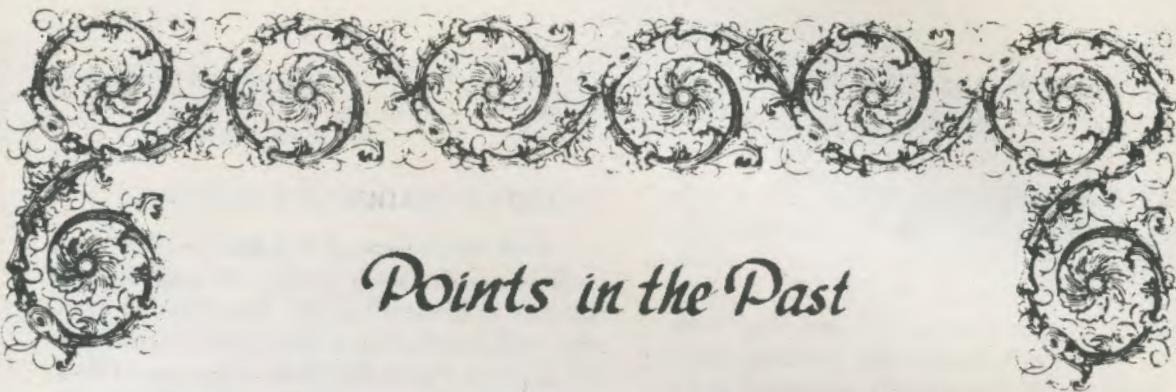
*Donna Roselius*

### ARCHIVE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT...

With the assistance of Chevron, USA, we will begin the huge project of copying the photos collected by the late Don Church, the well known local historian. I particularly want to thank Hal Holt, Manager of Public and Governmental Affairs, Carolyn Poage, Public Affairs Administrative Assistant, Jeffrey James, Drafting Supervisor and of course the photographers, Jack Coombs and Alan "Mac" McKeegan. The Don Church Collection which consists of 1545 photos and 600 articles depicting local history is owned by Mr. Allan Smith. Mr. Smith has been kind enough to allow the History Association to copy the albums and use the reproductions to further our knowledge of the Point's colorful history. Thank you, everyone!

Besides work already done with the help of Roz Bury, Michael Brown and Donna Powers, the Archives Committee is now expanding and includes Mid Dornan, Pam Wilson, Louise Hammond, Marian Hawkins, Al Frosini, Jim Chesharek, Lucretia Edwards, Elizabeth MacDonald, and Marion Downey. Our current projects include Xeroxing, binding and indexing the entire Church collection in order to make this wealth of information accessible. We are also developing the necessary forms and procedures for acquiring and cataloguing historical objects and information. Another project we would like to begin is the creation of a photographic essay on the Point. All we lack is someone with a camera who would enjoy strolling around town, taking snapshots of anything and everyone. Interested? Let me know.

*Teresa Allbro  
233-6243*



## Points in the Past

Articles from old Richmond newspapers and books, courtesy of the Richmond Museum.

### 70 YEARS AGO . . .

"The West Side hill district extending from Golden Gate Avenue northward to the Standard Oil holdings and westward to the Bay is being put on the market by the Point Richmond Development Company which has opened offices at the corner of Standard and Santa Fe Avenues. Clay Marble, who is in charge of the local business of the company, is preparing to make an active campaign to induce home builders to locate in that district. Marble feels that . . . the West Side is in for a big development."

—February 6, 1913

On February 9, the Independent announced the opening of the Point Theatre (now the Point Orient Restaurant) and contained a coupon which, when properly filled out and presented to either Independent office, would entitle the bearer to one free ticket of admission to the grand opening. Plans for the festivities included: "Prof. A.L. Cappelli, director of the Union Band and Orchestra of Oakland, (who) can make the violin almost talk, (plus) a noted prima donna (Madam Rosa Capelli) has been engaged for a number of vocal solos and will appear between reels."

Four of the "very finest" photoplays will be shown: "Caprices of the King, with hand-colored scenes; Pathe's Weekly No.3,

1913 (The funeral of the Countess of Flanders, mother of the King of Belgium; President-elect Wilson on his fifty-sixth birthday, and the German Emperor deer hunting); "The False Order" (which includes a head-on collision of two "enormous locomotives") and "Here's Your Hat", a comic.

Unfortunately, the celebration originally planned for Friday evening, February 14, had to be postponed one day because the construction was not completed. It was held on the 15th and was a great success, with over 1200 people attending.

—February 9,11,13,14,15,16, 1913

The dedication of the newly built Washington School will take place on Washington's birthday, February 22, "with an informal program at which members of Richmond Post No. 1 and General Stotsenburg Camp, United Spanish War Veterans have been invited to take charge." It will be "purely a patriotic event in every sense of the word."

—February 11 and 16, 1913

"It has come to the attention of city officials that the planned route of the street leading to the municipal tunnel crosses directly over the site of John Nicholl's oil and gas well on Richmond Avenue. However, engineer P.A. Haviland is of the opinion that the road can be shifted slightly so that condemnation and purchasing of the well by the city will not be necessary."

—February 2, , 1913

John Gerlach, owner of the property at the corner of Richmond and Tunnel Avenues, announced plans to construct a three story hotel building (now the 'New Todd Hotel'). "It will be furnished on the exterior in pressed brick and will be so arranged to be one of the most modern hotel buildings in the city . . . It will cost in the neighborhood of \$25,000. Gerlach is a pioneer resident of this city and superintendent of the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Co. (near Brickyard Cove). He has decided on the erection of the new building as one of the best investments he possibly can make."

—February 19, 1913

#### 60 YEARS AGO . . .

"Ben Brignone, West Side Hotel (Columbo Hotel, 443 Standard Ave.) proprietor, was fined \$250 in Federal Court in San Francisco this week for having 235 gallons of grape juice that had turned to wine. Brignone told the court he did not know the grape juice had fermented."

—January 26, 1923

At the City Council meeting, Postmaster James N. Long answered an inquiry made by Mayor E.J. Garrard as to the possibility of providing mail service to West Side residents who live in the district fronting the Bay. "The district is too small to obtain rural mail delivery, Long said, and city delivery cannot be obtained in most of it because sidewalks are not laid." However, a portion "of the district has sidewalks and an effort is now being made to have city delivery service extended to the top of the hill."

—February 6, 1923

#### 50 YEARS AGO . . .

Through the efforts of Fred D. Parr, the Winhaven property has been placed on the list of sites in the San Francisco Bay Area for the proposed Naval Supply Station. "The

Winhaven site consists of 47 acres of land with class A steel and concrete buildings that formerly housed the great plant of the California Wine Association and (has been) vacant since the advent of the eighteenth amendment." Although Alameda, San Francisco and even Los Angeles are offering sites, "it is believed locally that the Winhaven site at the price it can be secured for will be the most desirable of any on the coast."

—February 14, 1933

#### 40 YEARS AGO . . .

Heavy rain and a roaring gale caused a great deal of damage around the Bay Area. "At least ten homes on Ocean Avenue, at the Point, were being battered by the heaviest waves in the memory of the oldest residents . . . A barge was reported beached near the Standard Oil salt water pumping station and the beach house of the J.R. Totten's was washed away. . . A portion of the roof of the old Washington School was blown off . . . (and) The famed old Indian statue at Washington Avenue and Park Place, erected in 1909, was blown to the ground and smashed to pieces."

—January 21, 1943

—Teresa Albro



### Checkered Front LIVERY STABLE

S. R. CURRY, Prop.

Outfits are new and stylish. I  
buy and sell on commission.

BRANCH MORGUE

Undertaking supplies in stock.

## THE INDIAN . . . A MYSTERY UNVEILED

A part of Point Richmond history which has assumed monumental proportions, partly due to its mysterious birth and demise, is the 'Indian Statue'. Standing like a sentinel at the juncture of Washington Avenue and Park Place for thirty-four years, its presence was so taken for granted that when, in 1943, it tumbled over in a storm, little note was made of its disappearance. Its fountain base remained until the early '60's, when the Triangle was renovated.

Last year, the Point Richmond Business Association asked Rod Garrett to redesign the tip of the Triangle. Garrett, President of Inter-Arts of Marin (an organization that coordinates design and execution of Public Art projects) conceived the idea of replicating the old Indian Statue. (Please refer to the October issue of "This Point in Time", page 10.)

With its proposed resurrection came a renewed curiosity about the Indian's origin. Although it was known that the West Side Improvement Club had provided the original statue, none of the Club's charter members remain to tell its story. However, Virginia Bryant, present Secretary of the Club, found the minutes of its 1908 - 09 meetings, and, thanks to her and the Club, we have been able to piece together the following account:

On August 11, 1908, a committee, consisting of Mrs. McHenry, Mrs. Cowan and Mrs. Peard was appointed to see S.J. Futter, whose department store and residence were located at the corner of Washington Avenue and Park Place, about placing a fountain at that intersection. (They were also asked to



petition the Water Company to blow a whistle at least 30 minutes before turning off the water.) Another committee was appointed to "interview the people of the Methodist Episcopal Church about placing a drinking fountain at the corner of the church."

At the August 18 meeting, "Mrs. Peard reported that Mr. Futter would be willing to pay half the expense of putting up a fountain . . . if Mr. Katchinski the owner of the property would pay half. . . The Secretary was instructed to write to . . . Mr. Katchinski." Mrs. Gibbons reported, "that the committee had talked with the M.E. Church people about a drinking fountain at the corner of the M.E. Church and that they were very willing that the ladies should utilize the natural spring at that corner but that if anything was done it would have to be done at once as it would interfere with the work of building later on."

In the search for suitable fountains and sites for fountains, members investigated reports on fountains in Martinez and Woodland, a free fountain offered by the Humane

Society, and a small fountain with a cement trough for horses that could be obtained for \$50.00. A committee was appointed "to investigate the subject of placing drinking hydrants in several places on the streets," but interest gradually concentrated on acquiring just one large fountain.

Mrs. Curry reported on September 22. that she had secured "the Catalogue of Fountains and price list. The subject of fountains was laid over to allow Mrs. Curry to write the firm for further particulars." Mrs. Peard reported that she "had talked with Mr. Katchinski regarding a fountain at the corner of his property and that he was willing to give \$25.00 towards its cost. She informed him that we should expect a larger donation from him."

In October, letters from J.L. Mott Iron Works were received, "with the blueprint of a fountain such as we would like to have." And, at the October 13 meeting, the Club voted to "take up for our year's work the securing and placing of a fountain, establishment of a reading room and improvement of the little park near the Baptist Church".

On the chance that J.L.Mott Iron Works might have been local, we asked the Library to look in 1909 directories. J.L.Mott was located in San Francisco, in the Lick Building. Virginia Kennedy of the Richmond Library managed to find the Mott Metalurgical Company, now located in Farmington, Connecticut. A representative of the company should contact her soon, to possibly ascertain whether the company's records (and blueprints) go back to 1909!

To raise money for a large fountain, the Club had a "Tag Day". Tags and districts were "assigned the different members for distribution." The Club raised \$184.35, but we have not been able to find out what a "Tag Day" was.

Mr. Futter donated his promised \$100, and Mr. Katchinski, true to his word, sent only \$25. The Club decided to have a "trip around the world in automobiles" to raise more money, and appointed several ladies to "take charge of the starting station," but again we are at a loss to know what this event was; however, within a week, \$94.25 was netted from the fund-raiser.

On March 16, 1909, Mrs. Topping reported "that the Fountain Committee had decided upon the style of fountain they wanted and had written for prices on same." Minutes of the following meetings mention communications from J.L.Mott Iron Works at each meeting. On July 6, their letter was "in regard to inscription to be placed on fountain." At no time was there any indication, however, that the Club discussed the design of the Fountain, and no mention was ever made about the subject of the statue.— i.e., the Indian.

Plans were made to have the unveiling of the Fountain late in July, but it did not arrive until late in August. The unveiling took place on September 4, 1909, with 1,000 people present. Mrs. L.D.Dimm unveiled the Fountain, and Mrs. S.R. Curry gave the address. Fisks Band of Oakland played, and there were speeches by local dignitaries.

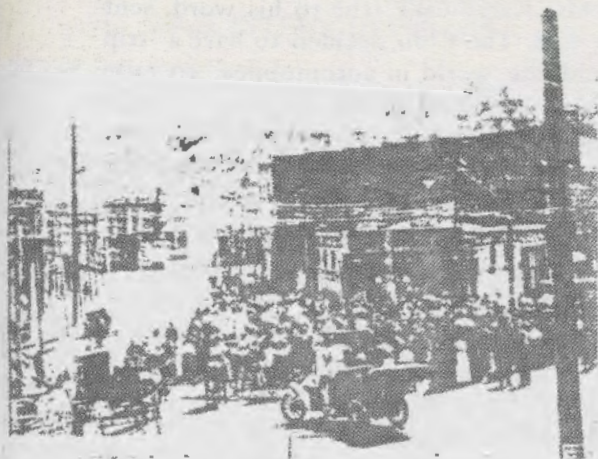
Bills mentioned in the minutes include:

Fountain:	\$800.00
Freight on Fountain:	\$173.65
Geo.Dimick, freight:	\$ 1.44
Bal. on Fountain:	\$ 87.86

Total: \$1,062.85

Don Church's notes state a total of \$1074.80, which is \$11.95 higher, but we can't find any other bills in the minutes.

The Club asked the People's Water Co. for free water for the Fountain. Letters received at the time included a "letter from



Mr. Younglove, Secretary of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Animals, thanking the Club for the beautiful fountain which was erected for the benefit of man and animals," and a letter from Mr. Minner for the Merchants of Point Richmond, in appreciation for "the efforts the Club has put forth for the improvement and betterment of the City, and most sincerely appreciate the beautiful fountain, and to show their appreciation their places of business would be closed from 1 to 3 O'clock for the unveiling of the Fountain."

—Donna Roselius

### COMMUNITY MEETING ON THE STATUE'S RETURN

On Thursday, February 3, at 8:00 p.m., the community is invited to the Community Center in Point Richmond to hear a progress report on the statue plans and the accompanying Victorian park setting. Everyone is invited to attend.



## A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION: WASHINGTON'S 70th BIRTHDAY!

Did you know that Washington School first opened on Washington's Birthday in 1913? (The original building, pictured on the cover, was replaced in 1944.) Coincidentally, PTA Founders Day is celebrated each year in February. Thus, this year, the Washington PTA and the Point Richmond History Association are inviting the community to a party celebrating Washington's Birthday, Washington School's Birthday, and Founders Day. Washington School alumni from all over will be invited, and those who attended the very first day of Washington School in 1913 will be special guests. Honors will also go to dozens of former PTA presidents and Service Award recipients.

A down home barbecue, reminiscences of the "good old days" at Washington and a variety of entertainment will be just a few of the highlights of the Birthday Party on February 22.

Taking a new tack because of working parents, the traditional tea-luncheon honoring past PTA Presidents and Honorary Service Award winners will be replaced by a reception at 5:30 for parents, faculty and invited guests, followed at 6:00 by an old fashioned barbecue featuring charcoal broiled goodies, from hamburgers for the kids to more sophisticated fare for grown ups, plus all the trimmings. Everyone is invited to come for dinner and entertainment, and to share memories of elementary school, as well as problems and solutions. After all, it's been said that history repeats itself and many past dilemmas crop up again today.

The dinner is \$5.00 for adults and \$2.50 for children. Proceeds go to Washington PTA's School-After-School program, which provides art, music, science and sports classes

as an after school activity, and to additional educational supplies for classroom use, and for assemblies and field trips. So you will be contributing to a worthy cause while enjoying a good dinner and a great time. Join your friends and neighbors at Washington's Founders Day and Birthday Celebration on February 22.

Reservations are necessary — for reservations and information, please call Wendy Thompson at 237-1351.

*-Judy Spediacci*

## RICHMOND VOTES YES!

Nationally, feelings were running high for prohibition in 1912 (prohibition became law on January 16, 1920), but Richmonders did not share this sentiment. They favored an open town with plenty of saloons. (The issue came to a vote on April 11, 1912 and saloons won overwhelmingly. The Independent recorded the outcome as follows:

"By an overwhelming majority yesterday the electors of the City of Richmond — male and female — voted to retain the saloons. Twenty-six hundred and seventy-nine voters out of a total of some 3,300 who were on the great register and entitled to vote, marched to the polling places and registered their ballots. Of these, 1,864 voted for the continued operation of the saloons, while only 793 voted to close them. The ratio in favor of the saloons was 2½ to 1."

The women's ballots were about equally divided between those for and those against the continuance of saloons. But, even "those who'd opposed the issue took their defeat with good grace and many after the result was known said that Richmond, even with saloons, was a pretty good town to live in after all."

*-Michelle Brown*

### THREE POINT RICHMOND EDUCATORS HAVE DIED

*Three women who spent their careers in Richmond Schools, and most of their lives in Point Richmond, died in the last three months. One, Karin Pulko, was to be the subject of this month's interview by Rosemary Corbin.*

#### GLADYS O'HARA

A native of Point Richmond, Gladys O'Hara lived here throughout her life. Her parents arrived here from Ireland in 1901. A pioneer Point family, they were instrumental in establishing Our Lady of Mercy Church.

Gladys graduated from Washington Elementary School, and was part of the 'famous' Richmond Union High School's Class of '25. Several members of that class still live in Point Richmond, and many of them were community leaders. Gladys attended San Francisco State Teachers College, graduating in 1928. She was employed by the Richmond schools for more than 40 years. Her career began during the Depression, and for years she taught two half-day sessions, a morning session at Washington, an afternoon session at Kensington; and similar double duty at Pullman and Stege. During World War II, instead of double sessions, the overcrowded conditions caused a reverse problem — she had to share the school auditorium at Peres with another class, to accommodate the great numbers of students.

Gladys taught at most of the elementary schools in Richmond during her long career, and she was a member of various local, county, state and national teachers' organizations. After retiring from teaching, she was a member of the Contra Costa County Retired Teachers' Association. An active member of Our Lady of Mercy Church and the West Side Improvement Club, her presence will be greatly missed in this community.

#### ETHEL FRANCIS

A memorial service was held for Ethel Francis, Sunday, January 30, at 2 p.m. at the Point Richmond Methodist Church. Rev. Roger Spence officiated at the services.

Mrs. Francis was a 60 year resident of Point Richmond. She graduated from the University of California, and both taught and was a counselor at several Richmond schools, for over 26 years.

Although ill for many years with Lateral Sclerosis, Mrs. Francis never gave up, and was interested in many things. She was a Bible student, sports enthusiast (TV), and kept up her many other interests.

She is survived by her husband, Henry; two daughters, Jeanne Downey of Martinez and Elizabeth Hammond of Columbia, South Carolina; a brother Floyd M. Watt of Huntington Beach, California; nine grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Betty Hammond spent almost a month with her mother and father during December.

The family requests any memorials may be sent to the Lateral Sclerosis Society, at this address: A.L.S. Society of America  
P.O. Box 5951  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

—Marion Downey

# Karin Palko

On January 3 Crest Avenue lost a great lady. Karin Palko – one of the well-known “Peterson Sisters” – passed on after being ill for several months.

Karin was born in 1906 in the house on Western Drive that the Greiner family now occupies. She was the daughter of Charles and Thekla Peterson, immigrants from Sweden. Charles was the chief marine engineer for Standard Oil, and he was the first Worshipful Master of the local Masonic Lodge.

There were six Peterson children: Margaret, Bertle, Karin, Ruth, Maja and Carl. They were all athletic. They used objects found on the beach to build a baseball diamond, hockey court, basketball court, and a handball court between their house and the beach. They played tennis where the Plunge is now, before it was built, and Carl and Bertle were members of the “men’s only” Westside Tennis Club. One of Carl’s tennis students was March Fong Eu. Karin continued playing tennis in the courts behind the Plunge with her sisters until she was 74 years old. She also distinguished herself as an athlete at San Francisco State where she played on their state championship basketball team. She also enjoyed fishing, hunting and beachcombing.

Karin and her brothers and sisters moved into a larger home on Crest Avenue in 1916. They walked to and from Washington School, and later when they attended high school downtown, they occasionally received a ride in their father’s car. Their contemporaries still remember getting rides with Mr. Peterson during the streetcar strike. It was a big deal because he owned one of the first cars in town.

Karin had always wanted to be a teacher, so she attended San Francisco State, and upon graduation returned to Richmond to teach. She loved her work, and many students returned years after she taught them to compliment her. She remembered many incidents at Washington, Lincoln and Nystrom Schools with fondness, and enjoyed relating them to her friends and neighbors. She was particularly proud of her accomplishments with children who hadn’t been “turned on” to education until she got hold of them. She was a real champion of the underdog.



Karin and her sister Maja married two Palko brothers from Crockett. Maja and her husband settled on Western Drive, and Karin and Pat moved into their home at 117 Crest. They raised two sons, Patrick, Jr. and Peter who are both married, and each has a son and a daughter.

Karin was the perfect grandmother. Each of her sons brought his family to Grandma’s

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### PART II

house once a week, and Grandma and Grandpa Palko often babysat in between. I was lucky enough to have a daughter, Diana, about the same time as their first grandchild, Laura, was born; and the two girls became fast friends. Diana doesn't have any grandparents, so the Palkos substituted very nicely. Karin taught Laura and Diana to crochet, play badminton and tennis, and often let them do messy projects like cooking and painting that I had vetoed at my house. Karin truly loved children, and they loved her just as much in return.

As much as Diana misses her "Grandmother", I miss my political confidant. "Oh, you Democrats!", Pat would say in a facetiously exasperated tone of voice when we would 'work over' the Republicans. My family had many late dinners because of my discussions with Karin. Politics wasn't our only topic of conversation. I passed my New Yorkers on to her and then enjoyed her insightful comments. She had a wonderful sense of humor, and innate common sense. I would classify her as a populist. She liked to listen to talk shows, and would often catch my husband, Doug and me as we were coming home from work, to discuss the topic of the day. Doug says she used the Socratic method. She always began a conversation with, "What do you think about . . . ?" She was brimming over with opinions and facts to back them up, but she waited until we had our say before expressing her views, and we usually agreed.

Karin loved to read, and loved the library. She made twice-weekly visits with her sisters to either Westside or the Main Library, and was eager to help save the Library after Proposition 13.

Karin was good at everything she did. She was a marvelous teacher, athlete, wife, mother, grandmother, and neighbor. A real success.

— Rosemary Corbin

*Stege Elementary School* was named for Richard Stege. He was born in Germany in 1832. After an adventurous life he married the widowed Mrs. Quilfeldt and took over the Coleman Ranch. He turned the ranch into a "showcase" with spectacular gardens, trees and lawns. He raised frogs for the finest restaurants in San Francisco on his estate. Others bought land from Stege and the small town of Stege developed. It had a post office, hotel, lumber yard, the California Cap Works and the Stauffer Chemical Company. Richard Stege died in 1882 leaving his estate to his daughter, Edith. She sold the property to the East Shore and Suburban Railway. Eventually, the city purchased the site and created the Eastshore Park.

*Rheem Street* was named for Colonel William S. Rheem. He was one of the representatives from Standard Oil who helped arrange the original purchase of 85 acres on which to build their refinery and later, served as president of the company from 1902 to 1911.

*Ohlone School* was named in honor of the Ohlone Indians, who were members of several tribes and inhabited the Bay Area. The group of Indians called the Huchium lived in the Richmond area.

*The town of Pinole* gets its name from a bread preparation eaten by the Ohlone people. It was made from ground buckeye balls and acorns.

*Rumrill Boulevard* was named to honor Azro Rumrill. He settled on 54 acres of the old San Pablo Rancho. This site was eventually developed into a community of homes. Rumrill served as a Justice of Peace and a Supervisor of Contra Costa County. One of his daughters married Walter T. Helms, the first Richmond Superintendent of Schools.

*Alvarado Park and Alvarado Street* are named for Juan Bautista Alvarado. He served as Governor of California from 1836 to 1842. Alvarado settled in what is now San Pablo in 1848. A replica of the Alvarado adobe now serves as San Pablo's City Museum and is open to the public.

*Parr Boulevard* was named for Fred D. Parr. He played a principal role in Richmond's history by masterminding the plan that turned Richmond into a war production center during World War II. Parr operated a steamship line and was one of the major port terminal operators and industrial land holders of the Pacific coast.

*DeAnza High School* was named in honor of Juan Bautista deAnza, an early explorer of Contra Costa County. He traveled in this area in the late eighteenth century.

*Martina Street* was named for the eldest daughter of Francisco Castro, who married Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1839.

*Cutting Boulevard* was named for Henry Coleman Cutting, early land promoter.

*Delfino Street* was named for the first child of Governor Alvarado.

*Hoffman Boulevard* was named for Edward Hoffman, city engineer and Superintendent of Streets.

*Park Place* was named for Park Jacobs, City Clerk.

*Potrero* is a Spanish word meaning "grazing land". The Potrero included Point Richmond.

One of our readers, Sarah Eeles, would like to know for whom Eddy Street in Point Richmond was named, and why it was changed from San Pablo Street. The cement on the corner of Eddy and Tewksbury has "San Pablo St., 1911" and "Eddy Street" printed in it. Does anyone have any information about this?

#### Sources:

Whitnah, Joseph C., *A History of Richmond, California*, 1944.

Cole, Susan D., *Richmond Windows to the Past*, 1980.

Point Richmond History Association, *This Point in Time*, 1980.

—Michelle Brown



#### HARRY P. MOLL

Former professional pianist - bandleader Harry Moll died on December 23. A longtime resident of the Point, he came to Richmond during World War II, to work in the shipyards. Instead, he took a job at Standard Oil, remaining with the company until his retirement. He led bands during the '20's and '30's, performing at Cal-Neva at Lake Tahoe's North Shore. Often on election days, with encouragement by local voters, he would provide entertainment by playing the piano at the Baptist Church, helping to break up the day for members of the election Board. He was 81 years old.

—Mid Dornan

#### HAPPY FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY to ....

Frank Pearson  
Jennie (Pearson)  
Connie Healy  
Dixie Copeland  
Sharon Amantite  
Shelly Virgo  
Arline Hartman

Doug Bushy  
Bessie Squires  
Frankie Greenlaw  
Allan Smith  
Russell Pansch  
Helen Valentine  
and You.



## IT WAS WRITTEN . . .

*From the archives of local churches come  
stories of early Point Richmond.  
A time when people enjoyed and  
took time to compose the  
"written word"*



### THE METHODIST CHURCH

*Records of the First Methodist Church in Point Richmond began in the November issue of this newsletter (Vol. 1, no. 4) and continues. Each account in 'The Record' varies, indicating the difficulty of maintaining accurate historical records.*

"I have been asked to make a few corrections of the historical statement on previous pages which I do from items written in my memoranda of 1900 while pastor of the Martinez-Pinole circuit.

"Late in September Bro. Odell, of San Pablo, convinced of the opportunities offered in the new town of Point Richmond for the establishing of Methodism, visited me in Martinez with that object in view.

On Monday, Oct. 1, with Bro. Odell, I visited a number of families in Point Richmond and Richmond, there being two town sites. The people received us kindly and expressed a desire for religious service. I made announcement for preaching service Sunday, Oct. 7. Not being able to fill the appointment, I went to Vallejo Oct. 15 to ask Rev. Jas. Williams if he could go or secure some supply preacher. He consented to do so and went to Richmond but was called home unexpectedly and the date for preaching service was changed from Sunday 7 to Monday 8. Bro. Williams and myself went from San Francisco Preacher's meeting to Point Richmond on Monday, made a number of visits and held the first religious service in the Critchett Hotel then being erected, Bro. Williams preaching the sermon, I taking the

opening part of the service. About 30 persons were present. Tuesday, Oct. 9, we held a second meeting, Bro. Williams opening the service, I preaching the sermon, there being between 20 and 30 people present. This service was also held in the Critchett Hotel. On Sunday, Oct. 14, we held service in small room back of Pioneer Store, kindly offered by Mr. and Mrs. Naugle, as the Hotel room plastered and not available.

"At the close of this service a class was formed, the following persons giving their names: Bros. A. Odell, O. J. Dahl and Sister O. J. Dahl. Sister McCool, being a probationer of Vallejo M. E. Church said that she would have her certificate of membership transferring her to Point Richmond sent off. The following week I saw Bishop Hamilton about getting a regular preacher for Richmond, if possible. He advised getting a tent at once, saying that he would see Dr. J. Kirby the P. E., regarding a preacher. I could not secure a tent, but got permission from Santa Fe headquarters in S. F. to hold service in a passenger coach in the R. R. yard, should there be one available Sunday, Oct. 21. Dr. Kirby, about this time, sent Bro. Younglove to Martinez to confer with me about Richmond and we went down together, looked over the ground (part of the Nicholl Tract with Mr. Morgan the surveyor) visited several of the families, Bro. Younglove being so impressed that he concluded to accept the pastorate offered him by Dr. Kirby and my supervision of the work ceased."

(signed) Thomas Leak

"Brother Younglove did heroic work in erecting the little chapel 24 X 32 with only a few to aid. He did most of the work and boarded building himself. It was found impracticable to utilize the old building in erecting the new one. We processed new plans and specifications in June 1906 and we commenced work. Mr. Geo. Dimmick donating the wagon and train to haul the rock and sand for the concrete foundation, the pastor donned his overalls and jumpers and did the hauling. The money came in slowly for the work — the pastor filling in nailing on the lathe, conveying the hod and doing everything when needed, as there was no money to hire the work done. It was all a work of love and done willingly and joyously. The blessings of God have rested on our work and we are grateful to God and these people for what has been accomplished. The church was dedicated July 4, 1909 by Bishop Hughes and Superintendent Hotsin-piller, the \$1500.65 being collected and subscribed on the day of Dedication."

Sept. 29, 1909

(signed) D.W. Calfee

—Mid Doman

## THE BAPTIST CHURCH

*The paragraphs below are taken from the Articles of Incorporation of the First Baptist Church of Point Richmond, California, dated October 24, 1903, and duly notarized by James Carroll. Filed in the office of the County Clerk of the County of Contra Costa State of California the 10th day of November, 1903.*

"Know All Men By These Presents: That we the undersigned have this day associated ourselves together for the purpose of establishing a religious Corporation under the laws of the State of California, to be known and designated as The First Baptist Church of Point Richmond, California. That the object



and purpose for which this Corporation is as follows:

"To establish and maintain a regular Baptist Church in the town of Point Richmond, County of Contra Costa, State of California, for the purpose of public worship and religious teaching according to the Holy Scriptures. To hold all property of said Corporation owned by it prior to incorporation, and all that may be acquired thereafter by gift, donation, purchase or otherwise, and to manage all the business connected therewith. To build a house of worship and secure payment of same by mortgage or other lien on its property.

"That the place where its principal business is to be transacted shall be Point Richmond, California, and the place of worship and the holding of other meetings shall be at the same place. That the term for which it is to exist is fifty years from and after the date of incorporation. That the number of its trustees and directors who shall have the management of this Corporation's affairs shall be five, named below, and who will hold office for one year or until their successors have been elected. C.W. Brown, Ber-

tha A.Reynolds, Elizabeth A.Donahoe, F.L. Lea, and O.H.Oxendine."

Baptist Church meetings were held in Point Richmond in private homes as early as 1901, our lots on Washington Avenue were obtained in August, 1903, the church building (the same building we worship in today) dedicated in November, 1904. And all that accomplished by a small group of individuals without assistance from a parent organization.

As I sit here just now to jot down a bit of history, I glance up and across our venerated sanctuary – the plank floors worn by eight decades of use, the high ceiling, the chapel-shaped windows framed with redwood, the cherry wood finish assembly chairs with their racks for hymnals (and racks underneath for gentlemen's hats), I feel a sincere debt of gratitude for the two ladies and three gentlemen named above, together with a few others whose hard work and devotion eighty years ago provided us today with our lovely old church. Several names of early Point residents appear often in our records – Mr. F.F.Stout, first church treasurer, whose daughter, Mabel Stout Edwards still lives nearby and remembers well the old days; and Lucetta (Mrs. Paul) Dunlap, who by all reports and records was all things to our church during the lean teens when approximately half of the congregation moved to the then booming downtown Richmond. Mrs. Dunlap was also active in early civic matters.

Since we write for a historical publication, we write historical information. I would not have you believe, however, that the Point Richmond Baptist Church is all history. We are very much alive today, as you will see if you'll drop in some Sunday morning at 11:00. You'll find the sermon spiritually uplifting, the music enjoyable, and the folks just right neighborly.

—Roy Jones

## BUSINESS BITS AND PIECES

### POINT RICHMOND PARKING DISTRICT:

The City Council opened the public hearing on the proposed parking district at its regular meeting of January 24. Of the 66 property owners that would be affected, only three made statements in protest. Two of the three, Jim Byers and Larry Delorifice, stated that they would support the district if certain modifications were made in the formula by which assessments were calculated. A third speaker, Janet Fleming, said she thought the parking to be provided by the district was unnecessary.

In addition to those making personal appearances, the Council received letters from a half dozen other owners who took issue with the proposal.

The hearing was continued until February 7, by which time presumably modifications to the assessment formula could be incorporated by the City and those affected notified of the change. Barring any additional significant protest, it is hoped that the wishes of the majority will prevail and the improvements will be constructed in the spring.

### POINT RICHMOND CRITERION

Velo Promo, an organization that promotes bicycle races, requested and received the cooperation and sponsorship of the Point Richmond Business Association for a segment of the California Veterans' Classic event.

The event is a two-day, three-stage race for Veteran and Master Riders only. The first two stages will be the Benecia Road Race and the Franklin Canyon Time Trial. The third and final stage would be the Point Richmond Criterion, a 30-mile race on the

Point Richmond hills to be held August 7, 1983.

The event will have a budget of \$10,500 which will be raised from commercial sponsors by the promoter. The race will receive two to three days of coverage by major newspapers and television stations. It is anticipated that about 2,000 spectators will attend the race.

Anyone interested in additional information should contact Velo Promo at (408) 425-0688.

-Tom Butt

### RICHMOND MUSEUM NOTES

The First Annual Richmond Museum Association Dinner will be held Thursday evening March 10 at the Rockefeller Lodge in San Pablo. The guest speaker will be Inez Brooks-Myers, Associate Curator for the Oakland Museum History Department. Tickets are \$12.50. For tickets or information contact the Richmond Museum, 235-7387, or Tom Ryan, 232-6689. RSVP by February 25.

The Richmond Museum is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday, except on Holidays.

### SAN PABLO MUSEUM NOTES

The San Pablo Historical and Museum Society shows, in their annual report, that they have had an active and growing year. Having furnished the Gabriela Castro bedroom in the Alvarado Adobe, their next big project is to furnish the Adobe living room with Victorian pieces which would have been current at the time Governor Alvarado lived in San Pablo. The Museum has a slide show on the History of San Pablo. Information may be obtained from Anna Gaumer, at 234-7518.

## RECENT HISTORY - THE MILLER-KNOX REGIONAL SHORELINE PARK

II

*A series of articles on  
the Park - its birth and  
development.*

1971

Feeling that the design concepts were in excellent hands, the Contra Costa Shoreline Parks Committee gratefully prepared to relax their vigilance, but instead were forced to turn their attention to an unexpected and unwelcome development - a lawsuit about



the hills brought by the Richmond Ramblers Motorcycle Club. The club members contended that they had acquired the right to public use of the hills by "implied domain", since the land had been freely used (that is, without protest by owners) by motorcyclists since 1947. The landowners (including the Santa Fe Land Company, Santa Fe Railroad, and PG&E), the neighboring residents and the Shoreline Parks Committee maintained that the motorcyclists were trespassing on private property, causing a destruction of the land ecology in scarring and removing topsoil, and causing pollution of the air with noise, constituting a nuisance both public and private. Suits and countersuits were launched, with 1.6 million dollars in damages claimed by the landowners for damage purportedly done to their land by the Ramblers over the past 25 years. Fortunately (for the hills, the hikers and picnickers and the park plans) the law suits did not drag on and on, since the judge in the case did not rule in favor of the cyclists. Though motorcyclists still trespass on and despoil the hills, they do so less now, possibly because they can now be cited for contempt of court if reported and caught.

A happier event was the ceremony held in 1972, formally dedicating the park as the George Miller, Jr. Memorial Park, in memory of the late, great State Senator. Senator Miller lived in Point Richmond when he was young, as did his wife. Mrs. Miller has happy memories of the pleasures of rowing on the Bay and climbing the hills "when the whole of the Bay side of Point Richmond was essentially one big, beautiful park, which was freely used by everyone." 1972 was a red letter year for park people for still another reason. In October, Bethlehem Steel Company, finding it economically unfeasible to develop the integrated steel plant which had been originally planned, sold approximately 1,000 acres of land and water at Point Pinole

to the East Bay Regional Park District for \$6,000,000. And so, eight years after it was originally considered as the site for the Park District's West Contra Costa Shoreline Park, Point Pinole was finally brought into the Park District's family of parks. At a time when belated recognition is given to the extraordinary value of San Francisco Bay in the lives of all who live in this area, the Park District and Contra Costa are fortunate in having obtained a second Bayshore park — and especially one that so superbly complements the possibilities inherent in George Miller Park. Ideally the entire shoreline of the Bay should be one beautiful "rim" park,



but since this is impossible, every bit of bayshore land that can be obtained is cause for rejoicing. If the energy crisis is indeed to be a way of life, and the freedom to travel which we as a nation have so long enjoyed is to be severely curtailed, these bayside "islands in time" of peace and beauty will be more essential to our public mental and physical health than ever.

Another heartening happening in 1972 implemented actions, initiated much earlier, to provide additional revenues for park acquisition and expansion. In 1971, Assemblyman John Knox introduced AB95, authorizing the Park District to increase its tax rate \$.10 per \$100 of assessed valuation, 50% of which was subject to adoption by the District of a Master Plan. Stewart Udall's environmental and parks consulting firm, "Overview" was hired by the Park District to prepare a Master Plan which would "create a balanced

system of regional parklands designed to reflect the needs and desires of residents of the entire district." Overview's work on the plan was begun in March, 1972 and an 83-member citizens' task force was appointed by the Park District's Board from among the citizens of the two-county District, as an independent body to review and make objective recommendations.

Both Overview staff and Task Force members came to Point Richmond to see the Park site, and were given the Contra Costa Shoreline Parks "guided tour". In addition, presentations about the shoreline park were made by Shoreline Parks members at the request of several of the Task Force sub-committees.

Tantalizing hints about various plans under consideration served to encourage the Park protagonists, but it was not until February, 1973, after nearly a year of tests and studies, that Arbegast and Newton presented their recommendations for initial development of the park to the public. Actually the firm presented three schematic plans for the Park: One for the entire 650-odd square acres on both sides of Potrero San Pablo's ridge, one for a smaller version of 350 square acres and one for the actual 8.5 acre property owned by the District.

Mr. Arbegast, who made the presentation, made it quite clear that the District should acquire all of the hill lands, explaining that regional parks should serve many functions, including recreation, education and open space preservation. He stressed the unique nature of the Point Richmond headlands. The area is the last in the Bay where one can stand on hilltops and get complete 360 degree views. It is the last area where one can look or walk from the hills directly to the Bay with no development getting in the way. And, perhaps most important, the combination of nature and man's creations

provide an ideal area for the study of man in his "total environment". Mr. Arbegast called the larger park an "urban threshold park" because it is in the midst of, and answers the needs of a highly urbanized and industrialized area, as well as providing an open space experience and regional shoreline recreation.

The park that "can do things no other Regional park can do" would have open meadows, hiking trails, magnificent views from the hills, picnic areas, day camp facilities, nature education sites, fishing and swimming possibilities, and play areas for children. Other elements would include mini-bus service to alleviate traffic, or the possibility of running the historic steam locomotives on existing tracks in a loop to move people in and out of the park. But in order to achieve the highest and best use of the land "you must save the hillside."

Another proposal was drawn up with the premise that some of the lower slopes would be developed residentially. In this plan the upper portions of the ridge would be theoretically protected by imposing various zoning regulations on the land. The consultants were personally opposed to this plan "because even developments that were limited in height would intrude on the sweeping views from the ridge."

The third design, for the 8.5 acre property owned by the District was planned with the idea in mind that one day the small parcel would be part of a larger Regional Park. The plan called for minimum development on the Bay side of the tracks where three small hooked peninsulas, or groins, would be created with bay fill to extend the amount of shoreline available to the public. A path would link this section with Keller's Beach. Sandy beaches, fishing, picnic and children's play areas and a small tidal study area would be created in and around the little peninsulas. A gently soaring pedestrian overpass ac-

ross the tracks would connect the beach area with the 8.5 acres between the tracks and Garrard Boulevard, where a parking lot, rest rooms, picnic meadows and a play area would be set in a man-made mounding system and connected by a meandering path.



It was made clear by Mr. Arbegast that the decisions as to whether or not the District moved to acquire more land (especially hill land) at Point Richmond would depend primarily on the recommendations made by the Task Force and Overview in the Master Plan. However, Assistant General Manager Jerry Kent commented that one phase of planning had been accelerated because the District hoped to acquire 250,000 cubic yards of useable fill (for the little peninsulas) from another Richmond project, the Point Isabel Bulk Mail Center. Before any fill can be placed in the Bay, permits must be obtained from the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, so applications had been filed for permission to accept and use the Mail Center fill. Regretably, the District missed the opportunity to obtain this fill, but was alerted to the availability of suitable free fill from the Social Security Admini-

stration Payment Center site in midtown Richmond, and arrangements were made to stockpile 80,000 cubic yards on the 8.5 acre park site off Garrard Boulevard.

On June 18, 1973, the East Bay Regional Park District's eagerly awaited Master Plan was presented to the public. Out of about 100 originally proposed sites, forty had been chosen, following an exhaustive five-point evaluation which included (1) relative suitability for a particular park use, (2) the need or demand for that use, (3) accessibility, (4) threat of loss to development or other use, and (5) the ease of acquiring the site.

The proposed Master Plan calls for the acquisition of a minimum of 34,700 acres, though the preferred acquisition would be closer to 54,000 acres. Illustrative of the new direction the District had taken was the fact that 13 of the proposed 40 sites were along the Bayshore, and ten of them in the Richmond- Berkeley area.

Expansion of George Miller Jr. Park was one of five high priority items listed as Regional Shoreline. Overview recommended the acquisition of 300 acres of hills and flatlands, to make its 8.5 acre site with adjacent half mile of shoreline plus the top of Nicholl Knob into a workable, truly regional shoreline site.

The citizens' Task Force Master Plan report said, "The combination of the Bay Shoreline and the dramatic hill forms make the Point Richmond area a unique open space resource in the entire East Bay. Adequate flat land is available for high-use shoreline recreation facilities and the hills are well suited for use as an undeveloped viewshed and vantage point. Spectacular views of the Bay to the West and the urban environment to the East are visible from the ridge. The conjunction at this site of Bay and land, hill and flat, developed and natural, makes this site a potential environmental education area."

"The existing Regional Park holdings in this area (Nicholl Knob and 8.5 acre flat parcel) are too small alone to form an effective parkland unit. However, if expanded, the site has the potential of providing a wide variety of recreational opportunities. First priority acquisition should be the land necessary to connect the existing holdings to form one park entity to be managed as a unit."

The District's Chief of Land Acquisition, Hulet Hornbeck, reported that as part of a program to help hold down the ultimate costs of buying new park lands, the District, over the past months, had been securing options to purchase many key parcels in the proposed park sites in the two-county District. A good number of these were for Point Richmond, for parcels just below the ridge-line on the Bay side involving, "a good part of the viewshed." The options permitted the District to purchase the parcel at the quoted price, usually within one year, but did not commit the District nor prevent them from buying up other pieces first.

Of relevance to George Miller Jr. Park was the item in the Master Plan about "Vehicular Recreation Areas". In response to a task that has been thrust upon the Park District because no other agency appears to be equipped to handle it, Overview proposed the creation of suitable sites for the 80,000 motorcycle and off-road vehicle riders in the District, accessible to riders in each county. This idea seemed to promise relief to many motorcycle-scarred hills popular with the hill climbing cyclists.

Now, does all this sound like progress? Yes, of course it does, although it is hardly the park which in 1964 was promised for 1969. But it is fortunate that the Contra Costa Shoreline Parks Committee has been tempered in the fire of past disappointments, delays and frustrations into a tough, resilient group, for a new and interesting develop-

ment threatened what seemed to be authenticated gains and progress.

Long ago, BCDC agreed in principle to the concept of a shoreline park at Point Richmond. But when a hearing on this matter was scheduled in fall of 1973, the item was suddenly removed from the agenda without explanation. Enquiry revealed that though it had originally appeared that there would be no difficulty in obtaining permits for the fill necessary to create the little peninsulas, their design would necessitate eight acres of fill. It must be understood that BCDC is under constant fire for the permits to fill the Bay which they have granted, as well as for illegal filling they have not prevented or penalized. In June, 1973, BCDC granted applications for only 4.36 acres of fill in the entire Bay, but many cities were now eager to create parks or marinas or housing developments along their shores, and were awaiting a precedent-making BCDC decision upon which they could base their fill applications. Obviously, eight acres here would trigger a host of such applications.

Therefore, BCDC suggested several alternatives for the Park District to pursue, including (1) reshaping the shoreline plan to eliminate fill altogether, (2) deleting 1 to 3 acres by eliminating the extensive mounding and screening along the railroad tracks, or (3) seeking agreement with Santa Fe to move the tracks inland, permitting the creation of a beach and waterfront facility at the present shoreline without any fill. Any one of these proposals meant continued delay, especially the last one. Not only would Santa Fe object strenuously to the very idea of moving its tracks, but the idea would shatter the integrity of the terrain, putting an end to the idea of acquiring the hills as part of the park.

*To be continued, next month: Bringing the Park Story Up to Date.*

*Lucretia Edwards*

## POINTS ??IN QUESTION??

If you have questions about how or why something in Point Richmond came to be, or if you can answer a question brought up in the newsletter, please let us know. You may even find a mistake here or there, and be kind enough to send in a correction. We are, after all, trying to gather enough authentic information to eventually publish the most complete book on Point Richmond history possible.

### QUESTIONS :

*What is a Tag Day? ( It was a fund-raising event, but what kind?)*

*What was a Trip Around the World in Automobiles? (Also a fund raiser)*

*How or for whom was Eddy Stree named?*

*Does anyone have a picture of the original building called the Central Pool Hall?*

### CORRECTIONS:

*On page 13 of the book, This Point in Time, it states that the Plunge opened on September 15, 1925. Georgia Johnson, who served as their cashier (the only one they ever had) was there when it opened, and knows that the date was March 20, 1926.*

Please send your questions or answers to us at 212 Bishop Alley, Point Richmond, CA 94801., or call 235-4222.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP (CHECK ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/> SINGLE	\$10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR CITIZEN (65 +)	5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY	20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> ORGANIZATION	25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORY-PRESERVER	50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORY-MAKER	100.00

## POINTS IN THE FUTURE

FEB. 3 Community Meeting about the Indian Statue at 8 p.m. in the Community Center.

FEB. 22 Community Celebration of Washington School's 70th Birthday, at Washington School. Joint meeting of History Association, PTA Founders Day, and Birthday.

5:30 - honored guests.

6:00 - Barbecue dinner & celebration & entertainment.

Call 237-1351.

"This Point in Time" is published by the Point Richmond History Association, 212 Bishop Alley, Point Richmond, CA 94801.

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Illustrations: Donna Roselius

Layout: Jodi Roselius

Articles for next month's issue are due on the 20th day of this month.

Mail articles to the Association at the above address, or bring them to the Richmond Supply Company—145 West Richmond Avenue. For information or small news items, call 235-4222.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE POINT RICHMOND HISTORY ASSOCIATION INCLUDES A SUBSCRIPTION TO THIS NEWSLETTER. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS MAY BE SENT TO MICHELLE BROWN, 25 IDAHO STREET, POINT RICHMOND, CA 94801.

