

Introduction

Place. We all have one on this Earth. Block 36, in West Berkeley, has been my place for nearly 40 years. It is the block bounded by Sixth and Seventh streets between Page and Camelia streets. Historically this block was known as Block 36 of Tract B of the Berkeley Land and Town Improvement Association.

The Berkeley Land and Town Improvement Association (BL&TIA) was the group formed in 1873 *“to promote settlement in the flatlands, to start a ferry from San Francisco, and to establish a horsecar line up University Avenue”* (Pettitt, undated, p. 20). This association purchased a large portion of the land around what was first known as the Ocean View district—from the Bay to San Pablo Avenue—and then marketed and sold land parcels to interested buyers.

The sources of information that I have sought out include the relatively small number of books written about the history of Berkeley and its people, articles in local newspapers of the time, census records, maps, yearbooks, and other publicly available data and original records available online, in the Berkeley Public Library’s Berkeley History Room, the University of California’s Bancroft Library, the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, the Berkeley Historical Society & Museum, Alameda County property records, and City of Berkeley building records. I also investigated the people who lived on this block over 100 years ago using a variety of family history programs. Oh, and countless walks around the block.

I miss being able to talk to my neighbor, Mary, who passed away 20 years ago, in 2005. She was born and lived all her 89 years on this corner of the Earth. I asked her many questions and listened to her tales of growing up in the neighborhood. I regret never speaking with, or even meeting, another neighbor, Marie—who lived just 50 yards from my house when we first moved in. She passed away at the age of 80 in 1991. Like Mary, she lived her entire life in the neighborhood and could have shared her perspective on the vibrant Portuguese slice of the West Berkeley community.

Initially, I was curious to know the history of my house—when it was built and who lived in it. This quickly grew into wanting to understand more about what life was like in my piece of the neighborhood in the late 1800s and first part of the 1900s. As I dug into the lives of those who lived on my block and read the news of the time, I was struck by the degree to which the social and political context of each era played out right here, on Block 36. The prevalence of child labor, the anti-Chinese movement, the time before any social safety net existed, the ravages of uncontrolled diseases, defined sex roles, the impact of World Wars, Japanese internment camps, and the Great Migration—all this and more is manifest in the lives of those who lived on my block. Though I first focused on observing change over time, it soon became unavoidable to notice those things that have not changed. These include, but are not limited to, poverty, extreme gaps in children’s opportunity to learn, street crime, contrasts between East and West Berkeley, town-gown strife, intense and persistent racism, the additional hardships faced by people of color, domestic abuse of women, systematic environmental degradation, complaints

about taxes, short-sighted capitalistic ventures, anti-vaxers, the need for street repairs, controversy around the fate of eucalyptus trees, scarcity of water, and more. It's all still here.

What follows is a look at Block 36 in 1900, and in each decade that follows, through 1950. I provide an overview of the larger context of each decade, followed by notes about each house on Block 36 and its inhabitants that year—and sometimes into the decade a bit if I was able to find further interesting information. This “dipstick” approach reflects the limitation of the decadal focus of the U.S. Federal Census as well as a desire to keep the scope of information more manageable than wall-to-wall storytelling might be. In choosing a period that was 75 to 125 years ago, I have endeavored to focus on historic events and people and to steer clear of anyone still living.

1900 Berkeley

In 1900, Berkeley had a little more than 13,000 residents. The community was built around two hubs: one centered on the burgeoning university on the east side of town, the other focused in West Berkeley, the former, older, unincorporated Ocean View community. In those days, West Berkeley was often referred to as the “West End.”

In 1900 the university had 2,500 enrolled students (nearly a fifth of the entire population of Berkeley), virtually all of whom lived near the campus, as did most of the university's faculty and staff. Unsurprisingly, in comparison to the West End, East Berkeley's residents were more educated, had more financial resources, and included more adults who worked in professional occupations (as lawyers, physicians, bankers, etc.), more who self-identified as artists, singers, musicians, or painters, and more who employed live-in servants (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

In contrast, the West End

developed into a lively working-class and agricultural community. Most of its residents lived in modest homes scattered among the district's plants, mills, and shops or on farms adjacent to the industrial section. (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 20)

A great number of its residents were employed in the West End's numerous industries, located in proximity to Berkeley's wharf and the Southern Pacific train tracks that ran parallel to the waterfront along Third Street. In 1900, these industries included a planing mill, a soap factory, a match factory, a broom factory, two oil works for producing linseed and coconut oil, two tanneries and leather furnishing establishments, a soda water factory, an organ factory, a shoe factory, a factory for making silk cloth, chemical works and fuse works, a lumber yard, a wood pulp mill, a brewery, a starch factory, and a flour and grist mill, a steam laundry, among others (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, April 28, 1900).

The waterfront also provided a range of employment opportunities, including sea captain, sailor, deckhand, and longshoreman, for the collection of sailboats, ferries, tugboats, and steamers that frequented Berkeley (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

The railroad employed engineers, conductors, brakemen, and laborers (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

In addition, several farms and garden nurseries, located in the flatlands between the West End and East Berkeley, were another source of employment. One could also find small dairies and chicken farms integrated into the residential areas.

Throughout all of Berkeley there were many immigrants, though the West End had substantially more. The diversity of origin countries and languages spoken was expansive, with many people from Ireland, Germany, Canada, Scandinavia, England, Scotland, and China, as well as smaller numbers from Chile, France, Mexico, Russia, and more. The West End also had substantial representation from Portugal, Italy, and Finland (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

Tension between East and West Berkeley showed up in many ways, over many years:

An animosity between the two areas sprung up for several specific reasons, along with general social and economic differences. When the university dammed Strawberry Creek for a water supply, Ocean View residents claimed this substantially lowered the water level in their wells and argued that waste from the campus area was polluting the stream. A law prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages within two miles of campus would have closed down taverns in Ocean View, a matter of concern to the hardworking community. The limit was reduced to one mile but caused other problems as new bars opened in Ocean View catering to students. (Online Archive of California, Bancroft Library)

In describing the chasm existing between East and West Berkeley, an editorial in the local newspaper claimed that the “riff-raff of the city” congregated in West Berkeley because of the saloons, and went on to say:

One of Berkeley’s most prominent men told me the other day that he stood for half an hour on the corner of University and San Pablo avenues and saw more degradation in that thirty minutes than he had ever seen in Berkeley before. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, November 28, 1906)

Those who attributed the “moral decline” observed in West Berkeley to alcohol organized and attended anti-saloon meetings, which were periodically held at the city’s churches, with the goal of establishing sobriety in all of Berkeley. In 1900 the city enacted an ordinance that aimed to protect the entire town from the impact of alcohol sales, resulting in the arrest of saloon operators in West Berkeley. The ordinance was sent for review by the State Supreme Court and

subsequently rescinded, but it further harmed already difficult relations between East and West Berkeley.

Many of the streets in Berkeley were unpaved, especially in West Berkeley, whose infrastructure seemed to be lower priority than East Berkeley's—an opinion held by many who lived in the West End and expressed regularly in the local newspapers. In the wet seasons, mud and ruts made passage along the streets arduous. In summer, the dust generated by passing horses and wagons was unforgiving both for those traveling along the dusty streets and anyone in the path of the travelers. In 1900, an endeavor was underway to grade, curb, and pave some of the West End's main thoroughfares: Sixth Street from Dwight to Gilman, Delaware from San Pablo to Third Street, and Camelia from San Pablo to Second Street. This project included installing sewers in these locales where they didn't already exist.

The cost of street improvements was typically passed along to the city's residents. So, in 1902, when the City of Berkeley informed the residents of Sixth Street that they needed to contribute to the construction of cement sidewalks, its residents protested. The following petition was published in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*:

We the undersigned citizens and property owners along the west line of Sixth Street between Delaware and Camelia streets, and whose property has been warned by your street Superintendent to lay concrete sidewalks respectfully protest against the order for laying of said walk on grounds via: We do not consider the filled grounds in perfect condition, knowing by observation the gradual sinking and especially that portion of the fills between Delaware and Holyoke (Virginia) streets. Second, we have not heard any complaints of our board walks being out of repair or that when warned by proper authority that we did not seek to remedy the warning necessary for repairs. Third, we are people in limited circumstances, striving to work off the debt for the recent street improvement of macadam, guttering, etc. And with the expense of laying concrete sidewalks added, we dislike the order as it works too much of a hardship on us at once, financially. We wish to be excused for about two years, at which time we would be pleased to see both sides of the street from University Avenue north to the city limit, laid with concrete walks. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, July 15, 1902)

Running water was by no means universal in the early twentieth century (Hoagland, 2011). Water mains ran down many, though not all, streets in Berkeley. If you lived within 200 feet of a water main, you could pay the local water company to connect your house and then pay monthly for access to water. The quality and quantity of the water, however, was questionable. The water pressure varied depending on multiple factors. In addition, there were restrictions placed on what water could be used for (for example, not for irrigation). However, the main concern I read in the multiple letters of complaint from water customers (Bancroft Library) focused on both the quality and cost of the water. Here is one example:

Do we have to pay full price for water when you can't use it even when it is boiled? It spoils everything we cook—can't even boil potatoes and have them fit to eat. We have to

buy distilled water and that is quite an item of expense. I think we should not have to pay full price when we don't get what they agree to furnish. (Letter to Berkeley City Council by Mrs. H. A. White, October 7, 1903)

At the time she wrote the letter, Mrs. Henry A. White was living at 1300 Grove Street with her architect son. It turns out that she was the mother-in-law of Berkeley's renowned architect Bernard Maybeck. Water quality issues were likely even more pronounced for the working-class residents of the West End than for the middle-class residents of East Berkeley.

Even though in 1900 there was a water main running down Camelia as well as one on Sixth Street, the costs of extending water service to each home, of monthly charges, and of plumbing fixtures were likely prohibitive to most on Block 36 at that time. We also know that in 1911, 1413 Sixth Street had an active well with a 30-foot windmill and water tank in its backyard. There is no indication that the other houses on Block 36 had wells. There were alternatives to purchasing the costly distilled water—there were people who gathered water from creeks and would bring it to your home. Or just maybe, the neighbors bought water from the owners of 1413 Sixth. To this day, that well exists and is usable.

Access to electricity in Berkeley was spotty at best in the year 1900. The first universal access to electrical lights was through the city's street lights. As early as 1888 Berkeley had street lighting—well, a little bit of street lighting. The company that provided it to the City of Berkeley was called the East Berkeley Electric Light Company, so you can guess where the street lights were. In 1888, there were 30 street lights in total, three of which were located west of San Pablo Avenue. By 1900, the Berkeley Electric Lighting Company (note the name change) had installed 62 street lights citywide, of which 10 were located in the West End. Of the two closest to Block 36, one was located at Camelia and Fifth Street (it was hanging on a span wire over the intersection), and the other was located on a pole at Jones and Sixth Street.

In an effort to provide electrical service more broadly, the Berkeley Electrical Lighting Company constructed a power house and was building out a system of wires and pole lines to provide access to electrical power to factories and homes in Berkeley. The power loop began and ended at the power house on Louisa Street (now Bonita). The part that came closest to Block 36 went down Delaware Street to Sixth Street to Camelia Street to Fifth Street back to Sixth Street and then back to Delaware. While we might think that access to electricity was the limiting factor for electrifying a house, as was the case for water, the costs of extending wires to one's property, building out electrical fixtures, and paying monthly charges were for many the larger barrier.

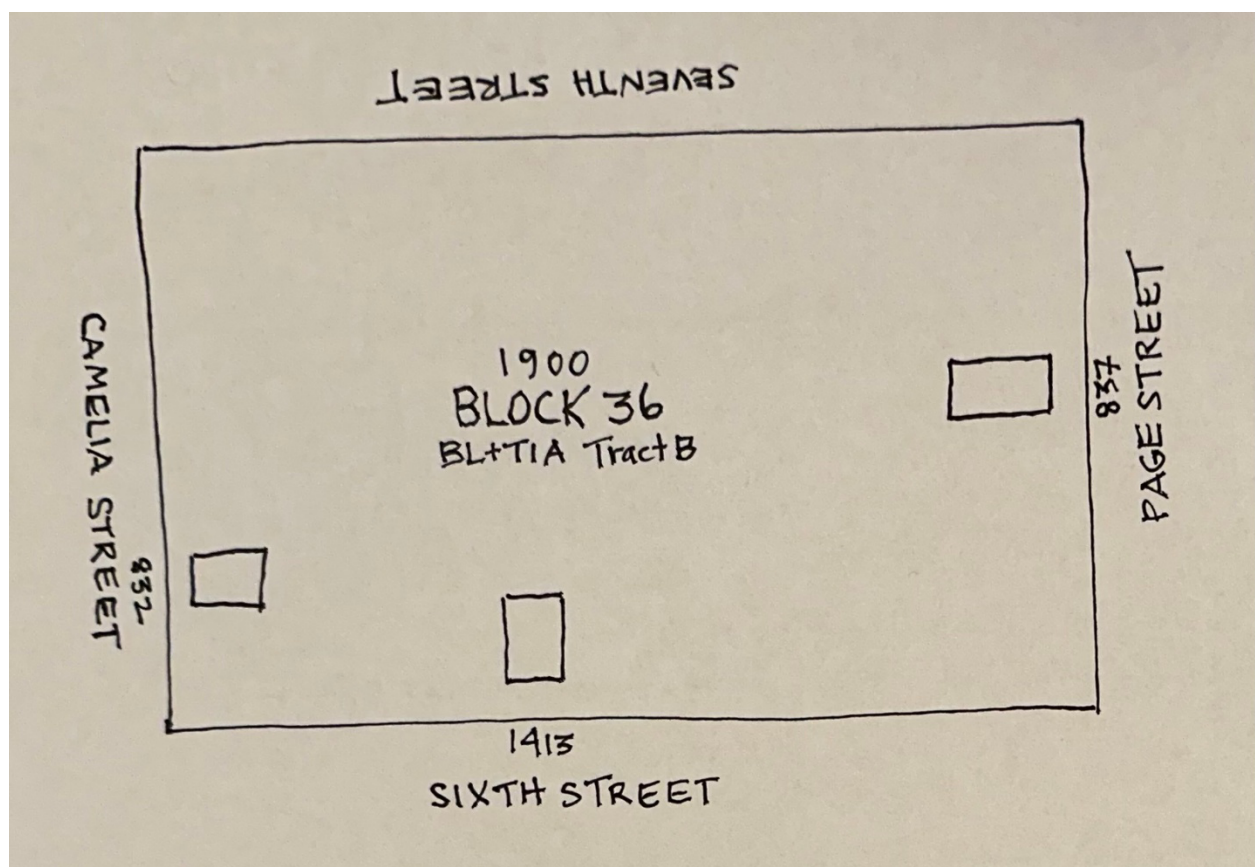
My neighbor Mary told me about going to swim at the beach “right down Camelia Street.” Though Bath Beach, at the foot of Camelia Street, was just a five-minute walk from Block 36, the beach was a



Ad in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 1901.

destination for people throughout East and West Berkeley. This popular spot, often referred to as Berkeley Beach, provided access to a beautiful mile-long beach and provided tents in which people could change into their swim attire. People picnicked during the day and had campfires in the evening. Duck hunting was also a popular pursuit along the waterfront, as were fishing and clamming, attracting many from across the city. At low tide, town residents could walk about 250 feet and dig up numerous clams in little time (Chase, 1937; Tanner, 1986). Even San Franciscans were known to use Bath Beach as a weekend picnic spot (Manning, 1983, p. 13). The Bath Beach Hotel was located at the corner of Gilman and Third Street for several years. It was a place where beach visitors could stay and visitors and locals could get meals, including a French dinner on Saturday nights. It burned down in 1904.

In 1900, there were only three houses on Block 36: one on Sixth Street, one on Page, and one on Camelia. Of those three houses, we know that two were “high basement” Victorian cottages, characteristic of the high-water-table areas of the East Bay. High-basement cottages were modest houses, whose living space was on the second floor accessed by an external staircase at the front of the house. A dirt-floor basement accommodated the regular, seasonal flooding that occurred in areas that were close to the Bay. The third house, the one originally built at 837 Page, no longer exists, but I presume it was of similar construction.



The residents of Block 36 were all immigrants from Northern Europe but had all resided in the United States for many years prior to living in West Berkeley.

1413 Sixth was owned, in 1900, by Benjamin Lehmann and his wife Marie. The house was built in approximately 1894, and Benjamin (age 49) and Marie (age 43) were its second owners. Married in 1897, they were both French immigrants (as was the house's first owner).

Benjamin, though born in Paris, came from a line of Alsatian Jews. His father was born in the Alsatian village of Duttlenheim, not far from Strasbourg. Benjamin's first wife, Julie Roos, also from an Alsatian Jewish family, died in Paris, one year after their marriage. She was born in the Alsatian village of Diemeringen. I was able to trace their extended families back for more than a century, living in little Alsatian villages, most working as peddlers. We do not know if Marie, Benjamin's second wife was Jewish or Alsatian, nor do we know her surname. However, the fact that she lists her parents variously as born in France or Germany is a characteristic that is common to those of Alsatian descent given the shifting national affiliation of Alsace.

Living with Benjamin and Marie in 1899 was Charles Vohrmann. Charles was also a French immigrant, also the child of an Alsatian, from Dorlisheim, the village adjacent to where Benjamin's father was born. When Germany seized Alsace in 1870, it gave Alsatians a one-time option to retain their French citizenship, with the proviso that they leave Alsace. Charles Vohrmann's father left Alsace as an "optant" in 1872. Perhaps this is also why Benjamin's father left Alsace and how Charles' and Benjamin's fathers knew each other.

Benjamin commuted to San Francisco, working as a cigar dealer with a storefront on Montgomery Street. He would have ridden the ferry to San Francisco. (Construction of the Bay Bridge was still more than 35 years in the future.) A certain number of people who lived in the West End took advantage of the opportunity to work in San Francisco.

Soon, Benjamin and Marie would move to San Francisco, where they would live the rest of their lives. But for now, they lived on Sixth Street in Berkeley, in proximity to about a dozen families, all living within a couple of blocks, who had immigrated from France, including another family from Alsace.

837 Page was home to Rasmus Jensen (age 51) and his wife, Charlotte Follis (age 41), and their two sons, James (age 18) and Posen (age 12). Rasmus immigrated to the United States from Denmark in about 1865. Charlotte came in the early 1870s from Ireland. Over time, the Jensen family became known as the "Johnsons."

A note in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* in 1902 indicates that Rasmus, like many men in Berkeley, went to Alaska in search of gold:

Rasmus Jensen of 837 Page Street, who lately returned from Alaska, has been making extensive improvements to his house by putting on a front porch and awning and also giving the house a new coat of paint that adds greatly to the appearance of the building. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, October 23, 1902)

Perhaps the home improvements are evidence that Rasmus got lucky and returned from Alaska with some gold. Rasmus most likely went to Nome, Alaska, whose Gold Rush began in 1899, just as the Klondike Gold Rush (1896 to 1899) was winding down.

There are also several mentions of Rasmus' youngest son, Posen, in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* that might give a flavor for the freedoms and pursuits of West End boys. In 1901, when Posen was 13 years old, he and a buddy were walking at Bath Beach and saw a corpse floating in the water. They hauled it ashore and alerted the authorities. Apparently, it was the body of a man who had been murdered on his boat near Point Richmond and pushed overboard (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, January 2, 1901).

In 1904, at age 16, Posen and a friend were hunting geese in a rowboat several miles north of Bath Beach when his friend's improperly loaded gun exploded. The explosion seriously injured the friend. Posen rowed his unconscious companion all the way back to Bath Beach, flagged down a man with a horse and wagon, and drove his friend to downtown Berkeley to the nearest medical care, at the corner of Shattuck and Addison. The doctor, Julius Benton, claimed that Posen saved his friend's life (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, December 16, 1904).

In 1906, at age 17, Posen was one of 13 West End boys who were arrested for assaulting Wong Si Kip, a Chinese man employed at the Chemical Works at Fleming Point (currently the Albany Bulb) and for subsequently shooting at his house. Wong Si Kip was 54 years old in 1906. He was the foreman of a group of 15 other Chinese men living together in a boarding house located on San Pablo Avenue, all of whom worked at the Chemical Works.

[Wong Si Kip], who presented with a battered appearance, claims that a short time ago the boys named [above] visited at the Chemical Works [Wong Si Kip's workplace]. It was during the new year's celebration of the Chinese, and according to Wong Si Kip, he gave the boys candy and treated them to other refreshments. Afterwards the Chinese claims they attacked him and shot at him twice. Later the Chinese claims he was met by two members of the gang, one of whom held him while the other struck him with brass knuckles between the eyes. The warrants for the West End youths were served late this afternoon. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, February 1, 1906)

Three weeks later, the judge dismissed the case. This ruling is unsurprising given the extreme racial discrimination faced by Chinese people in California. Significant numbers of Chinese immigrants first came to California in the late 1840s and 1850s for the California Gold Rush and subsequently in the 1860s to work on the railroad. Numerous social and legal restrictions were enacted during those years and continuing into the next century, with devastating effects on Chinese immigrants. In 1854, the California Supreme Court stated that the Chinese were

a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress of intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history has shown; differing in language, opinions, color, and physical conformation; between whom and ourselves

nature has placed an impassable difference. (California Supreme Court, People vs. Hall, 4 Cal. 399; 1854)

The actions of 17-year-old Posen Johnson and his friends, as well as the hundreds of lynchings, riots, and cases of theft and vandalism of Chinese property, were tacitly encouraged and likely rewarded in the xenophobic and discriminatory context of California at the time.

In 1900, there were about 200 adult Chinese immigrants in Berkeley and the nearby unincorporated remainder of Ocean View (which in 1908 would become part of the newly established city of Albany, California). All these 200 immigrants worked as domestic servants (most often living in East Berkeley homes), on farms and nurseries, as laundry workers, or in one of three industries: the chemical works, the powder works, or the fuse works. All but two that is: Jeu Dip (aka Joseph Tape) worked as an expressman (responsible for the secure transport and delivery of goods and valuables) and his wife, Mary, was a homemaker. Joseph and Mary immigrated separately to the United States in the late 1860s, as children. Mary is the sole woman out of Berkeley's 200 Chinese immigrants, because beginning in 1870, Chinese women were prevented from immigrating to the United States (1900 U.S. Federal Census).

Though Joseph and Mary had lived in San Francisco for decades, they were legally prevented from becoming U.S. citizens, and therefore from attending school. Their children, however, having been born in this country, were U.S. citizens. But because she was born to Chinese parents, Joseph and Mary's first child was denied entrance to their local elementary school. In an extraordinary, landmark case, Joseph and Mary sued the San Francisco School Board, the school superintendent, and the principal of their local elementary school for excluding their daughter from attending school based on her ethnicity. Though they won the case, the school district quickly worked with the state to pass a law that established separate schools for children of Chinese parents. Years later, this legendary *Tape vs. Hurley* case was a basis for *Brown vs. Board of Education* (Thompson, 2004–2006).



The Tape family: Photo from “The Tapes of Russell Street: An Accomplished Family of School Desegregation Pioneers,” by Daniella Thompson, BAHA, April 30, 2004.

The Tape family subsequently moved to Berkeley, where they lived on Russell Street for the rest of their lives. Young Gertrude Tape attended LeConte School right up the street. Was this an indication that Berkeley schools were more accepting? Perhaps. But young Posen Johnson and his friends' actions are also an indicator of the harsh reality for Chinese people in Berkeley.

832 Camelia was owned by Charles Christensen (age 55) and his wife, Bridget (age 54), in 1900. Charles, an immigrant from Norway, worked at the Deach Tannery on Third Street between Camelia and Gilman. Deach Tannery was the precursor to the Manasse-Block Tannery that moved into this same site, where it operated for 80 years until it closed in 1986 (Thompson, 2007). Bridget, his wife, had immigrated from Ireland. Both Charles and Bridget are listed in the 1900 U.S. Federal Census as unable to read and write. I confirmed at least Bridget's illiteracy upon finding a legal paper she signed with an "X."

Illiteracy notwithstanding, in addition to working at the tannery, Charles bought and sold real estate. More than 10 years earlier, Charles and a group of others purchased all of Block 32, the lots from Camelia to Page between Second and Third streets. In 1887, the bank foreclosed on the property.

I found evidence that Charles became a contractor later in his life.

Working as a laborer while also buying and selling real estate was not uncommon. At this moment in Berkeley's history, plenty of land was for sale, and nearly everyone was new to the West and working to make their fortunes. Particularly in the West End, one can see numerous examples of working people acquiring land as they pursued the "American Dream" and then falling back into relative poverty as their fortunes changed.

A 72-year-old man living at Third Street near Gilman is one such example. In April of 1900, John C. Kenyon was found dead in his 10 x 12-foot shanty. John, formerly a photographer from Indiana, had made a strike in the California gold fields. He returned to Indiana briefly and then settled in Berkeley, where he bought the lot on which his shanty stood. For some years he worked as a cooper (barrel maker) and did odd jobs. As he grew older, John made his living by digging and selling clams and firewood he collected on the nearby mudflats. His body was found

clothed in indescribably filthy garments. Three one cent postage stamps and a broken pocket knife were found on his person. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, April 14, 1900)

Another newspaper reported:

The surroundings of his home and the condition of the body indicate that death was by starvation. In the midst of a populous neighborhood the poor old man passed away neglected and thrown aside by his friends. (San Francisco Call and Post, April 14, 1900)

John C. Kenyon lived and died close to where some of the many of Berkeley's homeless encampments are now located.

1910 Berkeley

Berkeley's population in 1910 was 40,000—triple the population of 1900. The relatively quiet Berkeley of 1900 was becoming increasingly urban (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 47), with more commercial activity, more traffic, more people, and, well, just more of everything.

By 1910 there were many additional factories in the West End, including a glove factory, a cigar factory, a brass foundry, paint works, a knitting factory, dye works, a fruit cannery, an ice factory, fertilizer works, a match factory, ink works, a sausage factory, a coal yard, a rubber tire company, marble works, a phosphate company, a cotton mill, a bookbindery, a tripe house, a paraffin factory, a biscuit factory, and more (1910 U.S. Federal Census). The construction industry was booming as more houses were built to accommodate the increasing population.

A main cause of the rapid growth was the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and the subsequent fire that destroyed many of San Francisco's houses and businesses. Within several days of the earthquake, more than 15,000 earthquake refugees had arrived in Berkeley. Within a year of the earthquake, Berkeley's population had doubled (*Northern California Writer's Project*, 1941, pp. 85–86).

Corresponding to the rapid growth of Berkeley's industries and population, Berkeley experienced increasing problems related to disposal of industrial and human waste and of garbage.

In 1907, Berkeley decided to dump its untreated waste directly into the Bay (Tanner, 1986). Industrial discharges were also piped directly into the water, with dire impacts on shellfish and fish in the Bay (Chase, 1937). Further, the rapidly increasing number of industries located in the West End, many of which spewed emissions into the air and generated noise, must have made for a foul and noisy environment much of the time. While there had always been a practice of “unaware” waste disposal, the sharp increase in the total number of people and industries all needing to dispose of waste elevated the scale of the problem and caused significant degradation of the Bay's air and water.

Then, in 1908, after the City of Berkeley had been dumping its garbage in a location just over the county line (the northwest side of Albany Hill), on a piece of property owned by the Judson Dynamite and Powder Works, the residents of Contra Costa County complained about “the hundreds of rats” and the “menacing fumes” (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, February 29, 1908). The Contra Costa County residents threatened to meet the men unloading Berkeley's garbage with shotguns; subsequently, the Powder Works revoked its permission. So the City of Berkeley started dumping garbage in West Berkeley's tidelands and then at the foot of Camelia Street. This ignited a huge protest, led by the women of Berkeley's West End. At a meeting of the Berkeley Board of Trustees, a delegation of women showed up and their leader, Ella Deveau, spoke:

I am sorry to say that this board has done far from its duty in the matter and all the people of this central part of town seem to think all our homes in the West End are good for is to serve as a place for the rest of the town to dump their garbage. We live in a thickly-settled community, and are law-abiding, but we will not put up with this any longer, and the women of West Berkely stand ready to back up the move to resist the efforts to convert our part of town into a dump pile.... If nothing else will help us we will do as they did at the county line, [and] try shotguns.... (Berkeley Daily Gazette, March 4, 1908)

The battle over what to do with Berkeley's garbage continued. For a short period, the remaining unincorporated part of Ocean View (about to be established as the city of Albany) considered taking Berkeley's garbage for a fee, but that plan failed too (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, March 17, 1909). By 1910, Berkeley was paying Oakland \$400 per month to take its garbage out to sea (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, January 7, 1910). For the purported reason of saving money, Berkeley bought a solid waste incinerator in 1913 and installed it at Second and Harrison streets (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 20, 1912). Use of the incinerator continued until 1923. Thus began Berkeley's systematic pollution of the community's air.

Sidebars:

Water on Block 36. A report on Berkeley's water supply, made in 1910, summarized the situation as follows: "Purity: above the average; Quantity: seriously inadequate; Distributing service: inadequate; Price: 22.3% higher than the highest in 374 cities" (The Committee on Water Supply, September 23, 1910). Up until now, the various water companies that Berkeley had contracted—Alameda Water Works, Contra Costa Water Company, and The People's Water Company—all got water from local sources. With complaints about service and price as well as inadequate supply, it was clear that an approach focused only on local water sources could not continue to meet the growing demand for water. It would take almost two decades for this all to be worked out and for the birth of the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) when "...Mokelumne River water...about one hundred miles east of Berkeley, flowed out of East Bay taps for the first time" (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 89). In the meantime, at least in Berkeley's West End, there seemed to be continued reliance on well water. In addition to the well, windmill, and water tower at 1413 Sixth, in 1911 there were another five wells with windmills on the two blocks between 1300 and 1450 Sixth Street, and easily more than a dozen in the area bounded by Fourth and Seventh streets between Gilman and Page streets (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1911).

Neighborhood Fire Fighting. House fires were a real danger; an even greater danger were fires at nearby factories. All the factories located closest to Block 36 were labeled "No watchman; no fire protection" on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. In 1911 Berkeley Fire Station Number 6 was located at 1339 Sixth Street—on the east side of the street, one lot north of Camelia Street. It had three men, a hose wagon, and two horses. It was most likely placed there due to the fire danger posed by nearby industry.

In another ongoing civic battle, in 1910 alcohol sales and consumption were prohibited in all of Berkeley. And yet one could find alcohol served in more than one café in the West End (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 36), and a look at the 1910 U.S. Federal Census shows various saloons still in existence.

At Harrison and Third streets, in the vicinity of Block 36, Robert Burcher and his three sons operated a saloon. Records show Robert's application to the city for a license to sell alcohol (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, May 9, 1904), Robert's arrest after having sold alcohol to a minor—unwittingly, he claimed—(*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 21, 1909), and the subsequent arson and destruction of his saloon (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, May 23, 1911). Apparently, liquor would maintain its illegal (if not eliminated) status in Berkeley until the end of Prohibition, in 1933.



Robert Burcher standing in front of his family saloon at Harrison and Third streets. Family photo, circa 1905.

Also being debated was a proposed new ordinance before the City Council regarding cows. The ordinance in place allowed residents living east of Grove Street (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way) to have one cow, while residents living west of Grove could own two cows. The chief of police testified that there were at least 11 violators of the existing ordinance in West Berkeley alone, each with many more than two cows (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 19, 1911). Apparently there were issues with cows roaming freely; being “driven” down the streets; doing harm to lawns, flowers, shrubbery, and sidewalks; and being kept in situations with poor sanitary conditions (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, October 12, 1911). A group of West Berkeleyans submitted a petition signed by 147 people asking that the one-cow limit be extended throughout the city, and enforced, asking why “West Berkeley had to put up with the cow nuisance when other sections of the city were not annoyed?” (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 5, 1911).

The proposed one-cow ordinance ignited spirited discussion, a counter-petition with 5,000 signatures, and complaints from the small milk dealers that they were being approached by wealthy milk dealers from outside the city with offers to buy their cows and milk routes. People wanted to know whether the wealthy milk dealers were behind this campaign to limit others from keeping cows. Further, it was pointed out that West Berkeley's “small milk dealers” were often widows or others in poverty who were able to just scratch out a living by selling milk (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 19, 1911).

In the end, a new more generous cow ordinance was voted in that allowed up to six cows to be kept providing that there was enough space (not more than one cow per each half-acre of land). And it required that residents register their cows. As of mid-December 1911, 56 owners of cows had registered their bovine companions (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, December 18, 1911). The discussion of the issue of Berkeley's livestock sheds new light on the value of the many vacant lots that still existed, particularly in West Berkeley, in 1910. A prescient opinion was voiced at the City Council meeting:

In regard to the keeping of cows within the city limits, the speaker said that the time was not far distant when there would be no vacant lots in this city on which to keep cows due to the rapid building up of the city. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, October 12, 1911)

From the seemingly quaint "cow problems" being experienced in West Berkeley, the decade of the 1910s gave way to the sobering reality of World War I. This global threat, resulting in nearly 20 million deaths, impacted even Berkeley's West End.

Like every other American town and city, Berkeley had a quota of men that it needed to supply to the war effort. For Berkeley, that number was 384 (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, July 25, 1917). A lottery determined who needed to report for service. Roughly 25 percent of those reporting did not meet physical requirements. Of the remaining 75 percent, two-thirds sought exemption. Ultimately, only 35 percent of the total number of young men answering the call were successfully drafted. This required Berkeley to run several waves of drafting calls to meet the city's quota (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, July 21, 1917). Each time, the names of those called were published in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, as well as the list of those who did not pass the physical, those who requested exemption, and those whose exemptions were denied.

This very public process captured nearly daily attention for the couple of months of the drafting period, as evidenced by these headlines in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*: "Nation's Youth is Summoned in War for Democracy," "62 Percent Seek to Escape Draft," "Draft Opponents Predict Riots," "Troops May Be Called in Riots," "U.C. Man Held as Deserter for Resisting Draft," "Slackers Seek Licenses to Wed," "Badges to Mark Exempted Men," and "New Claims for Exemption Are Denied by Board." It must have been a very tense time. While the quota was based on the total population, including those who were not citizens, the actual draft included only citizens and aliens who had declared their intention to become citizens. Practically, this meant that the draft rate was higher for citizens in locales that had high numbers of immigrants, as was the case in Berkeley, and even more so in West Berkeley, causing some disgruntlement (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 8, 1917).

Given that the United States entered World War I only in 1917, and that it took many months to mobilize those drafted, the main period of combat for the majority of American soldiers was effectively 1918. In that one year, approximately 30 Berkeleyans died, either killed in action or dying of disease, of wounds, or from an accident (Haulsee, Doyle, and Howe, 1920). Of those 30 fatalities, less than a quarter were obviously from the West End. Perhaps this is reflective of the West End's high number of immigrants.

While no Block 36 residents fought in World War I, a man who lived a half block away, at 1447 Seventh Street, did. James Jacob Gimbel, age 30, son of German and Alsatian immigrants, still lived at home and worked as a teamster when he was drafted. He died of pneumonia in France after being wounded in battle.

“In his last letter to his parents he wrote that while returning with his company from the battlefield to camp that he saw Private Camille Verbeck of 2127 Sixth street lying on the ground among the wounded, but was helpless to assist his Berkeley friend.” (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, December 9, 1918).

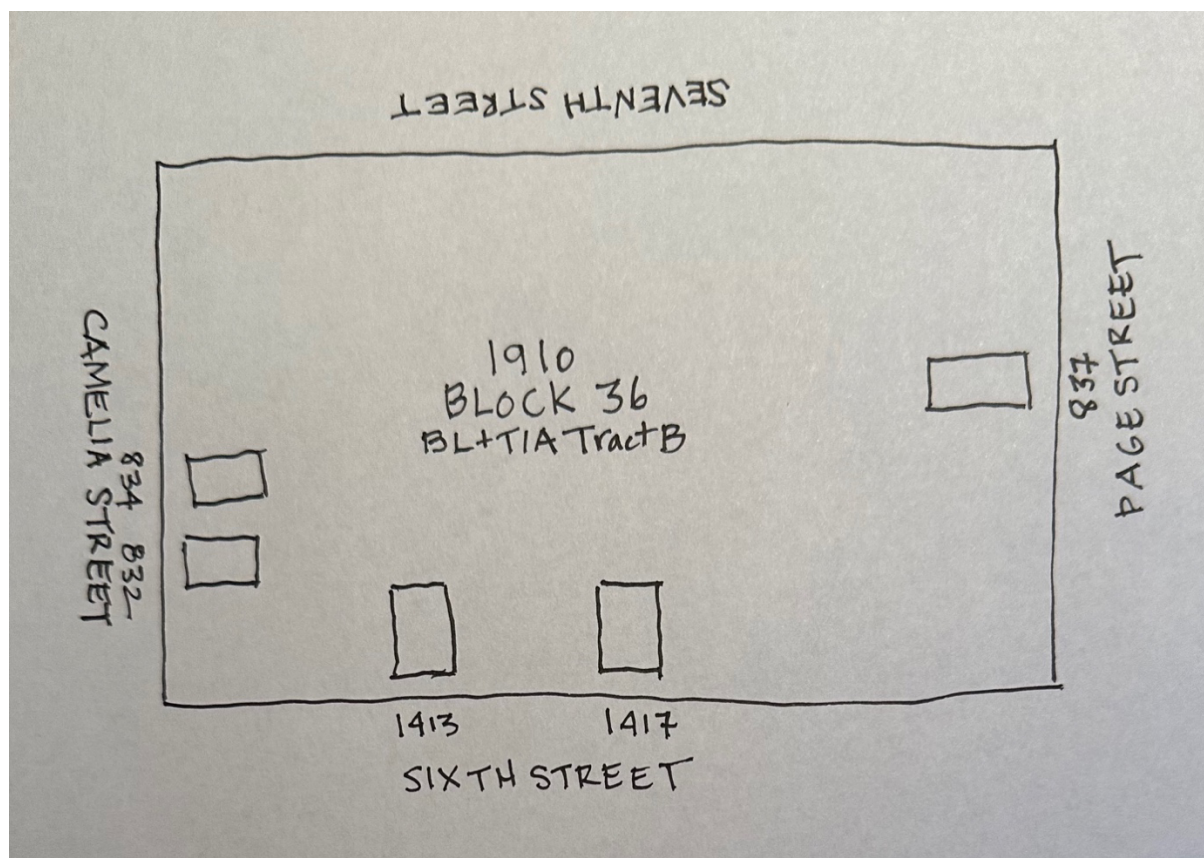
The Gimbel family, after losing their American-born son to the war, must have felt particularly bitter in the face of the growing anti-German feelings brought by the war. Already prevalent, xenophobia, and specifically anti-German sentiment, soared across the United States and in Berkeley as well before, during, and after the War (Ellis, 1998). Many first- and second-generation Germans living in Berkeley must have felt the sting of this reaction.



James Jacob Gimbel of West Berkeley died in World War I. Family photo, circa 1917

In addition to the deadly war, the world was visited by the Spanish Influenza, aka the Great Flu of 1918, the notorious pandemic that killed over 675,000 people in the United States alone. Reported cases of the flu in Berkeley numbered among hundreds—not thousands—with fatalities in the dozens—not hundreds (Finacom, 2020). For a while, public assembly was prohibited, masks were required, and some institutions, such as Berkeley’s libraries, were closed. A notification in the newspaper of a family living adjacent to Block 36 (at the northwest corner of Sixth and Camelia) were all suffering from the flu. I am unable to determine with any specificity how the pandemic might have otherwise affected the inhabitants of Block 36 more than the generalized sense of fear that grips communities battling for health.

Thus, a decade that began with the people of Berkeley absorbed mostly in everyday local and civic concerns ended with a populace awake to the sobering reality of the national and global phenomena of war and pandemics.



There were five houses on Block 36 in 1910: two on Sixth Street, one on Page, and two on Camelia. As in 1900, all the heads of household on Block 36 are foreign born.

1413 Sixth was owned, in 1910, by the Rosano family. The family had been living across the street at 1408 Sixth Street for several years, and before that at 448 Camelia (at Second Street). In 1902 they purchased 1413 Sixth Street and the two empty lots to the south, on the east side of Sixth Street, from former owners Benjamin and Marie Lehmann. The Rosanos appear to have rented out 1413 Sixth for several years before moving in, in 1906. We know, however, that the Rosanos had cows (plural) that they kept at 1413 Sixth before they moved in (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, October 27, 1905). I suspect it was the Rosanos that built the two-story, redwood barn, that appears on the property in 1911 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1911), perhaps to house their cows.

The Rosanos are the family who owned 1413 Sixth Street longer than any other family to date—64 years, until 1966.

In 1910, the Rosano family included Antonio (age 53), wife Marguerita DiClementi (age 42), and their three teenaged children: Jennie (aka Giovanna; age 17), Laurence (aka Lorenzo; age 16), and Christine (aka Cristina; age 14). Antonio immigrated from Italy in 1884. Marguerita also immigrated from Italy. She came to the United States in 1890. They both came from the

Piemonte region in Northern Italy. Antonio and Marguerita were married in 1891. According to the U.S. Federal Census, the family's home language was Italian. Antonio worked as a laborer, having moved around from one employer to another over the years, while Marguerita was a homemaker.

Jennie Rosano, the oldest child, was 17 years old in 1910. She had attended school through grade 8. At age 14, she began working at the Pacific Glove Factory, located just two blocks away at Fourth and Camelia, right next to the Manasse-Block Tanning Company. The glove factory was also owned by the Block family—brothers Harry and Leopold—known as the H & L Block Company (Thompson, 2007). Originally operating in San Francisco, the H. & L. Block Company moved to Berkeley after it lost its facilities in the 1906 earthquake and fire. The glove factory opened later in 1906, close to the time that Jennie started working there. Every month the factory received a shipment of peccary hides (wild boar) from Texas, which workers tanned and then used to make gloves of all kinds. Perhaps Jennie was excited to leave school and enter her “adult” life working at the nearby glove factory. Whether she was or not, it is likely that her parents expected her to contribute financially to the family. By 1907, the glove factory employed over 60 people, most of them women (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, August 5, 1907). In 1915, at age 23, Jennie was still working at the glove factory.



H & L Block Gloves, aka Pacific Glove Factory. Third and Camelia. Photo from “Immigrants’ Sons Established Local Tanning Industry,” by Daniella Thompson, *Berkeley Landmarks*, BAHA, 2007.

Lorenzo Rosano, the middle child, was age 16 in 1910. Like his older sister Jennie, he attended school only through grade 8. Beginning at age 15, he worked as apprentice machinist at an iron works, likely the Berkeley Iron Works, located near Third and Camelia. Though living with his parents and sisters, Lorenzo was eager to start his own adult life. At age 18, in April 1912, Lorenzo disappeared. Antonio and Marguerita Rosano went to the police to report him missing, and the police subsequently placed a missing persons ad in the *Oakland Tribune* (*Oakland*

Tribune, April 4, 1912). A month later, the following article appeared in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*:

Parents May Try to Annul Marriage. *After experiencing considerable difficulty in getting the nuptial knot tied, Miss May Riley, daughter of Mrs. N. Riley of Adams Street, Albany, and Laurence Rosano of West Berkeley, who eloped to Santa Rosa last Friday and were secretly married, are now facing the possibility of having their marriage annulled by the irate mother of the groom....*

The courtship of Miss Riley by young Rosano met with considerable opposition from the latter's parents and after a particularly stormy scene one evening the youth packed his belongings and left home and after he had secured a position in Petaluma, he made arrangements for the elopement.

When Miss Riley left her home last Friday morning, she took no one into her confidence regarding the wedding plans, letting her family think she was going to work. When she failed to return home at the usual time that evening, Mrs. Riley became alarmed. She was acquainted with the cause of their daughter's absence late in the evening when she received a telegram from the couple announcing their marriage. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, May 20, 1912)

The issue of this love match between Lorenzo and Mae was born 10 months after their elopement: Lawrence Anthony Rosano. Decades later he would become the captain of the Berkeley Fire Department and, in turn, Lawrence Jr.'s son, Jack Anthony Rosano, would also become captain of the Berkeley Fire Department and a prominent leader in Albany, California.

Christine, the youngest Rosano child, was in seventh grade at Franklin School in the first half of 1910 and then moved on to eighth grade, which would be her last year of schooling too. Christine graduated from eighth grade in June 1911 and began working right away as a "saleslady." Perhaps considered a cut above the factory work that her siblings were doing, the occupation of salesclerk was gaining ground particularly among women. I wonder if there was a store big enough in the West End to need a salesclerk or whether Christine took a streetcar up University Avenue to J. F. Hink & Son (aka Hink's), the department store that opened in 1904 in downtown Berkeley on the corner of Kittredge and Shattuck.

1417 Sixth, the second house to appear on the Sixth Street side of Block 36, was also owned by Antonio and Marguerita Rosano. It was located on one of the lots they had acquired when they purchased 1413 Sixth. The house was designed and built by Frederick Offe and was ready to live in by 1903. It appears to have been built as a high-basement cottage.

In 1910, the house was rented out to Fred (Fritz) Birkenstock (age 48) and his wife, Salome Simon (age 40), living with their four children: William (age 16), George (age 14), Emily (age 11), and Fred Jr. (age 10). Fritz was a German immigrant and worked as a millman at the feed mill. This was Salome's second marriage; the oldest two children were from her first marriage to a

man named David Wagner. Salome (and first husband David Wagner) were both Alsatian immigrants.

This article appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1896:

Many Destitute Families: Misery Caused by the Desertion of Husbands and Fathers.

...David Wagner is supposed to be employed in a bakery in San Diego. His wife [Salome] lives at 1605 Dupont Street [in San Francisco]. One of their children, nineteen months old, is an inmate of the Children's Hospital; the other is a baby of six weeks. During the last ten months, Wagner, it is charged, has not contributed one cent toward the support of his family.

Salome was granted a divorce.

837 Page was still occupied by Rasmus and Charlotte Jensen (aka Johnson). Their younger son, Posen, now 22 years old, still lived with them. Posen worked as a bookkeeper for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Their oldest son, James, died in 1907 at the age of 25.

834 Camelia was owned in 1910 by Joseph Jund (age 61), who purchased the lot in 1905 from Charles Christensen (who at that time also owned 832 Camelia). Joseph had a house built and was living there by 1907. He was a shoemaker and operated his cobbler shop out of his house. Though there was a shoe factory in the West End, Joseph still made his shoes by hand. He formerly lived and worked on Eighth Street near University, but the house on Camelia was closer to the tannery where he purchased leather (as evidenced by an unpaid bill leveled against his estate).

Joseph immigrated to the United States around 1890 from Barr, a village in Alsace, France. He listed his origin country as France, even though in 1871 Alsace was annexed by Germany, perhaps indicating his political sympathies. It's worth noting that in addition to economic reasons for emigrating, those living in Alsace also had political reasons, perhaps accounting for the number of Alsatians showing up in Berkeley, and on Block 36. Barr was a village in one of the winemaking regions of Alsace, and Joseph's father, Aloïse, was a vintner. Joseph and his younger brother Henry both immigrated to California around 1890, and both worked as shoemakers. Henry lived in San Francisco.

In January 1915, Joseph fell ill and required day and night care (which cost him \$18 per 24 hours). He died on May 4, 1915, intestate—without a will. Officials working for Alameda County ensured that Joseph was buried, searched for any heirs, had the house assessed, inventoried his belongings, auctioned off the house and belongings, and paid off his creditors. The house and lot were assessed at \$600. Christian Hoff (also an Alsatian immigrant as well as a member of Berkeley's Board of Trustees) bought the house. Among all the belongings one might expect—kitchen table, chairs, stove, rug, bed frame, bed stand, mattress, dishpan, kettle, dishes, glassware, mirror, rocker, pillow, blankets, etc.—there was a deer head, two additional sets of antlers, an accordion, 4 photos, a phonograph, and 23 phonograph records. Note that in 1915,

this was likely a wind-up phonograph. Wouldn't you love to know what records this music-loving Alsatian shoemaker had? There was also a "shoemaker's outfit," shoemaker's tools, and a supply of leather.

832 Camelia housed refugees from the 1906 earthquake from 1906 through 1909. Then, in 1910, Karl Felix (age 60) and his wife, Fredericka Docks (age 61), parents of eight grown children, lived there with their two youngest daughters: Sophie (age 20) and Dora (age 17). In 1910, Karl worked as a carpenter at Pacific Guano and Fertilizer Company located at Second and Bristol (now Hearst) streets. Note the density of this part of the West End in the drawing here.



The Pacific Guano and Fertilizer Company, circa 1897. Image from Bancroft Library.

Daughters Sophie and Dora worked at the Ramona Candy Factory on Third Street, just south of University Avenue. Sophie was a candy maker, and Dora was a wrapper.

The Felix family were German immigrants with an unusual story. Karl and Fredericka were ethnic Germans born in Eastern Prussia (in an area that is now Poland). Karl was drafted into the military as a young man and fought in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870–1871 (this was the war in which Alsace, France, became part of the German empire). Married in 1875, Karl and Fredericka had their first five children in Germany before immigrating to the island of Kauai in Hawaii to work on the sugar plantations. Short of labor, including laborers with expertise in maintaining the machinery increasingly used in sugar refining, Kauai's sugar plantations enlisted the help of German agents who recruited indentured workers from Germany.

Indentured workers committed to three years of work on the sugar plantations, and the company paid the fare for their wives and children to come along. For the first year, German laborers were paid \$16 per month, the second year \$17, and the third year \$18. They "received food and lodging free of charge" (Soboleski, 2016). Karl and Fredericka stayed longer than three

years. They lived in Lihue, Kauai from 1888 to 1904. Their three youngest children were born there.

In the late 1880s, the Kauai Germans included about 1,300 people—many of them women and children. Families were large and often shared many members in common, sometimes spread over generations, making for a large, extended tangle of connections that is tricky to follow. Different siblings from the Felix family, for example, married into two of the same families.

In Hawaii, the Lihue Lutheran Church and its associated school were at the center of the German community, as well as of the many efforts that were made to preserve German language and culture.

The Germans on Kauai kept up their customs, many having even brought tinsel from the Fatherland for the celebration of Christmas. They observed German holidays with gusto, and prior to America's entry into World War I, celebrated German victories at elaborate suppers of boiled ham, potatoe [sic] salad, Swiss cheese, German sausage, bread, cakes and cigars...." (Wagner-Seavey, 1980)

Most of the Felix family left Hawaii between 1897 and 1905. As the children came of age, they moved away and married. Several family members moved first to Honolulu, where there were other nearby sugar plantations run by the same company. But all eventually ended up in either Santa Rosa or Berkeley. Santa Rosa in particular, appeared to have been an immigration destination for many other members of the Kauai German community. Nearly all Felix family offspring married other members of the Kauai German community, even once they left Hawaii and immigrated to the U.S. mainland. Karl and Fredericka and their two youngest children came to Berkeley in 1904 and lived at the intersection of Gilman and San Pablo.

The Karl Wilhelm Felix family circa 1897. Two of the eight children have left home; one did not survive to adulthood. Family photo, circa 1896.



At this time, oldest son Herman (now aged 29, and whom they would not have seen since he left Hawaii at age 22) lived on Fifth Street near Camelia and worked at the Judson Dynamite and Powder Works, located on the northwest side of Albany Hill.

This exceedingly dangerous dynamite and powder works company underwent a series of disasters: explosions in 1883, 1892, 1898, and 1905 that literally rocked the region. In each mishap, buildings were demolished, windows were broken across the vicinity, and employees were injured, and often killed. In 1883, 37 Chinese workers were killed. Each time, the Judson company rebuilt and continued as before (Sorensen, 2020).

It was there, at the Judson Dynamite and Powder Works, that Herman Felix was injured in a minor accident that happened in March of 1905:

Through the bursting of the stopcock on the nitric acid pipe in the mixing room of the Judson Powder works, Herman Felix, an employee in the dynamite department, this morning at 10 o'clock suffered fearful injuries. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, March 16, 1905)

Several months later, in August, Herman escaped near death:

Two Powerful Explosions Wreck Powder Works. Death and Ruin Mark Havoc of One Day. Foreman Killed. Judson Plant is Scene of the Disaster [T]wo men reported killed, Olaf Olson and Herman Felix, are alive, although badly wounded by flying debris. Six Chinese, all members of the Ah family, were hurt, and one of them, Ah Lin, may die. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, August 18, 1905)



Explosion at the Judson Dynamite and Powder Company, 1905. Image from Albany Library Historical Collection.

What a re-entry for Karl and Fredricka, seeing their son engaged in such dangerous work. It must have made work at the sugar plantation, set in idyllic Hawaii, seem tame.

The period immediately following 1910 was a difficult one for the Felix family. Second oldest child, Carl August, still living in Honolulu with his family, lost his youngest child, six-year-old Carl August Jr., to leprosy. The child was held in the Kalihi Receiving Center (for lepers), alternately attended by his two parents (1910 U.S. Federal Census).

Then in October 1911, oldest son Herman, who after working at the Dynamite and Powder Works had joined the U.S. Calvary and was stationed at Fort Yellowstone in Montana, committed suicide (*The Butte Miner*, October 12, 1911).

Note that Carl August Sr., when living at 1447 Fifth Street in Berkeley 25 years later, would also commit suicide, at “the foot of Page Street,” leaving two teenage children to fend for themselves (*Oakland Tribune*, July 28, 1940).

1920 Berkeley

Following World War I and the end of the influenza pandemic, relief and optimism ushered in the 1920s. The “Roaring 20s” saw a decade of financial growth and broad prosperity. At the beginning of the decade, in 1920, only 1 percent of U.S. homes had electricity and indoor plumbing. (Lutz, 2004) Electrification of homes increased substantially across the decade (Nye, 1992) and installation of indoor plumbing began to increase. Many of the worker cottages in West Berkeley had “rear laundry porches,” which “eventually lost some of their space to back-porch toilets ... usually added after 1920” (Groth, 2003). The automotive industry was surging, which in turn drove related needs such as the improvement of existing roads, the creation of highways, the building of home garages, and the production of gasoline, tires, and other accompaniments to driving, etc. Radio was entering its golden age, and the film industry was rapidly growing, as was aviation.

By 1920, Berkeley’s population had increased another 40 percent, to 56,000. Unlike in the first decade of the twentieth century, Berkeley seemed more ready for this surge. Many of the systems needed to support the economic and population growth in a rising urban center had been established or at least were underway, including utilities and services for fire fighting, garbage disposal, public transportation, governance, and education; there was even a growing telephone presence. In the West End, the number of factories grew from 113 in 1919 to 193 by 1928, and the number of residential building permits issued by the City of Berkeley doubled in the first half of the 1920s (Wollenberg, 2008, pp. 87–88).

Berkeley’s dichotomous pattern of settlement began to fade as widespread construction was filling in the space between Berkeley’s center and the West End. Even the Berkeley Hills were now being built up. Yet by 1920, Berkeley had established exclusionary zoning practices, something that would preserve the divided character of East and West Berkeley for the next century, even after the physical space between these two parts of the city had been filled in. (Barber, 2019; Groth, 2004). By mostly excluding the construction of apartments and multi-family homes in the Berkeley Hills and its adjacent neighborhoods, Berkeley’s zoning practices effectively restricted access to housing in East Berkeley to those who could afford single-family homes. In another example of zoning practices failing to serve the residents of the West End, Berkeley’s zoning laws also had provisions “to protect [Berkeley’s] factory owners from complaints and lawsuits by low-income residential neighbors” (Weiss, 1986).

But zoning was not the only strategy used to socially engineer the complexion of Berkeley’s neighborhoods:

Private deed restrictions that prevented racial minorities from owning or living in [East Berkeley] neighborhoods made them mostly upper class and exclusively white. A 1912 pamphlet by the Berkeley Highlands touted how buying property in the Berkeley hills was a good investment because of (1) the amenities of the neighborhood, (2) the restrictions that make it the “cream” of North Berkeley with “No Asiatics or Negroes,” (3) the access to transportation, and (4) the scenery. (Barber, 2019)

These restrictions reinforced segregation and made it so that South and West Berkeley were nearly the only places where Black and Asian families could live. Further differential treatment of East and West Berkeley came in the mid-1930s with the beginning of red-lining, a practice that denied bank loans and mortgages in “high-risk areas,” which included all of West and South Berkeley (Barber, 2018; Groth, 2004).

The waves of immigrants that helped populate the rapidly growing Bay Area would dramatically change over the course of the 1920s, altering the immigrant character of Berkeley. As a percentage of the total population, the number of foreign-born Americans reached its peak between the years 1860 and 1920 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999). The zealous nationalism ignited by World War I was the impetus for many exclusionary policies related to immigration. Already in 1917, the United States passed the Literacy Act, requiring all those entering the U.S. who were 16 years and older to be able to read 30 to 40 words of their own language. Included as part of that act was a list of countries from which immigration was to be barred moving forward, including much of Asia and the Pacific Islands. Coming in 1924 would be the Johnson-Reed act, which instituted a national quota system, with the result that by 1929, 70 percent of American visa slots were reserved for immigrants from Northern Europe (Tenement Museum Blog Archive, 2015).

If Berkeley was more ready for the population surge in 1920, it was less so for the sudden explosion in the number of automobiles. Although the automobile had been invented well before the 1920s, the onset of the mass production of cars dramatically lowered the cost of a car (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 92). For \$250, a family could buy a car, and so people did, in all parts of Berkeley. Car ownership unleashed a change that would affect everything from the physical environment of the city, the distance people could live from their workplaces, air quality, and safety, created a whole new category of employment, and more.

People who formerly worked in proximity to their homes, or to public transit lines, could now drive to work no matter where they lived. Competition for jobs must have broadened as the pool for candidates expanded beyond those who lived locally. Traffic increased as did the need for wider roads. Tranquil streets in Berkeley’s neighborhoods now had to contend with speeding cars and uncontrolled intersections. Even in the case where laws related to driving existed (and they didn’t always), there was confusion about accountability measures. For example, in 1920 Berkeley police warned that a speeding infraction would result in an automatic jail term (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, January 12, 1920). Surely this was not a practical solution. It was all a bit chaotic as evidenced by this and other articles in local newspapers.

Finally, given ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920, I expected that the conversation about women’s right to vote would be prevalent in Berkeley. I was surprised to learn that in 1911, nine years before the Nineteenth Amendment passed, California had passed its own legislation allowing women to vote (Van Ingen, 2004). It was the sixth state to do so. Indeed, looking to see how that may have impacted Block 36, I saw that nearly all the women living on the block were registered to vote well before 1920, except those who were not yet citizens.

Getting “the vote” represented one form of advancement for women and corresponded to the social revolution that was gathering steam in this country since the end of the Victorian Age. Increasingly, restrictions of gender roles and traditional expectations loosened. By the 1920s it had become more acceptable for unmarried women to be in the company of men without supervision. Women were able to wear pants and could publicly show more skin and body parts as acceptable skirt length and sleeve length shortened, trends undoubtedly fueled by the popularity of movies featuring women looking and behaving in more “modern” ways. The increased need for workers during World War I when men joined the war effort opened up different kinds of jobs to women. You can see this change in the jobs held by women in West Berkeley. Whereas in 1900 and 1910, women factory workers were concentrated in those factories that involved sewing (for example, the glove factory) or food preparation (for example, the candy factory), by 1920 women were working in a much broader range of factories, such as the battery manufactory and the planing mill.

Berkeley’s Rivoli Theater

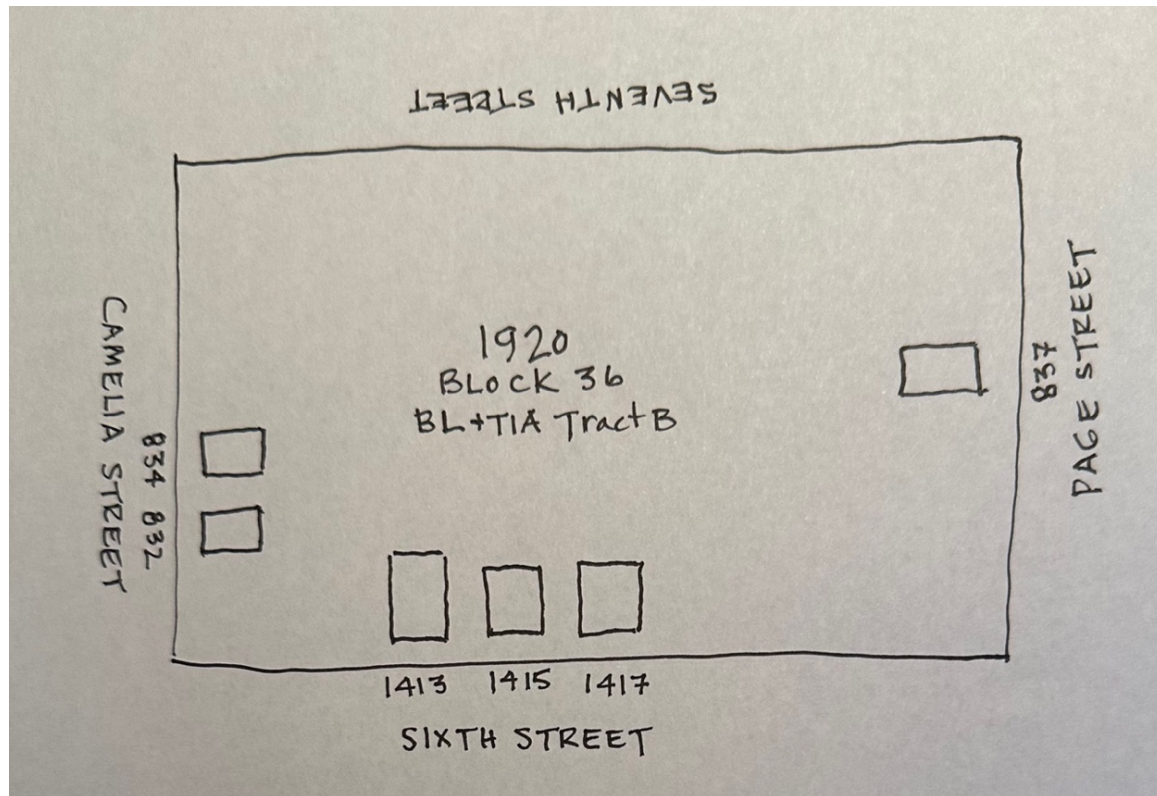
West Berkeley’s movie theater, the Rivoli, opened in the mid-1920s on San Pablo Avenue just north of University Avenue. It had an organ and an organist, seated 1,402, and changed shows four times a week (Dalzell, 2015). Movies in the early 1920s were mostly silent (though accompanied by music), but by 1929 “talkies” (voice-synchronized movies) had taken over.

[Social] reformers likened [a movie theatre] to the workingman’s club, the saloon, without alcohol and with the wife and children. Audiences were lively. What these lively audiences had in common were theaters in or on the edge of their own working-class neighborhoods, with relatively cheap admission. The theaters were public spaces where workers felt welcome. They were unpretentious places ... not requiring “proper” dress or behavior, where one could “drop in” with little planning. They made it a social space through their animated conversation and playful mood. And they were filled with familiar faces of fellow workers, a devoted following of regulars who could recognize each other at the theater. (Butsch, 2001)

Searching for other examples of the social evolution of women on Block 36, I am struck by a particularly disturbing example, showing what the community did with “wayward” girls and women—those who did not conform to traditional gender roles. The story of the California Girls’ Training Home—essentially a place of incarceration—is chilling. Read later in this section for details. Perhaps these homes were not different from other Victorian-age institutions established for the handling of nonconforming girls, but it seems to me that the collective pushback from the incarcerated young women was different and indicative of the changing times.

In 1920 there were six houses on Block 36—three on Sixth Street, one on Page, and two on Camelia—just one more since 1910. The house at 1413 Sixth Street now had a garage and had been turned into a duplex. The birth countries of the heads of household on Block 36 are no longer limited to Northern Europe. Now there are people who were born in both Southern and Eastern Europe. For the first time, two of the houses on Block 36 each had one head of

household who was neither an immigrant nor the child of an immigrant—however, they were both married to immigrants.



1413 Sixth was still owned by the Rosano family, and Antonio and wife Marguerita will live there again starting in 1922, but from 1917 to 1921 they appear to have rented the house out. The renters are a Polish couple, Tomasz and Anna Zuejeskie, who didn't speak English, nor did they read or write. They arrived in the United States in 1911. Tomasz worked at the tannery.

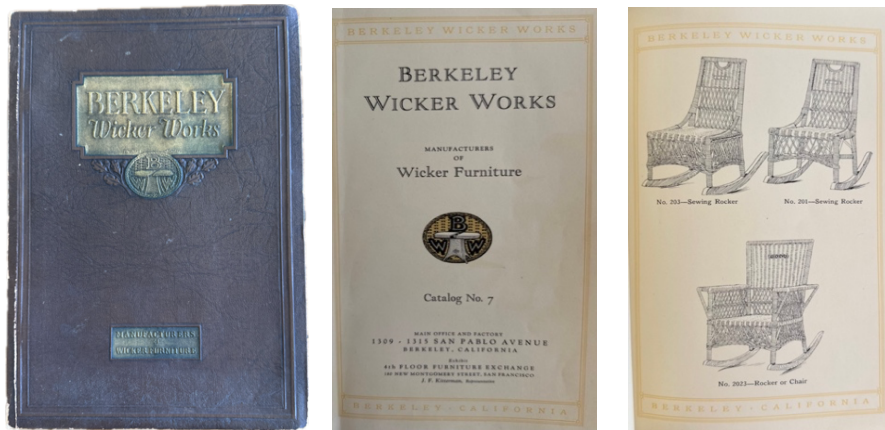
All three of the Rosano children are now married and living independently.

The oldest, Jenny Rosano, married John (Jack) Medes in 1915, and in 1920 the 28-year-old couple lived at 1314 Kains Street. Jack moved from Mendocino, California, to West Berkeley when he was 11, eventually living 50 yards from the Rosano home, at the northwest corner of Sixth and Camelia, at 1340 Sixth Street. Jenny grew up in a household where Italian was spoken; Jack grew up speaking Portuguese; his parents were both born in the Azores.

Jack was ambitious and hardworking, and about the time of his marriage to Jenny he built a small structure in their backyard on Kains Street, where he began making chairs and other objects out of wicker. Note that wicker weaving, quite beautiful and sometimes intricate and complex, was an Azorean craft. Within a year Jack had hired two men to help. By 1921 he employed a team of eight and opened a wicker furniture manufactory and storefront at 1315

San Pablo Avenue named the Berkeley Wicker Works (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 1921). By 1923, Jack had expanded the operation:

A finishing plant has just been added to the Berkeley Wicker Works and the company will now be able to care for all jobs of furnishing and decorating, it is stated. A branch plant will soon be established at Portland Oregon. John Medes, president and owner of the concern is leaving the last of the month on a business trip to Los Angeles. Mrs. Medes will accompany him.” (Berkeley Daily Gazette, June 4, 1923)



Leatherbound catalogue of the Berkeley Wicker Works (front cover and selected pages), 1926.

This is when Jenny, now age 31, resigned her job after working at the glove factory since she was age 14. Jack began traveling as he worked to expand the Wicker Works, often accompanied by Jenny, who surely played a role in the business. In 1924, Jack and Jenny moved to East Berkeley, buying a home on San Pedro Avenue, near where Thousand Oaks School is.

By 1925,

John Medes who commenced manning wicker ware by himself in a small building, now has one of the largest plants of the kind in the bay region, employing 16 men. He has just purchased all the land on the east side of San Pablo from his present plant to Gilman street on which he will erect new buildings.” (Berkeley Daily Gazette, October 8, 1925)

In 1926, Jack joined fellow West Berkeley native, R. Ahlgren, in purchasing the Berkeley Furniture Company in downtown Berkeley, at Allston and Shattuck, expanding his business to include more than wicker furniture.

The growth of Jack’s business and the impact it had on Jack and Jenny’s lives is a clear illustration of the boom times of the 1920s. In addition to their commercial success, the financial surge they experienced set in motion a series of social changes as well, including the ability to employ others from the neighborhood and to move their own residence to a more upscale part of town. It would have been a big change for them both.

Jack's parents were both born in the Azore Islands. They were among the couple of hundred Azoreans who went to Mendocino county in the 1880s to work in the timber industry—systematically leveling the magnificent first-growth redwood forests. Those were the days when trees were cut with axes and dragged, often in pieces, by oxen to the mill.

Timber was needed by railroads, by the mines, also the new towns and cities. Famously, the Redwood Forest built San Francisco, twice.” (Winslow, 2020)

Jack was born and lived the first part of his childhood in Mendocino County—specifically, at Ten Mile River, north of Fort Bragg. He lived with his mother, Maria de Arrial Santos, and his older brother, Foster Medes, while his father worked in the field, logging redwood trees. Jack's father, John Saudades de Medeiros (a last name that his sons anglicized to “Medes”) spent most of his time inland at a logging enclave called Furytown. He was known as Furytown John.

In 1895, Jack's parents divorced. Maria married another woodsman from the Azores: Francisco Jose Almeida. His specialty was making railroad ties out of redwood, and he worked at the tie camp a few miles south of the town of Mendocino at Big River. The family moved to the town of Mendocino where, in 1902, Maria and Francisco had a son, Frank John Almeida.

Again, Maria, Jack's mother, divorced. This time she moved to Berkeley. With her now were three sons. In 1908 Maria married her third and final husband, a man who worked at the lumber mill in Berkeley: Joseph Francisco Pimentel. He was also from the Azores. His trip to Alaska in 1900, working at the Snettisham Gold Mining Company, likely enabled him to buy the three lots extending from the northwest corner of Sixth and Camelia, where the Picante parking lot is now located. This is where they would live for the rest of their lives: 1340 Sixth Street, and later building an additional home at 1342 Sixth Street. It was at 1340 Sixth, still living with her sons, that Maria had a daughter: Marie Rose Pimentel. Note that daughter Marie married and moved onto Block 36 in 1952, where she was living when I first moved to the neighborhood.

All four of Maria's children (Jack and Foster Medes, Frank Almeida, and Marie Pimentel) remained connected to each other throughout their lives, as evidenced by frequent newspaper mentions of gatherings and trips to Mendocino, and they periodically lived with one another at 1340 and/or 1342 Sixth Street. By the 1920s, the number of Portuguese-identified residents in West Berkeley (including those who were immigrants, second generation, and third generation) had increased. Jack's large and blended family was an important part of this West End social network, as evidenced by many mentions in the local newspapers of events and gatherings among a collection of the same families and an announcement (later, in 1940) of a 70-person birthday celebration for Jack when he returned from his then-home in Pescadero, for a visit.

Meanwhile, recall that the middle Rosano child, Lorenzo, had eloped in 1912, at the age of 18, with his then-girlfriend, Mae Riley, and they had a child, Lawrence Jr. Mae and Lorenzo divorced after several years of marriage. Both remarried and had additional children fairly quickly. From what I can tell, based on the evidence of ongoing association and references to “loving step sister,” etc., this blended family of what became five children and four adults got along pretty

well. Sadly, Lorenzo and his new wife Florence lost their son Cornelius in 1924 when he was just 5 years old. He died at 1413 Sixth Street while in the care of grandparents Antonio and Marguerita Rosano.

The youngest Rosano sibling, Christine, married in 1914 at age 18 to a man named Vincent Emil Musso, age 22. She was the only of the three Rosano siblings to marry someone of Italian descent. The Musso's were fruit growers in the Santa Clara Valley. Like the Rosanos, Vincent's family immigrated from the Piemonte region of Italy, when Vincent was 11 years old. Christine and Vincent moved to Los Angeles after they married, where Christine continued working as a salesclerk at a clothing store and Vincent worked as an auto mechanic in a garage. Three years later, in 1917, Christine and Vincent divorced. Christine remained working as a salesclerk in Los Angeles and during this period listed herself as "single."

Ex-husband Vincent, remarried in 1919 to Prospera Aiassa, newly immigrated from the Piemonte region of Italy. Vincent was drafted, served in World War I, and then returned to San Francisco and his new wife, Prospera. Tragically, in 1922, Prospera, age 25, killed herself and her two baby daughters (ages 11 months and 2 years old) by turning on the kitchen gas one morning when Vincent was at work. Vincent said she was suffering from post-partum depression. Prospera's side of the family believed that the suicide was to get out of a "bad marriage" and that she didn't want her two daughters to be "motherless." (noted on Ancestry.com by family member G. Bargetto, January 12 2013) Vincent died three years later, of causes unknown to me.



Lillian Frances Musso, the older of Prospera's two daughters.
Prospera Aiassa Musso. Family photos, circa 1919

After divorced husband Vincent died, Christine referred to herself as “a widow.”

Where were parents Antonio and Marguerita in 1920? Perhaps they took advantage of their empty nest to pursue another situation for themselves—a trip to Italy to visit family? Or maybe they relocated to Los Angeles to support their newly divorced youngest, Christina. Maybe they relocated temporarily as they worked to turn 1413 Sixth Street into a duplex. Or perhaps they were actually living at 1413 Sixth along with the renters, and the census taker didn’t realize there were two households. While the specific whereabouts of Antonio and Marguerita Rosano in this sliver of time from 1917 to 1921 remains a mystery, there is lots of evidence that they were actively managing their rental houses, sharing information in the local newspaper, etc. before, during, and after this period.

1415 Sixth is the house squeezed in between 1413 and 1417 Sixth Street on the lot owned by the Rosanos. Antonio Rosano had it built using the same contractor that he used to build 1417 Sixth, Frederick Offe. It was ready to live in by 1912.

In 1920, 1415 Sixth Street was rented by Eugene Roark (age 28) and his wife, Catherine O’Brien (age 25). Eugene was born in Berkeley to an Irish immigrant mother. Wife Catherine was an Irish immigrant herself. They lived there with their first two children, Margaret L. (age 2) and Eugene O. (newborn), and with Catherine’s two sisters, Madge O’Brien (age 32) and Christina O’Brien (age 19), both also relatively recent immigrants from Ireland. Eugene was a fireman with the Berkeley Fire Department. Catherine’s two sisters both worked at the planing mill.

Around the time he was married, Eugene Roark considered becoming a professional boxer. The 1920–1930s were the golden age of boxing—it was bigger than football or basketball. At 6 feet 1 inch and weighing close to 200 pounds, Eugene’s claim to fame was going three rounds with heavy-weight champion Jack Dempsey.

“I saw Jack Dempsey fight and I thought I could take him,” Roark recalled years later. “One day in 1919 one of the Olympic Club officials in San Francisco asked me to go three rounds of exhibition sparring with Dempsey and I consented.... The day finally arrived. He weighed in at 184 and I was about 197. I had a good left hand and he had a beautiful left hook. Boy he moved around the ring like a panther. He knocked me down with a right to the chin in the first round but I finished the three rounds—I can take a pretty good punch and I was never knocked out.” (Sacramento Bee, June 30, 1975)

1417 Sixth was sold by Antonio Rosano in 1919 to John Wesley Brown (age 42) and his wife, Ida Deparade (age 43). The two had married in Yukon, Oklahoma, in 1901 and come west with their two oldest children about 1908. In 1920 they lived at 1417 Sixth Street with their three children: Adolph (age 18), Opal (age 16), and Alice (age 12). John worked as a laborer at the gas factory. Son Adolph worked as an office boy at *Sunset* magazine in San Francisco.

John was the first resident in more than two decades of Block 36 who was not an immigrant or the child of an immigrant. As a reminder, very few of us weren’t immigrants at some point. John

was the great-great-great-grandchild of an Irish immigrant (whose family was Scots the generation before). The so-called “Scots-Irish” came to America in droves in the 1730s, often to the mid-Atlantic coast, landing in Philadelphia and moving inland. William Brown, John’s forebearer, did just that, settling in Virginia.

Perhaps more important than John’s deep family history was his recent family context. John’s father, Abner (who will move to Berkeley at the end of his life and live with John at 1417 Sixth Street), was one of six children born between 1837 and 1854. As a family, the Browns (grandparents, parents, children, and their children) homesteaded from Ohio to Illinois to Iowa to Kansas to Oklahoma. John and his siblings were born in Kansas and present for the subsequent homesteading in Oklahoma. The Browns were likely working as impoverished farmers at each location, needing to decide when to call it quits and move on in search of more agricultural success, or more land, or different opportunities, or whatever. And, of course, all this pushing on from one location to the next involved taking over “unassigned land” being opened to white settlement by the U.S. government, without regard to the Native people who lived there prior.

In particular, the last move, from the Brown’s homestead in Prairie, Kansas, to a new homestead in Yukon, Oklahoma, happened around 1890, the time of the “Oklahoma land runs.” This was when the United States government “gave away” nearly two million acres of Indian Territory intended for the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek/Muscogee, and Seminole people who had been forcibly removed from their lands in the southeastern United States (Hagan, 2002). The land being given away included both land for farming and land designated for building towns. Yukon, Oklahoma, was one of those new towns. John’s parents, Abner and Mary, used this opportunity to pivot from farming to running a restaurant and eventually a bakery in Yukon. John would have been there during the Oklahoma land runs in 1890, when he was about age 13.

John still lived with his parents in Yukon in 1901 when he married Ida Deparade, a German immigrant, whose family also homesteaded in Oklahoma via Kansas.



John Brown's parents and sister in their restaurant in Yukon, Oklahoma, family photo circa 1905.

John's siblings and Ida's siblings also moved to the Bay Area. For whatever reason, Yukon, Oklahoma, did not provide enough to keep these children of Yukon "settlers" living there.

John's wife, Ida, died in 1926 at age 49 after an uninterrupted "sleep" of 40 hours. The coroner concluded it was due to an accidental overdose of sleeping pills. John's son, Adolph, died in 1928 at age 19 while duck hunting off Fleming Point (currently referred to as the Albany Bulb). He had placed his double-barreled shotgun on a seat in his boat and accidentally kicked the trigger when he struggled to right his balance after jumping into the boat.

837 Page was now, in 1920, after his parents' death, owned by 32-year-old son Posen Johnson. In 1917, Posen married 18-year-old Mary Fisher.

It turned out that Mary, at age 15, had been declared "a wayward girl" by her mother and committed to the California Girls' Training Home. The California Girls' Training Home was a juvenile detention center in Alameda known by some as an institution for the "discipline of incorrigible girls." Run by women as a semi-public institution, the management endeavored to "run the home in a Christian manner."

A look in the local newspapers of the time shows reporting about deplorable conditions at the California Girls' Training Home and a regular stream of girls escaping despite its 12-foot fence topped with barbed wire. Here are two such examples:

Following the mutiny last night among seventy-five girls at the California Girls' Training Home in Alameda in which 14 of the girls escaped, an attempt was made today to bring

calm and reorganization in the school. The runaways had been recaptured but all the inmates of the home were in a highly hysterical condition.

Hasty telephoning for some woman who could control the girls resulted last night in the placing of Mrs. Francis H. Foss in charge. Mrs. Foss found the girls in the upper dormitory of the house crying, shouting, and screaming. Some were in groups telling of their troubles, while others huddled in the corners weeping. All the furniture in the place had been overturned. Papers, books, and clothes had been torn to strips. Almost every window in the upper part of the house had been broken.” (Oakland Tribune, July 8, 1915)

And from another article:

Suddenly attacking the janitor, William Anderson, with chairs, three inmates of the California Girls’ Training Home, an institution in Alameda for the discipline of incorrigible girls, overpowered him, took his keys and escaped at 8 o’clock last night. The Alameda police, in answer to a riot call, arrived just in time to prevent the escape of nearly fifty more girls who were battering down the fence of the home with a heavy piece of timber and fighting off nurses and matrons with maniacal ferocity.” (San Francisco Examiner, May 16, 1917)

I don’t know whether to be more horrified by the notion of institutionalizing “wayward” young women or more impressed by these young women’s collective response. Mary was an “inmate” of the California Girls’ Training Home for three years (from age 15 to 18), and the two events described above (“mutiny” and “riot”) would have happened during her tenure there.

Then, Mary was

paroled in 1917, whereupon she eloped with Posen A. Johnson. Johnson provided a modest cottage [this was in reference to 837 Page Street] and they were very happy, especially when a third member appeared in the family.” (San Francisco Examiner, August 30, 1919)

However,

Johnson said that ... almost immediately his wife began associating with other men. The first to come into her life was a soldier who was doing guard duty at a local factory during the war [Sgt. William J. Smith].... Johnson believed that [having a child] would tend to steady his wife down, he said. (Oakland Tribune, September 26, 1923)

But it didn’t. Mary continued seeing Sgt. Smith, telling him that the almost one-year-old baby (Eve) that she always had with her was her sister’s.

In June 1919, two years after their marriage, Mary sued Posen for a divorce. One month later she charged him with assault when, subsequently,

he tried to drown her by holding her under a faucet and turning the water into her mouth, after he had stripped her of all apparel, and that he then locked her out of the house and she was forced to take refuge with neighbors. (Oakland Enquirer, July 15, 1919)

Meanwhile, Sgt. Smith knew nothing of Mary's marriage, nor that her "sister's child" was hers. On August 6, 1919, Mary left baby Eve with Posen, the day after the baby turned one year old, and married Sgt. Smith in Marysville, California.

All came to light before the judge later that month, with both husbands present, and now bigamy and desertion had been added to the request for divorce and the charge of assault. When Mary said,

she could not make up her mind which of the two husbands she preferred...it was then that the court told her she could have neither for at least six months.

...Superior Judge Lin Church of Alameda County declared the 20-year-old bride mother a court ward and committed her to St. Catherine's Home for Delinquent Girls for six months. [St. Catherine's Home for Delinquent Girls was another institution for incarcerating young women. This one was in San Francisco.]

...Johnson and Smith both ... sought to have the judge free her, each promising that she would not stray again.

...Smith, though protesting his love for the girl, says he is content to let the husband matter stand as determined by law, which would free him. Johnson, who gets custody of the child, protested being assessed \$17.50 a month to the home for the mother's support. The care of the child, he claims, will stretch to the limits of his income. "I'll pay it," Sergeant Smith volunteered, as he left the court room with the other husband. (Oakland Tribune, August 30, 1919)

When Mary turned 21, she was released and returned home to Posen, Baby Eve, and 837 Page Street—and soon got pregnant with child number two. Baby Leroy was born in April 1921.

According to Posen,

[He] forgave his wife and used his influence to secure her release on her promise to reform he said. Almost immediately on her return she began going out on Saturday nights, he testified, and the climax was reached when he reproached her for returning home at 3 a.m. She packed her things and left the home and has not been back since. (Oakland Tribune, September 26, 1923)

Posen's request for a divorce was granted. He raised Eve and Leroy himself for a time, remarrying two years later.

834 Camelia was owned in 1920 by Ignatz Klier (age 45) and his wife, Franziska Brandner (aka Frances, age 42). They lived there with six of their seven children: Frances (age 16), John (age 14), Martin (age 12), Ignatz Jr. (aka Jake, age 10), Walter (age 8), and Mary (age 4). The youngest, Mary, was born at 834 Camelia. Mary is the neighbor I knew, who lived her entire life on Block 36. Madeleine (age 20), the oldest child, had married and moved to Oakland the year before.

The Klier family immigrated from an area in Bohemia that is now part of the Czech Republic. They lived near the border of Germany and were among almost one quarter of Bohemians who at the time were considered to be ethnic Germans. The Klier family spoke German at home.

In Bohemia, the Klier family were instrument makers and sellers. Ignatz's older brother Franz (Frank), who immigrated to the United States 16 years before Ignatz (in 1895), headed up the family instrument business. He left his oldest son, Johann, in Czechoslovakia to continue to run the business there, while Frank opened an instrument shop on Third Street in Oakland. Son Johann sent instruments to his father in Oakland to sell.

Ignatz immigrated considerably later, in 1911, with his wife and all his children. Ignatz's immigration papers indicated his profession as "violin maker." We don't know whether Ignatz came to California intending to continue his work with the family business or not. However, Ignatz shows up in the records living in Berkeley (not Oakland near his brother and the instrument shop) and working in a range of jobs, first as a foreman for the Pacific Guano and Fertilizer Company, then as a mechanic at the Judson Ironworks, and then as a tanner at the Mannasse-Block Tannery—all before 1920.

There is evidence of some drama around the family business:

Father and son arraigned against son and brother in a battle over musical instruments purchased in the old world in the spectacle seen in Superior Judge John P. Wood's court today. Johann Klier is the plaintiff and Frank Klier Sr., his father and Frank Klier, Jr., his brother are defendants. Klier asks for \$1,094. The plaintiff declares that his father and brother came to his home in Czechoslovakia and selected a number of violins, bows, cases, violin strings, and several other instruments and findings. He shipped them to this country and they were received by his parent and brother, who have since refused to pay him. (Oakland Tribune, May 20, 1925)

Perhaps Ignatz chose to steer clear.

Ignatz and wife, Frances, probably had their hands full with their own family challenges, in particular with Ignatz Jr. (Jake). In 1924, at age 14, Jake was the driver in a serious accident:

William Justensen, 65, a retired rancher of 1605 Channing way, Berkeley, incurred possible fatal injuries this morning when the automobile in which he was riding was struck by a speeding automobile and hurled 25 feet into a lot at Channing way and Seventh street. At

the emergency hospital physicians said Justensen was internally injured.... According to the police, Ignatz Klier Jr., 834 Camelia street, driver of the other car, was traveling at a high rate of speed at the time of the accident. Police said Klier's car skidded more than a hundred feet following the crash. (Oakland Post Enquirer, August 12, 1924)

Justensen died two days later.

Two years later, Ignatz Jr. was again the driver responsible for a serious accident that resulted in a death, this time of a 7-year-old neighborhood girl:

Alice Veloz, 7, 1456 Sixth street Berkeley, died last night from a crushed skull sustained when struck at Fifth and Page streets, Berkeley, by automobile driven by Ignatz Klier, 16, of 834 Camelia street. Klier is being held at the Detention Home for investigation. According to police he had no driver's license. (Oakland Tribune, June 11, 1926)

The parents of the child filed suit against Ignatz Jr. for \$10,000 (*Oakland Post Enquirer*, July 16, 1926). Ten thousand dollars was a lot of money in 1926. If this suit was successful, it must have created a hardship for the Klier family.

Teenagers and cars aren't an easy combination during any era, but there had to be something different about this time when broad access to cars and driving was relatively new.

Ignatz Sr. had his own dangerous encounter with the new technology of the automobile:

Ignatz Klier, 834 Camelia street, Berkeley, was seriously burned on the head and arms today when the fuel tank of his automobile exploded and spattered him with flaming gasoline. The blast occurred while he was repairing the wiring on the machine. (Oakland Post Enquirer, January 9, 1925)

Apparently the fire department arrived to find part of 834 Camelia (the Klier home) in flames and Klier badly burned on the face and hands.

832 Camelia in 1920 was the home of the Silva family, including José (aka Joseph) Enos Silva (age 46), wife Maria Madeline Samuels (age 28), and their five children: John Enos (age 9), Palmeter (age 7), Clara (age 6), Joseph Enos Jr. (age 4), and Maria Madeline (an infant). The family was Portuguese. While wife Maria [[Marie or Maria?]] spoke English (she was second generation), José spoke only Portuguese in 1920.

Like the Felix family who lived in this house a decade earlier, the Silvas came to California via Hawaii, where they were part of the large number of indentured agricultural workers brought in to work in the cane fields or in the sugar refineries. The German indentured laborers came early on, as did the Scots. They were replaced by Portuguese laborers, who were paid three-quarters of what the Germans and Scots received. In turn, the Portuguese laborers were replaced by

Japanese laborers. Each successive “generation” of imported laborers was paid less than the one before (Almeida, 1992).

When Japanese laborers began arriving in Hawaii, many of the Portuguese laborers came to San Leandro, California, and to Oakland, both known to have vibrant Portuguese communities. José and Maria married in Oakland in 1910.

The large influx of these immigrants from Hawaii caused ... certain resentment in the Portuguese community, which at the time was beginning to experience the pleasures of acceptance ... attained after hard work and economic independence. So, the Portuguese in California went on to label their brothers from Hawaii as the “Kanakas”—a name designating the Hawaiian native. (Almeida, 1992, p. 17)

Recall that in addition to the Silva family who came to Berkeley from Hawaii via Oakland, Block 36 had a growing number of connections to Portuguese immigrants. There are the connections mentioned above in the Medes family. Also, Madeline Klier, the oldest of Ignatz and Francziska’s children, married Joseph Matthew Sousa, a second-generation Azorean living in Oakland.

Berkeley Moonshine Plant Is Uncovered

In the meantime, several blocks down the street, whisky was apparently being brewed:

Prohibition agents visited the east bay district during the early hours yesterday and raided two alleged moonshine factories, one in West Berkeley and the other in Fruitvale.... what prohibition agents consider some of the best moonshine whisky they have run across they found at 1820 Sixth Street, Berkeley. Two complete stills, one of eighteen and the other of thirty gallons’ capacity were found. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, December 30, 1920)

1930 Berkeley

The stock market crash of 1929 and the subsequent downward economic spiral leading up to the Great Depression are undoubtedly the events that had the largest impact on daily life in Berkeley, and indeed on the rest of the country, in the 1930s. Going from the decade of the 1920s, where economic growth and prosperity abounded, to one in which jobs were lost and poverty skyrocketing must have been both shocking and devastating.

Already in November of 1930 the newspapers were writing about poverty in West Berkeley:

Berkeley citizens have shared generously from their bounty with the needy this year and never before had there been so much charity work done in West Berkeley homes, where there has been illness and unemployment during the last few months. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, November 27, 1930)

Berkeley's suicide rate in 1931 (27) was nearly double that of 1930 (14), as hopelessness took over from the seemingly boundless growth of the 1920s (Finacon, 2007).

More broadly:

By ... 1933, the banking system had collapsed, nearly 25% of the labor force was unemployed, and prices and productivity had fallen to 1/3 of their 1929 levels. Reduced prices and reduced output resulted in lower incomes in wages, rents, dividends, and profits throughout the economy. Factories were shut down, farms and homes were lost to foreclosure, mills and mines were abandoned, and people went hungry. The resulting lower incomes meant the further inability of the people to spend or to save their way out of the crisis, thus perpetuating the economic slowdown in a seemingly never-ending cycle. ("Great Depression Facts," FDR Library)

While the University of California provided some financial stability to a portion of Berkeley's population, West Berkeley's industries and subsequently its workers were hit hard by the Depression (Wollenberg, p. 102). This may have primed workers for the rise of workers' unions that followed as increasingly "radical social movements channeled desperation into collective action" (Glass, 2016, p. 211).

Politically, Berkeley was largely Republican in the 1930s, voting for Herbert Hoover over Franklin D. Roosevelt for president in 1932. Yet as a city, Berkeley benefitted greatly from Roosevelt's New Deal programs, including the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Proposed by Roosevelt, a Democratic president, and supported by the majority Democratic House and Senate, these stimulus programs were designed to put people back to work. They also improved Berkeley's infrastructure and quality of living through the addition of Berkeley's Rose Garden and adjoining tennis courts, Aquatic Park, Tilden Park, the Tilden Park golf course, Lake Anza, Codornices Park, John Hinkel Park amphitheater, improvements to James Kenney Park, Indian Rock Park, Live Oak

Park, and San Pablo Park, and the creation of the Berkeley Marina. The programs paid for the building and repair of schools and sidewalks, street improvements, and the planting of thousands of street trees. Artists and writers were put to work, creating, for example, the bas-relief murals on Berkeley High School buildings and a book about the history of Berkeley that I used in my research on Block 36. The list of Berkeley-based New Deal–supported projects is even longer (Smith, 2014).

Rather than quell the widespread discontent over economic conditions in the nation, the New Deal was perceived by many as simply not enough. In Berkeley, as well as in multiple locations in the Bay Area and the nation, a WPA strike was underway, as workers clamored for a living wage and increased security:

“Thousands laid down their tools in demand for higher wages and job assurances, with the walkout gaining momentum hourly,” the Berkeley Daily Gazette reported April 1, 1937.

Three Berkeley WPA projects were temporarily stopped. Only about 15 workers out of “the usual 300” showed up to work on the Berkeley Marina and Aquatic Park projects.

“A similar number of striking pickets appeared at the projects, and it was anticipated that the few on the jobs would lay down their tools before tonight.... At the Rose Garden project in Codornices Park the entire quota of 38 WPA workers called a halt, and the garden work, as well as the remodeling of the Codornices clubhouse was temporarily abandoned.”

Elsewhere in Berkeley, 12 WPA workers continued marking street numbers on curbs, while an estimated 75 others working on construction at Berkeley schools joined the strike. Clerical workers assigned by the WPA to school projects initially continued working. These totals imply that more than 400 workers were supported with WPA jobs in Berkeley in early 1937. The large strike lasted about a week, with federal authorities refusing to raise wages. (Finacom, 2012)

Over the course of the 1930s, throughout Berkeley, worker strikes and protests became increasingly commonplace. In downtown Berkeley, picketing workers and sympathizers were arrested outside the local Woolworth’s five-and-dime store following the lead of protesting Woolworth’s stores nationwide (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, September 12, 1936). In solidarity, organized warehousemen and teamsters participated in protests and refused to deliver merchandise to striking stores. Successful union campaigns were conducted at some of Berkeley’s largest industrial employers, such as Colgate-Palmolive, Durkee Foods, and the precursor to Bayer, Cutter Laboratories (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 102).

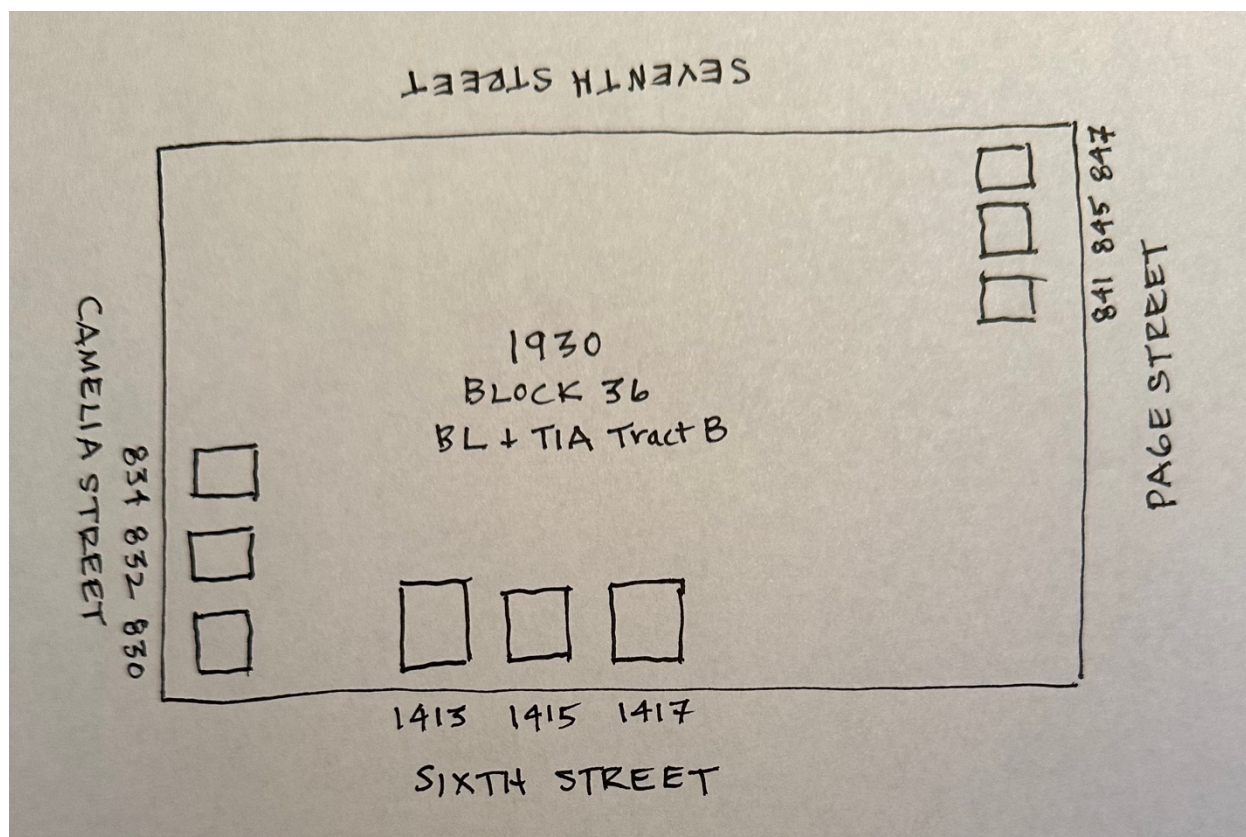
In a mass uprising of almost four million working people in the late 1930s and early 1940s, young people were on the move; the Left was thriving; new tactics of canny strategy and direct action, especially the sit-down strike, were suddenly deployed with both daring and shocking success. It wasn’t exactly a revolution but something huge was happening in early 1937. (Zinn, Kelley, and Frank, 2001)

Berkeley's solid Republican base, combined with its growing left-leaning working class, just added to the differences between East and West Berkeley.

Big events of the decade also included the construction of the San Francisco Bay Bridge, completed in 1936, and the Golden Gate Bridge, completed in 1937, both with funds in part from the New Deal, along with the four-lane Eastshore Highway (the precursor of I-80). Connecting the East Bay to San Francisco with an auto bridge was a big blow to public transportation. Funds from New Deal programs subsequently paid to dismantle many of the Key System streetcar tracks throughout Berkeley.

On Block 36 in the 1930s, the signs of poverty and life stress include unemployment (three working-age young men), overpopulated homes (a modest home of less than 1,000 square feet had 11 people living in it), two homes taking in boarders, a family that lost their business and property, another family that had to mortgage their home, and four couples that ended up divorced.

There were nine houses on Block 36 in 1930, an increase of three since 1920. The same three houses are on Sixth Street, and there is an additional house on Camelia Street that was moved there from elsewhere. The house at 837 Page Street is gone (read on for speculation of what happened to it), and there are three new "worker cottages" on Page Street—contractor W. Russell built two in 1923 (841 and 845 Page) and the third (847 Page) in 1925.



1413 Sixth was still owned by the Rosano family in 1930, but family patriarch Antonio had died, at the age of 68. In January 1926, he got a scratch on his hand, and an infection set in. After a four-month hospital stay, his body succumbed to the infection, a death that antibiotics surely would have headed off. Wife Marguerita and youngest daughter Christine lived in the family house at 1413 Sixth. Christine worked as a stenographer at a department store. My back neighbor, Mary, told me that Marguerita had an extensive and beautiful vegetable garden that spanned from the front of the property to the back. "She was always gardening."

Recall that the oldest Rosano daughter, Jenny, was married to Jack Medes. They owned the highly successful Berkeley Wicker Works, which rapidly expanded, fueling their upward social climb to East Berkeley. After the financial crash of 1929, the Berkeley Wicker Works and the Berkeley Furniture Company that they had acquired no longer existed, presumably failing after the crash. Further, Jack and Jenny divorced.

Imagine how many people, like Jack and Jennie, were devastated by their complete loss of fortune. This must have particularly been the case when, like Jack and Jennie, the demise of a business impacted others, including the neighbors and family members they employed. The loss must have brought tremendous feelings of failure and shame.

The 1930 U.S. Federal Census shows Jennie, now age 38, as single, living as a roomer at 1345 Hearst Avenue, and working as a "saleslady" in dry goods. Jennie lived alone the rest of her life,

working as a salesclerk. It shows Jack living at 1602 Stannage Street. He disappeared from the records for a while, surfacing in Pescadero, California, and then returning to Berkeley, where he lived for a bit at 1340 Sixth (the corner of Sixth and Camelia) with his stepfather, Joseph Pimentel, and then on San Pablo Avenue. While Jack's brother, Foster Medes, continued to make and sell wicker bassinets out of his home, Jack seemed to have left wicker work completely behind. He worked as a teamster and a warehouse worker for various factories, positions that were most likely unionized at the time.

Marguerita's middle child, Lorenzo, and his family also disappeared from the records until 1940. I imagine that like many, they hunkered down during the years of the Depression, with no extra income to afford things like paying to be listed each year in the City Directory.

1415 Sixth was still owned and rented out by Marguerita Rosano, for \$18 a month. Living there was Foster Hallman (age 28), his wife, Josephine Russo (age 22), and their three daughters: Florence (age 5), Jeannette (age 4), and Beverly (newborn).

Foster was born in Delaware and worked on boats as a deckhand for some number of years. In 1930 he worked at the awning factory. Wife Josephine was born in North Beach, in San Francisco, to Italian immigrants. She married Foster when she was age 15. She had her three children at ages 16, 17, and 22.

Why might Josephine have married at age 15? Understanding what Josephine's home situation was like may provide insight. Josephine was 7 years old when her father, Ignazio Russo, died in 1915. Her mother, Giovannina Asaro (aka Jenny), would have been 26 years old at the time, with children ages 7 (Josephine), 5, and 3 and pregnant with a fourth. They lived at 2235 Eighth Street in Berkeley.

Three years later, Josephine's mother, Jenny, remarried. Her second husband was a man named Angelo Cassaro who had recently been released from prison, where he had served a sentence for grand larceny. Jenny and new husband Angelo promptly had two more children.



Jenny Asaro, Josephine Russo's mother.
Photo on gravestone, St. Mary's cemetery,
Oakland, CA., circa 1906.

In 1922, now living with second husband Angelo and six children ages 14 (Josephine) through 18 months, Jenny appeared in court accusing Angelo of beating her. The next day she appeared again before the judge, pleading with him not to send Angelo to jail saying, "He's promised to be good. As long as he brings home his money and treats me and the children right, I'm willing to give him another chance" (*Oakland Tribune*, May 18, 1922). The very next year, Josephine turned 15. It is perhaps, then, not a surprise that Josephine said yes to a proposal of marriage by Foster Hallman when she was 15.



Angelo Cassaro, Jenny Asaro's second husband and Josephine Russo's stepfather, mugshot, Folsom Prison. Inmate photo, 1915, Tulare County Sheriff.

Foster and Josephine divorced in 1935, when Josephine was 27, leaving her to raise her three daughters, who at the time of the divorce would have been ages 11, 10, and 5.

Despite the Hallman's family of five and the small house, they also had a roomer living with them, Richard Marshall (age 30). Richard grew up at 1714 Fourth Street, the child of Finnish immigrants. In 1930 he was divorced and working as a machinist at Pacific Telephone. His ex-wife, Marie Miguel, and their 6-year-old child, moved back in with her parents on Ninth Street.

1417 Sixth was still owned by John Wesley Brown in 1930, now a widower (age 51). In 1930, he lived there with his youngest daughter, Alice (age 21), who worked as a stenographer at the Automobile Association, and with his oldest daughter, Opal (age 26), and her family, including Opal's husband, Ignatious Burke (age 36), and their 1-year-old baby, Richard. In 1930, Opal was pregnant with their second baby. Both John and son-in-law Ignatious were machinists, working at a machine shop.

837 Page no longer exists in 1930. It is absent from the 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps and does not appear in the 1930 or 1940 U.S. Federal Census. I could find no record of a fire, but I did find the following information yielding some evidence about what may have happened to the house:

In 1919: Posen Johnson of 837 Page street has torn down the front part of his house and will make many improvements. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, May 14, 1919)

In 1920: Posen Johnson, 837 Page street, will begin the construction of a new home in the near future. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, August 5, 1920)

In 1922: Posen Johnson took out building permit number 11743 (May 1, 1922).

In 1924: When Posen Johnson, west end man, tried to sell the home of his late parents at 837 Page St. recently, he found it could not be sold as it was a homestead to pass from one generation to another. He has a young son. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, 30 August 1924)

It is still a mystery what happened between 1924 and 1928, after which 837 Page is gone. I suspect that Posen tore the house down, perhaps due to the prohibition of selling the house, and sold the lot.

841 Page was owned by widower Charles Lane (age 57) in 1930, father of a grown daughter. Born in Texas and a longtime Richmond resident, Charles was a member of a prominent Richmond family “closely identified with the Standard Oil Company since it first located in Richmond.” (The Richmond Independent, April 23, 1911, page 4.) In 1911, both the families of Charles Lane and his father resided “in their attractive homes on Mancilla Avenue [in Richmond], in the vicinity of the oil plant.” (The Richmond Independent, April 23, 1911, page 4.)

Working as a plumber in 1930, Charles was living on Page Street with a Guatemalan woman named Estelle Irene Brent (age 50). She, too, was a widow. She formerly ran a boarding house in Oakland. Estelle also owned a house up the street, at 939 Page. It seems that over time, Charles and Irene lived in one or the other of the two homes and listed each other sometimes as husband/wife and sometimes as owner/boarder.

841 Page was built by contractor W. Russell in 1923.

845 Page was owned by Lorin A. White (age 34) and his wife, Wanda A. Barnhart (age 30). In 1930, they lived with their two children, Donald (age 10) and Lorna (age 5), and with Wanda’s stepsister, Anna Davis (age 18). After years of working as a fireman for Southern Pacific Railroad (the person who kept the fire going in steam locomotives), Lorin graduated to locomotive engineer in 1930. Anna also worked for the railroad. She was a clerk.

Lorin’s parents and grandparents were early settlers of San Jose. Wanda was raised in California’s San Joaquin Valley, the daughter of a farmer.

845 Page was built by contractor W. Russell in 1923, the same contractor who built 841 Page.

Young Donald will enlist in the military in World War II and lose his life 165 miles south of Osaka, Japan.

847 Page was the third of three houses built by contractor W. Russell. This third house was completed last, in 1924. It was owned by Alfred Markuson (age 40) and his wife, Hilda (age 29). Alfred was born in Norway. He arrived alone in the United States in 1910, and in 1930 he worked as the first mate on the Southern Pacific auto ferry to San Francisco. Hilda was the seventh of 16 children. Her parents were both born in Finland; they immigrated to the United States and settled in Minnesota.

834 Camelia was still owned by Ignatz Klier (age 55) and his wife, Franziska (aka Frances, age 52). In 1930, they lived there with five of their seven children: John (age 23), Martin (age 21), Ignatz Jr. (aka Jake, age 21), Walter (age 17), and Mary (age 14). Ignatz Sr. worked odd jobs. John was a millhand. Martin was a mechanic. Jake and Walter were unemployed.

In 1930, Mary was attending Berkeley High. She went on to graduate from high school in 1933. It was uncommon for teens living on Block 36 to complete high school, especially girls.

Despite there being multiple wage earners in the house, money must have been tight, especially with so many mouths to feed. In 1932, Ignatz took out a mortgage on their house from the bank.



Mary Klier, Berkeley High School yearbook. 1933

832 Camelia was owned in 1930 by John Noble (age 38) and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Smith (age 39). They lived there with their nine children: Edward (age 15), Ernest (age 14), Lorraine (age 12), Arthur (age 9), Wally (age 7), Milton (age 6), James (age 4), Howard (age 2), and John (an infant). Unlike the other Nobles in the neighborhood (there were quite a few—all related), John's surname Noble was shortened from Nobriega, a Puerto Rican name. John's parents were born in Puerto Rico, but they, like others who have lived on Block 36, were indentured workers on Hawaii's sugar plantations who subsequently came to California. Wife Mary was born in San Francisco. Her parents immigrated from England. In 1930, John worked as a stevedore—responsible for loading and unloading ships.



Mary Smith Noble on the right with children Lorraine and Arthur (Family photo, circa early 1920s).

John was killed in 1933 when the car he was riding in was struck by an electric train (street car), leaving Mary as a single parent of 10 children (one more had been born since 1930) and pregnant with her eleventh child, who would be born in April 1934 and die in June 1934.

The account of the following story is perhaps too far afield to include in a piece about Block 36; however, there is a connection (to Mary Smith's mother), and the story is too topical to current times to leave out of this picture of the reality of the first two-thirds of the 1900s. Twenty years earlier than 1930, in October 1910, a 26-year-old woman named Eliza Campbell Tildsley died in the care of her midwife, Mary Adams. Eliza was the mother of four young children, ages 9, 7, 4, and 3.

Mary Adams was accused of murdering Eliza, by performing two "criminal operations" on her, a mother "with child" (*Oakland Tribune*, December 27, 1910). Mary was imprisoned as she awaited trial. In January 1911, a jury of twelve men was unable to arrive at a unanimous verdict on the charge of murder (eight for acquittal and four for conviction). The judge declared it a hung jury. The district attorney's office immediately announced that Mary Adams would be tried again (*Oakland Tribune*, January 14, 1911). Based on late information provided by Eliza's husband, Abraham Tildsley, suggesting that Eliza may have harmed herself prior to visiting the midwife, the judge dismissed the case (*San Francisco Call*, February 24, 1911).



A couple of months later, Mary Adams was arrested as part of a sting operation conducted by the California Medical Board in which a decoy patient was sent to the midwife's place of business requesting an abortion. Mary, who prescribed medication, was charged with a misdemeanor for practicing medicine without a license (*Oakland Tribune*, April 23, 1911).

All of this happened in 1910–1911.

A couple of years later, in 1914, Eliza's widower, Abraham Tildsley (now age 33), married Elizabeth Singleton Smith (age 48), herself a widow. Elizabeth Smith was the mother of Mary Smith Noble, who in 1933 became the widowed mother of 10 children living on Block 36 at 832 Camelia.

830 Camelia was owned by Edward Kirkwood (age 72). Widowed in 1926, Edward lived at 830 Camelia with second wife Martha Marie Goddard Groves (age 58). Edward Kirkwood, immigrated from Scotland in 1886 with his first wife, Mary Wilson, and worked as a lead burner (welder) at the Giant Powder Works.

In 1923, Edward (and first wife Mary) had the house at 830 Camelia moved there from 995 Fifth Street—the very north end of the street, by Codornices Creek. Early on, its address was listed as "Fifth and Creek." In 1920, Edward and Mary lived in the house by the creek with Mary's older

sister Catherine and Catherine's husband, Alexander Craig (also Scots). After the house was moved to Camelia Street, Catherine and Alexander Craig continued to share the house with Edward and Mary, until Mary's death in 1926. In 1929, at age 71, Edward married Martha Marie Goddard Groves (age 57), something he would later regret.

Martha was born in Utah to a polygamous Mormon family. Her father had three wives and 16 children. Martha was one of nine born to his first wife. Martha herself married eight times (one man she married twice). Unlike her father, she had only one spouse at a time. I found a string of somewhat dramatic newspaper articles over the years describing the events leading up to Martha's divorce of each husband. In 1936 it was Edward Kirkwood's turn, when he was charged by Martha with battery, and Martha filed for divorce:

The charges against Kirkwood grew out of an argument last October 26 that ended in a struggle with the defendant, Mrs. Kirkwood, and her sister, all falling to the floor. "When he fell down, he couldn't get up," the complainant told the court. "When he was down, he was like a tumble-bug, but when he was on his feet he was fast as lightning."

The argument that ended in near-violence was over a radio program. Mrs. Kirkwood wanted to listen to a musical broadcast and her husband wanted to tune in on a Townsend program.... "I switched it back," Mrs. Kirkwood related plaintively. "Then he switched it back. I switched it back again and he grabbed my arm and slapped my wrist...."

Turning to the audience in the courtroom, [Mr. Kirkwood] said: "If there is anyone out there that wants her they can have her." There were no bidders. A moment before this he told the magistrate there had been no romance in his life since he married Mrs. Kirkwood seven years ago and that he found out a month after he married her that he had "made a mistake." (Oakland Tribune, October 29, 1936)

Martha complained:

"He's always throwing it up to me that I've been married eight times. Well, I haven't been married eight times, not nearly that number." (Oakland Tribune, October 30, 1936)

But she had been.

I wonder how much Edward's sensibilities were impacted by lead poisoning. In 1899 an article in the *Berkeley Daily Gazette* said this:

Edward Kirkwood, a lead burner at the Giant Powder Works, has been down very low for three days with a case of what seems to be lead-poisoning. Dr. Charles F. Gladding reports the condition of the patient to be very serious.

Edward mortgaged 830 Camelia in 1931, and the Kirkwoods moved to Alameda, where Martha tried running a teahouse, and then to Oakland, where she ran a boarding house. After nearly 30

years working as a lead burner at the Giant Powder Works, Edward now worked for himself as a plumber.

For whatever reasons, Edward Kirkwood and Martha Goddard Groves were still living together in 1940, at the boarding house in Oakland that Martha ran, four years after Martha had filed for divorce.

1940 Berkeley

World War II, clearly one of the most impactful events of the twentieth century, had a more profound effect on the Bay Area than World War I, in more ways than one.

First, the relative numbers of people mobilized in the two wars was very different. About 5 million Americans served in World War I for essentially just the one year that the United States was directly involved in the war. In contrast, 16 million Americans served in World War II over the course of a war that involved the U.S. military for over three years. Accordingly, the number of people enlisted was much greater. No one on Block 36 itself served in World War I, whereas in World War II, of the 18 men living on the block between the ages of 18 and 44 (draft-eligible ages), 6 served in the military. All 6 had enlisted rather than being drafted. Suddenly everyone knew or was related to someone fighting in World War II.

World War II also drew on all Americans to address the significant resource shortages that faced the country as it geared up to play an active role in the war. This happened in several ways. Foods such as sugar, meat, bacon, coffee, butter, and canned goods, were rationed, as well as gasoline, tires, shoes, nylon stockings, and more. Everyone felt the pinch. Some things were rationed because they needed to be diverted to the war effort. Other things were rationed because war disrupted trade causing certain shortages (National Park Service, undated). Shortages in raw materials needed in the war effort, including steel, tin, copper, aluminum, brass, and rubber, meant there was both scarcity of, as well as rationing regulations applied to, sale of new goods that incorporated these materials.

Berkeley established a Defense Council, whose name was then subsequently changed to the Berkeley War Council. Its purpose was to promote, organize, and coordinate a wide variety of civilian war efforts. One such effort consisted of material drives to collect used scraps and substances, such as tin cans, scrap metal, wastepaper, and used cooking oil, that could be utilized in the fabrication of new products. Goals were set and monthly progress announced. During 1943, Berkeley collected 1,142,000 pounds of tin, 454,00 pounds of scrap metal, 484 pounds of wastepaper, and 111,800 pounds of household fats.

According to the Berkeley War Council's monthly newsletter, *The Messenger*,

Beginning December 13, butchers will issue to the Berkeley housewife two meat [ration] points for every pound of fat which she brings in. It is not often that one receives such tangible payment for doing her duty. The figures given in last month's Messenger show conclusively how loyally careful Berkeley women are. Most of them know that ten pounds of fat yield one pound of glycerin which, in turn, provides the amount necessary for the manufacture of one and one-half pounds of gunpowder. (The Messenger, December 1, 1943)

The Berkeley War Council also promoted and supported the planting of Victory Gardens. In addition to serving as a symbol of patriotism, encouraging this form of decentralized food production

freed up agriculture produce, packaging, and transportation resources for the war effort, and helped offset shortages of agricultural workers.” (National Park Service, undated)

In 1943, 10,000 Berkeley homes had Victory Gardens, and the Berkeley War Council had a volunteer staff of eight to help people successfully grow vegetables.

While World War II was technically an overseas war, the bombing of Hawaii’s Pearl Harbor in 1941 abruptly changed how Americans viewed the war. Not only did that event precipitate the United States’ official entrance into the war, but it ignited fear of attack or even invasion of the mainland. The concern was particularly pronounced in coastal areas. Being located on the coast, Berkeley and the whole Bay Area took blackout regulations seriously, requiring homes and businesses to cover windows and doors at night. Blackout drills were conducted, with volunteer “air wardens” in each community monitoring the effectiveness. One of these air wardens lived on Block 36. Bomb shelters were built or designated. Air raid sirens were installed.

Support is rapidly developing all through West Berkeley, the Committee said. The realization that this area west of Grove [now Martin Luther King Jr. Way] to the Bay is the manufacturing area has caused district leaders there to work intensively among the voters calling attention to the fact that if the Jap [sic] bombing attack can be made from a low altitude they will certainly concentrate on the military objectives, which are in West Berkeley. (Berkeley Daily Gazette, May 21, 1942)

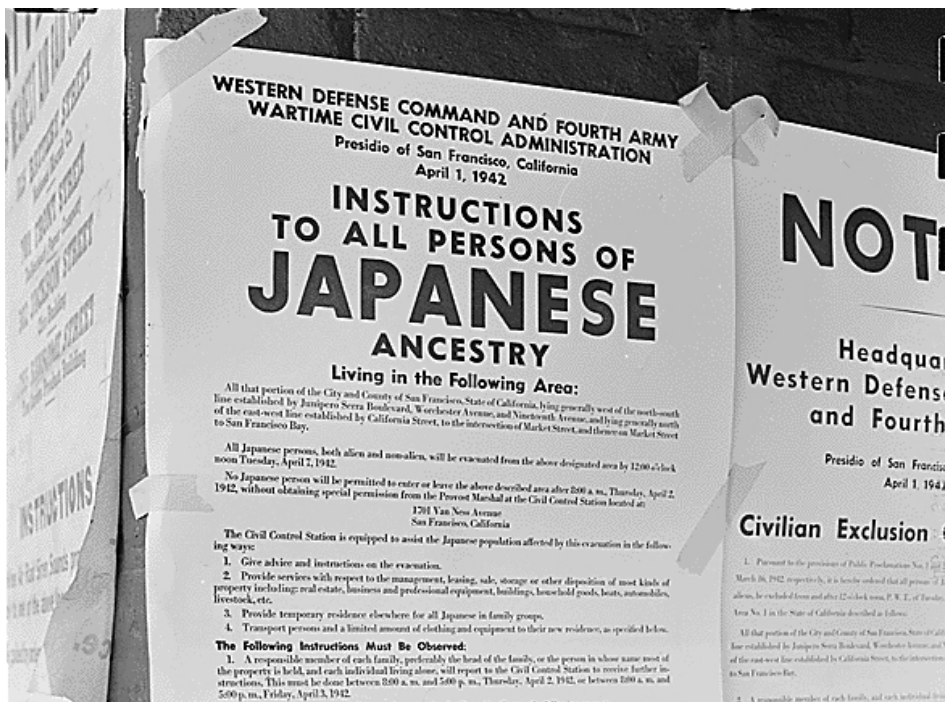
In a time before satellite warning systems, the U.S. activated a Ground Observer Corps consisting of 1.5 million civilian volunteers who were (loosely) trained to spot, identify, and report aircraft (Army Air Forces, 1942). Over 14,000 ground defense towers were constructed all across the United States for this purpose, and volunteers were also urged to make use of rooftops and other high vantage points to conduct their observations. Ground Observer Corps volunteers included housewives, teenagers, and people too old for the draft. My mother was an observer during World War II, as a teen.

This climate of fear also drove an unconscionable and appallingly racist act against Japanese-Americans, who had already borne the brunt of anti-Asian discrimination in the United States. In February 1942, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt enacted an executive order requiring the incarceration of over 110,000 individuals. People of Japanese ancestry were forcibly removed from their homes in California, Oregon, Washington, and part of Arizona (a declared “war zone”).

Because of the perception of "public danger," all Japanese Americans within varied distances from the Pacific coast were targeted. Unless they were able to dispose of, or

make arrangements for, care of their property within a few days, their homes, farms, businesses, and most of their private belongings were lost forever.

From the end of March to August [1942], approximately 112,000 persons were sent to “assembly centers”—often racetracks or fairgrounds—where they waited and were tagged to indicate the location of a long-term “relocation center” that would be their home for the rest of the war. Nearly 70,000 of the evacuees were American citizens. There were no charges of disloyalty against any of these citizens, nor was there any vehicle by which they could appeal their loss of property and personal liberty. (National Archives website, undated)



Executive Order 9066 posted in April 1942. Image from National Archives and Records Administration.

In Berkeley, the Japanese-American community that had been in place for a half century, was uprooted in a few months:

“Approximately 1,300 persons of Japanese ancestry...” including UC students and professors, had to vacate homes, quit jobs, leave school, close businesses, and sell possessions. (Berkeley Historical Plaque Project, 2017)

One of the families who lived on Block 36 was incarcerated in a Japanese internment camp.

Perhaps the most widespread impact of World War II, and certainly the most positive, was how it improved the United States economy. Whereas at the depth of the Great Depression, one in four Americans could not find work, by 1944 unemployment was at an all-time low of 1.2

percent. This was especially the case in the Bay Area (National Park Service exhibit text, undated):

West Berkeley industry boomed, with the military buying everything from Colgate toothpaste and Heinz ketchup to Cutter Lab blood plasma and Pacific Steel industrial castings. (Wollenberg, 2008, p. 110)

The impact on the economy hit even before the United States officially joined the war:

The U.S. government began preparing for war as early as 1940 in response to growing conflict in Europe and Asia. Initial efforts included expanding the military, exploring ways to increase industrial production, and lending equipment to our allies in their fight against Germany, Italy and Japan.

Momentum accelerated significantly when the U.S. entered the war in late 1941. President Franklin D. Roosevelt put it bluntly: "Powerful enemies must be out-fought and out-produced." More than 16 million men and women joined the armed forces, and another 24 million contributed to an unprecedented nationwide effort to manufacture the vehicles, tools, weaponry, and supplies necessary to win a war. (National Park Service exhibit text, undated)



Kaiser Permanente Richmond Shipyard Corporation Yard Number 2, August 1942. Image from the Bedford collection, Richmond Museum Association, Kathleen Rupley & Staff, Warren F. Lee, and Catherine T. Lee.

The Bay Area, and in particular Richmond, California, just north of Berkeley, was one of the areas where government funding was invested to build up wartime manufacturing. Richmond

was the terminus of a major railroad, it had a deep harbor, there was ample land available, and there were plenty of potential workers within the San Francisco Bay Area (National Park Service exhibit text, undated). Beginning in 1941, construction began on what became massive shipbuilding facilities. Operations ran 24 hours a day. A total of 747 ships were built in the Richmond Shipyards during World War II.

The Richmond Shipyards offered more employment than could be easily met with just local labor or with typical manufacturing workers. Over 100,000 workers from all over the country flocked to work in the shipyards (Pack and Toy, 2021):

The influx of men into the armed services created an extraordinary demand for labor, which with startling speed broke down a multitude of customs and rules about who could and could not perform heavy, well-paid factory work. Three million women took “men’s jobs,” encouraged by explicit government appeals featuring photos of smiling women riveters and welders in overalls. Just as important, World War II accelerated the stream of black migration from the agricultural South, as over one million African Americans left sharecropping in a semi-feudal economy for northern cities and factories. (Gosse, 2005)

These changes in the workplace demographics occurred “despite the resistance of many unions, which were dominated by white men” (Pack and Toy, 2021).



Hundreds of workers leaving the main checkpoint after a shift at Shipyard Number 2 in 1943. Image from the Bedford collection, Richmond Museum Association, Kathleen Rupley, Warren F. Lee, and Catherine Lee.

To meet the needs of this mass influx of workers, the federal government rapidly built housing—lots of it:

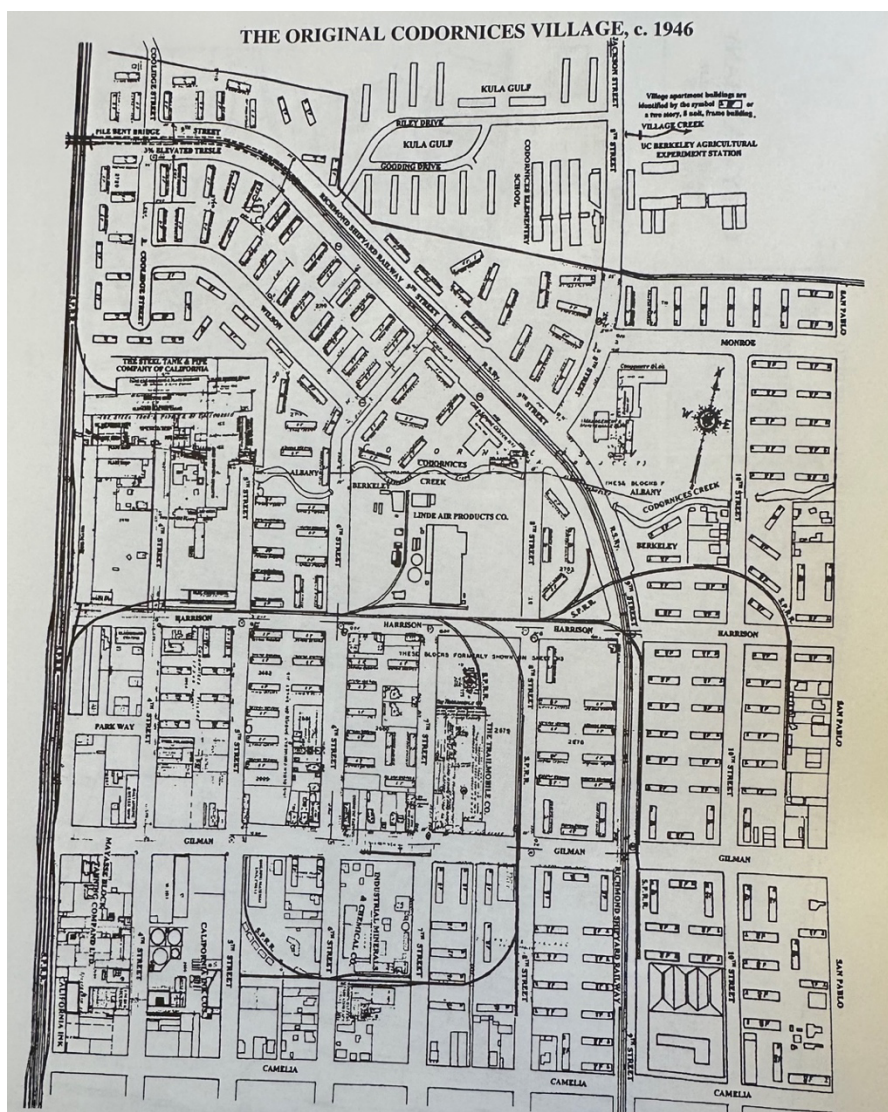
In all, more than 30,000 public housing units, holding an estimated 90,000 war workers and their family members were built in the East Bay. Among them was the 1,900-unit Codornices Village.

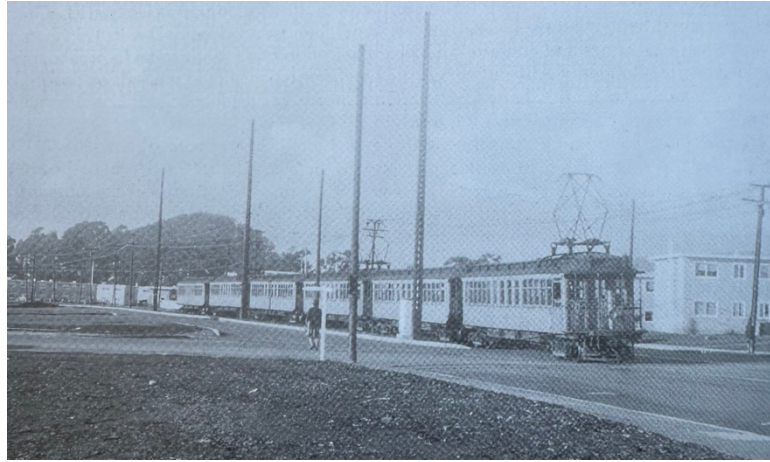
The projects, especially Codornices, ran into immediate opposition from whites. The Albany City Council warned of “an undesirable element” (i.e. blacks) that would bring integration to city schools and make Albany “like South Berkeley.” The city of Berkeley, not yet a liberal bastion, was also opposed, as was UC Berkeley, which owned 40 percent of the project’s land.

But the federal government overruled local objections and opened Codornices in 1943. Like nearly all wartime Bay Area public housing projects, it was [initially] racially segregated—white tenants ended up in the more desirable units on San Pablo Avenue, while blacks were shunted to the west side of the project, next to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks. (San Francisco Chronicle, 2018)

Codornices Village occupied most of the area bounded by the north side of Camelia Street all the way to Buchanan Avenue from San Pablo Avenue to the railroad tracks.

Map of Codornices Village. Portions from the Sanborn Insurance Company Maps, dated up to 1947, assembled and supplemented by Warren F. Lee, November 1997.





The Richmond Shipyard Railway passed through Codornices Village on Ninth Street. Image source: Oakland History Room. January 1943

In addition to housing needs, workers up and down the East Bay needed a way to get to the shipyards. By January of 1943, the United States Maritime Commission had built the Richmond Shipyard Railway. Note its path in the map. It ran 90 trains a day, from the Emeryville-Oakland border to the shipyards.

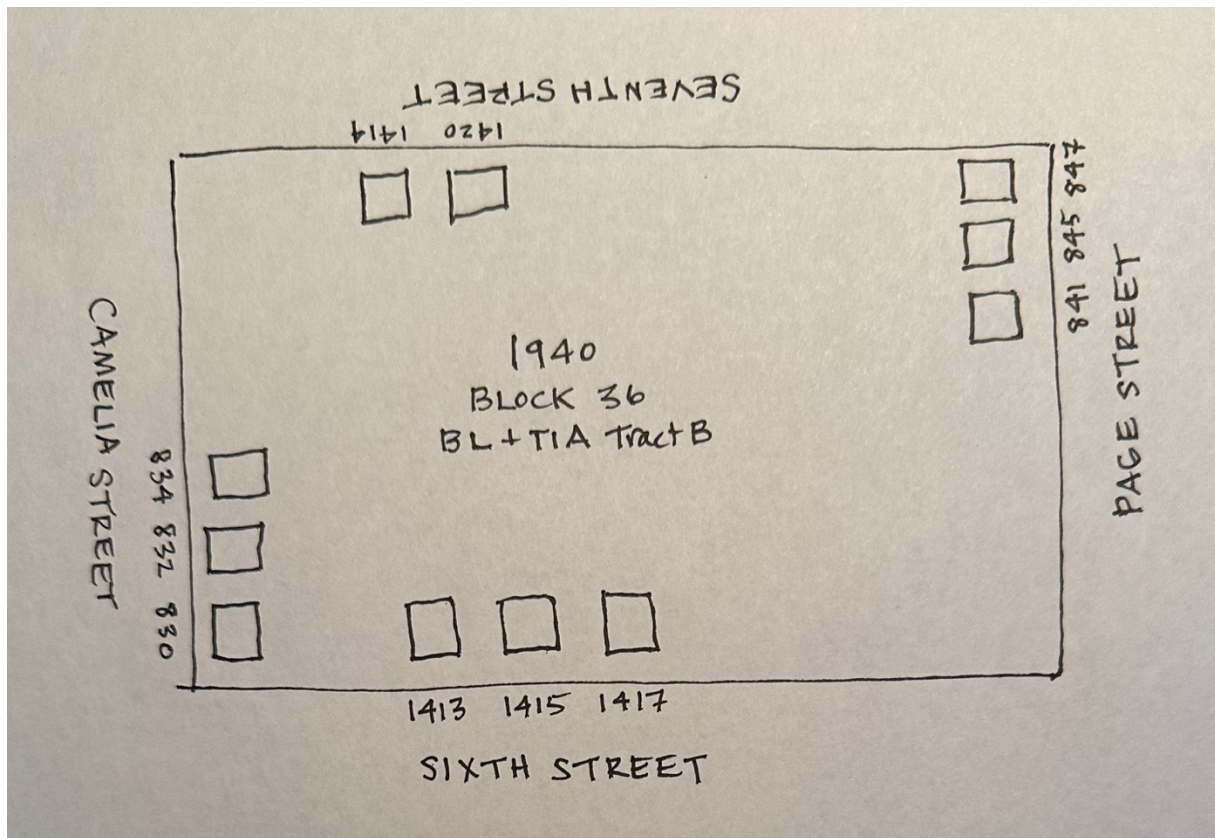
The wartime years must have been an extraordinary time in the Bay Area. As the economy came roaring back, suddenly people had work and money. At the same time, there was an ongoing shortage of housing, even with all the new wartime housing units built:

Some found housing in trailer parks, many slept in their cars and trucks, or even outdoors under cardboard and tarps, and others shared beds in revolving shifts. Businesses were open 24 hours a day so workers could do their shopping. Factories offered round the clock childcare. (Gordon, 2017)

The overall scarcity of resources and the active threat to lives and liberty posed by a world war likely skewed the sense of prosperity during this time. But make no mistake—a healthy economy was back and would continue until the mid-1960s.

There are two additional houses on Block 36 in 1940: the first two houses on the Seventh Street side of the block. In addition, two of the longtime houses on the block, 1413 Sixth and 832 Camelia, are now duplexes. Partway through the decade additional houses will be built, including, 837 Page Street—the house that disappeared in the 1920s was finally replaced.

True to the times, there is virtually no unemployment among the employment-aged people on Block 36.



1413 Sixth is now a duplex. The upstairs was occupied by widowed Marguerita Rosano (age 72) and divorced and widowed youngest daughter Christine (age 45). Christine worked as an inspector at a calculator company, earning \$1,000 annually.



Downstairs lived renters Jan Jankowski, aka John Koski (age 67), born in Poland, and his wife, Vera Salamota (age 56), born in Russia. John was a night watchman at the tannery, earning \$1,200 annually. The Koskis paid the Rosanos \$16 in monthly rent.

(California, U.S. Federal Naturalization Records, 1938)

1415 Sixth was rented out by the Rosanos to Andrew McKenzie (age 39) and his wife, Irene Myrtle Isaacs (age 40). Andrew was born in Scotland. The Standard Oil Company (now Chevron)

facility in Richmond, California, increased its number of employees due to greater demands for gasoline and oil due to war efforts. Andrew worked as a solderer at the Standard Oil Company, earning \$1,600 annually. His wife, Irene Myrtle, was born in San Francisco, one of three daughters of a barber. Andrew most likely took the Richmond Shipyard Railway to work each day.

1417 Sixth was still owned and lived in by John W. Brown (age 62). He lived there with daughter Opal Burke (age 35), now divorced, and her two sons: Richard (age 10) and Louis (age 9). Opal, who had an eighth-grade education, worked as a bookkeeper at a company that sold service station equipment. She earned \$1,200 annually. Her father, John, worked part time as a laborer and earned \$250 annually. Youngest daughter Alice Minerva was married to an insurance broker and was now living on Curtis Street in Berkeley.

837 Page had a new house built on the property in 1944–45 by contractor J. M. Walker. I am breaking my practice of including only those descriptions of houses and inhabitants that were there at the decade, because the timing of the subsequent inhabitants of 837 Page is important to the Block 36 story of the decade of the 1940s. The Fukuchi family purchased the house in 1946. They had recently been released from a three-year incarceration in a Japanese internment camp.

In 1940, the Fukuchi family lived in Martinez, California—Noboro Fukuchi (age 37), his wife, Chiyoko Aso (age 29), and their two children: Takai (age 9) and Kenji (age 6). Noboro was born in Japan and immigrated to the United States in 1919, right after World War I, while immigrants from Japan were still allowed entrance to the United States. Wife Chiyoko (aka Chiyo) was born in Colusa, California, to parents who had immigrated in 1902. Chiyo's father ran a laundry in Hayward, California. According to an interview in 2016 with then-adult son Takai, Noboro and Chiyo owned grocery stores that served Japanese American families, first in Danville and then in Martinez, California:

This enterprising young businessman [Noboro] sold staples for the kitchen such as rice, soy sauce, and tea to the Japanese families in the San Ramon Valley. He owned a 1930s pickup truck, and [son, Takai] recalled that his dad periodically invited him to drive through the recently constructed Caldecott Tunnel to the Oakland Produce Market to purchase wholesale vegetables for resale to his clients. His father even delivered the food stuffs to the scattered San Ramon Valley Japanese households.

...one room in the building housing the Japanese store was used for the Japanese School created by parents anxious to convey the language and culture of their original home to their children. Immigrants from Wakayama Prefecture on Honshu Island opened schools in Danville [in the backroom of the store that the Fukuchi family first operated] and Martinez [connected to the store that the Fukuchi family now operated there].... Each school taught the Japanese language on the weekends. So, a school week actually became seven days long for Japanese children. (Warren, 2016)

The Fukuchi family was incarcerated first at the Turlock Assembly Center, along with about 4,000 others, in April 1942.

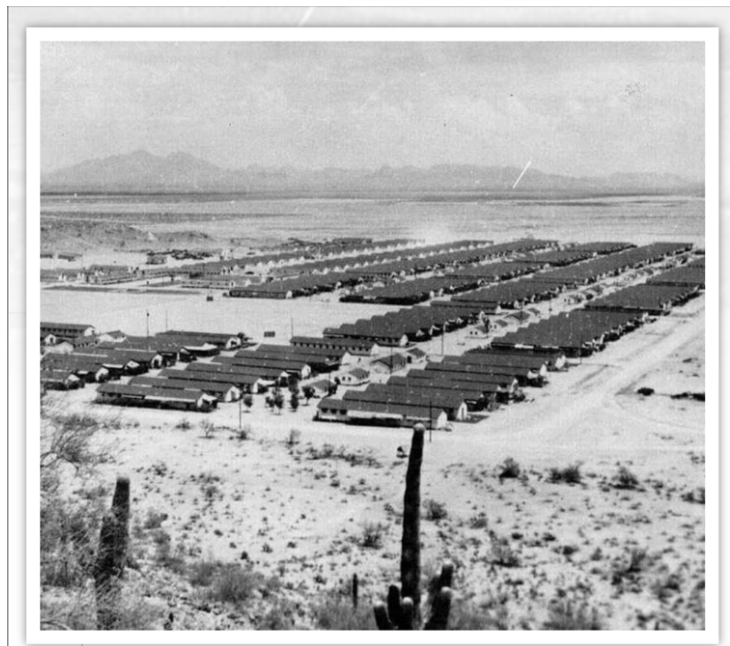
Several months later, the detainees at the Turlock Assembly Center were loaded onto trains with all the shades pulled down and not told where they were going (Densho Encyclopedia website, undated). They were brought to the Gila River Internment Camp located in the Arizona desert, where they remained, with 16,000 other prisoners, until the end of World War II. The Fukuchi family would resettle on Block 36 in 1946.



Families of Japanese ancestry arrive at Turlock Assembly Center, May 2, 1942. Photo by Dorothea Lange, courtesy Oakland Museum.

The U.S. government referred euphemistically to “assembly centers” and “relocation centers.” However, some officials, including President Roosevelt, referred to them as “concentration camps” in internal memos (Densho Encyclopedia website, undated). Historically, they are most often referred to as “internment camps.”

Note that Chiyo’s parents, along with her brother and his family, were sent to a different internment camp, and Chiyo’s sister and her family were sent to yet another internment camp. After the war, Chiyo’s brother and parents resettled in Denver, Colorado, and her sister resettled in the Los Angeles area. Having lost employment and all property due to their internment, there was often no reason for a family to return to the place where they had previously lived.



Barracks at the Gila River internment camp, 1942. Photo from Frances & Mary Montgomery Collection MS FM MSS 7, Arizona Historical Society.

841 Page was rented to Ernest Drew (age 46) and wife Marie Ray (age 37). They lived there with their two children, Ray (age 16) and Margie (age 12). Ernest fought in World War I. In 1940, he worked as a sugar packer at the sugar refinery in Crockett, California, earning \$1,460 annually. Wife Marie worked part time as a jam packer at the West Berkeley fruit cannery, earning \$120 annually. They rented their house for \$21 per month.

Ernest and Marie came from farming families and represent the farm-to-town movement of younger generations seeking jobs. They met in the town of Oakdale, a farming town in Stanislaus County, in California's Central Valley. Both Ernest's and Marie's parents were among the first settlers of Oakdale, working as farmers and ranchers. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the town of Oakdale advertised in the Midwest and elsewhere to recruit people to purchase land in this emerging farming region. And so Ernest and Marie's parents, too, were enticed to pick up and move, in search of a more prosperous future.

In 1946, Ernest died in a car accident in Petaluma, at the age of 52. He was trapped alive in his car for two hours before being extracted. He died shortly thereafter.

845 Page was rented to Merritt Franklin Hardesty (age 27) and his wife, Bernice (age 22). They lived there with their two children, Myra (age 2) and John (infant). Two more children will be born by 1945. Merritt was a woodworker, working at a nearby factory. He earned \$1,536 annually. The Hardesty's paid \$25 per month to rent their house.

In 1942, Merritt served as one of 2,500 block air wardens in Berkeley, recruited by the Berkeley War Council to serve in case of an air raid. Wardens' names were published in the paper along with instructions for how to prepare windows for blackout, what to do in case of a bombing in Berkeley, etc. Air wardens' jobs included preparing their neighbors for what to do in case of an attack from the air.

Also in 1942, while at work, Merritt and a colleague were "manhandled" in an altercation with picketing members of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) as they attempted to unload a truck (*Berkeley Daily Gazette*, April 22, 1941).

In January 1945, Merritt enlisted in the Navy. He was then a 33-year-old father of three, with a fourth child on the way. The fact that he enlisted, leaving his wife pregnant and with three children. He mustered out in November 1945.

847 Page was rented to Manuel Rodrigues Baeta (age 38) and wife, Alice Catherine Alameda (age 38). They lived there with their 4-year-old son, Manuel. Manuel Sr. worked at the Manasse Block Tannery, earning \$1,245 annually. Both Manuel's and Alice's parents were born in Portugal.

1420 Seventh was owned by Eugene Leroy Lewis (age 42) and his wife, Myrtle Opal Kingsbury (age 40). They lived there with their youngest son, Robert (age 7). Eugene and Myrtle were both

born in Copperopolis, a copper mining town in the California foothills in southwest Calaveras County, near Angels Camp. Eugene worked as an industrial electrician, earning \$2,506 annually, going back and forth to mining country from time to time to augment the family's income.

Copperopolis, like many mining towns, had a boom-and-bust economy, driven by the demand for copper. First established in the 1860s, it supplied copper to the Union Army during the Civil War. Subsequent booms happened around World Wars I and II. Copper, with its ability to conduct electricity, withstand water, and transmit heat, was indispensable for the construction of the tools of war— from guns to tanks to airplanes.

Eugene's parents were both born in California and lived their entire lives in and around mining country, moving to where the active mining was. His father, Frank Lewis, worked as a mining engineer, a copper burner, and a pumpman in Copperopolis. His mother, Etta Lieginger, was a member of a prominent Stockton, California, family.

Eugene Leroy Lewis' parents, Frank Lewis and Marietta Lieginger, family photo, circa 1896.



Eugene was 9 years old when his parents divorced, and he and his younger sister lived with their mother, Etta, and her new husband, Samuel Henry Clothier, a stagecoach driver. What does a stagecoach driver do when stagecoaches become outmoded? Sam became a motorman on an electric streetcar.

Sam and Etta, Eugene, and Eugene's now three younger sisters moved from Calaveras County and remained on the move for the next years. By age 21, Eugene had returned to Copperopolis, worked for a mining company as a truck driver, and married his wife, Myrtle Opal Kingsbury.

Myrtle was born in Oregon and as a teen lived in the small town of Kirkpatrick, in the eastern part of the state, a place filled with "sagebrush, sand, and rattlesnakes." (Kirkpatrick, 2003) She was the only child of her mother, Alice. Alice had four husbands (she was widowed three times and divorced once). She and second husband Asa Kingsbury, with Myrtle in tow, moved around

a fair amount, presumably in search of employment. Intriguingly, Myrtle's mother, Alice, was the postmistress in two different towns where they lived: first, in 1902, in the small town of Hardy, in Mendocino County, California; then later in Tancred, in Yolo county, California. She attended conferences with other postmasters and postmistresses. Her husband, Asa, declared himself a socialist on the 1914 Voter Registration form.

In 1914, at age 15, Myrtle, of 1420 Seventh Street, was the captain of a "ladies'" baseball team in Oregon that was sponsored by a local chapter of one of the many fraternal beneficial societies of the time (a "lodge"). Myrtle played catcher. Her mother played short stop. Half of the women on the team were married, and half were single.



Oregon State Lodge Championship Ladies' Baseball Team, 1914. Myrtle is in the center of the front row. Her mother, Alice, is on the upper left of the back row. *Oregon Sunday Journal*, Portland, September 6, 1914.

Myrtle and her parents ended up in Copperopolis, where her stepfather, Asa Kingsbury, worked as shaft boss in the mine. After attempting to rescue a fellow miner, Asa and the miner became trapped by fire and died, "entombed in the copper mine." (San Luis Obispo Daily Telegram, October, 1 1920)

1414 Seventh was lived in by Walter Lundquist (age 34) and his wife, Mary Klier (age 24). This is the same Mary that was born at 834 Camelia Street and grew up on Block 36. In 1940, Walter and Mary had three children: twins Shirley Ann and Barbara June (age 3) and son Robert (age 2). Walter worked as a printer at Colgate-Palmolive and earned \$1,560 annually.

834 Camelia was still owned by Mary's father, Ignatz Klier (age 64), and his wife, Franziska (Frances, age 62). In 1940, they lived there with three of their seven children: Martin (age 31), Jake (age 29), and Walter (age 27). Ignatz, Sr. was now retired. The three sons, Martin, Jake and Walter, were all lumber men at the lumber mill.

832 Camelia was still owned by the Noble family. Mary Noble (age 47), now a widow, is head of the household of 14 people. She lived there with her 9 of her 10 children: Edward (age 24), Ernest (age 23), Arthur (age 19), Wally (age 16), Milton (age 13), James (age 12), Howard (age 10), John (age 9), and Alice (age 7).

The tenth child, daughter Lorraine (age 21), lived downstairs with her husband, Joseph Dedrick (age 23), and their two children: Ronald (age 4) and Robert (an infant).

In 1940, in the two households, upstairs and down, only oldest son Edward and son-in-law Joseph had full-time work, each earning \$988 annually working at the lumber mill. Mary's sons Ernest and Arthur worked at the fruit cannery for two months, bringing in \$120 annually. Even all together, that was very little income to feed so many mouths. However, over the next couple of years five of Mary's adult sons would enlist in the military, and one would first go to work at the Richmond Shipyards. Of those five sons who went to war, one was wounded and came back early. All returned alive.

830 Camelia was owned in 1940 by the Hernandez family: Aniseto (age 54) and his wife, Rose Catale (age 45). Aniseto (anglicized to Ernest) and Rose were both born in Puerto Rico, and like next-door neighbor John Noble, they had been indentured workers in the sugar cane industry in Hawaii. Their first two children, Merced (age 31) and Alfred (age 24), were both born in Hawaii. They would lead troubled lives as adults. Two younger children were both born in California: Joseph (age 13) and Rosie (age 10).

Aniseto worked as a laborer at the ink factory on Camelia and Third Street, earning \$1,000 annually. Sons Merced and Alfred had both moved out of the family home in the 1930s, living various places, including together in Fremont, but by 1940 they had returned to live at home on 830 Camelia. In 1940, Merced worked at the fertilizer factory and Alfred at the fish cannery. All six family members were living at 830 Camelia in 1940.

On March 13, 1935, the following article appeared in the *Oakland Tribune*:

Arrested as Leader of Ring of Youth-Committed Robberies, Brothers Held in Foundry Robberies.

Berkeley police and Sheriff's deputies today arrested Merced Hernandez, 26, and his brother Alfred, 18, at their home in Decoto (Union City) on charges that they are ringleaders in a gang of six youths responsible for two recent burglaries in Berkeley foundries.

Merced, said by Inspector Frank Waterbury to be the leader and his brother, are both held on \$4,000 bail awaiting trial. Three other youths, all minors, are also held for Juvenile Court authorities in connection with the burglaries. A fourth boy is sought.

The boys are charged with having burglarized the F.P. Simonds foundry at Fourth Street and Bancroft Way of \$1,500 in aluminum castings, and the Wollenius Tile Company of dies valued at \$1,000.

Merced was married and divorced twice during the 1930s.

1950 Berkeley

When World War II ended, the Bay Area experienced the economic instability that followed wartime expansion. This was particularly acute just north of Berkeley, in Richmond, the center of wartime production in the East Bay:

Large numbers of Richmond's war workers were left unemployed or underemployed as the defense contracts ended and the industries closed down.... Although new industries moved in to occupy some of the vacated shipyard structures, unemployment in the City was exacerbated by the loss of its older urban industries that left to take advantage of incentives to build new plants in outlying suburbs. (City of Richmond, undated)

The end of the war also brought uncertainty to the many federally funded housing projects in the Bay Area. Built as temporary housing, much of it was substandard and already required significant maintenance. Who would pay for the upkeep of these housing projects now? Further, the housing had been built rapidly, with little planning, tucked here and there without regard to what additional needs it might generate.

Consider Codornices Village straddling Berkeley and Albany (a significant portion of the Albany piece was owned by the University of California). Recall that it had been built by the federal government against local wishes, in large part over the objection to an “invasion of outsiders,” notably, including those referred to as “Arkies” and “Okies” (derogatory terms for white people from rural Arkansas and Oklahoma), as well as African and Asian Americans. Over time, the population living in Codornices Village, which initially had been segregated, was reorganized, and the result was integration of the Village. By many reports, the Village flourished, particularly after the war ended, when a thoughtful approach to community building was introduced (Moffat, 2021). Despite years of petitioning the cities of Berkeley



Codornices Village scene, early 1950s. Vern Satcher, photographer.

and Albany to take on the Village from federal control, both declined, repeatedly, despite there being a waiting list of over 500 families wanting to live there. So in the mid-1950s, the federal government bulldozed Codornices Village, all except the portion owned by the University of California, which had agreed to take on responsibility for its part to house its married student population (Moffat, 2021).

The situation was even more complicated in Richmond, the city that had taken on the largest federal housing program in the nation (National Park Service, 2007):

The story is wild: the government built tens of thousands of housing units as the city's population nearly quintupled. Then, they tore almost all of them down. (Madrigal, undated)

Many who were living in that temporary war housing were left homeless when it was demolished, an outcome, it turns out, that was in fact intended. The complicated but real refrains of racism and capitalism reigned, as the largely white, pre-war citizenry and land developers of Richmond decried the racial composition of its newcomers, resulting in the City of Richmond working to selectively “right-size” its number of citizens and protect its property values (City of Richmond, 1950; Madrigal, undated; Rothstein, 2017). By reducing the supply of housing, Richmond was able to ultimately reduce the number of people able to live in the community.

In particular, this practice affected African American and Asian American members of the community, who were more reliant on public housing given the growing number of private deed restrictions placed on properties in the Bay Area, forbidding sale of homes to Black and Asian families. Further, the federal government refused to insure bank loans made to African Americans for housing, making standard construction unaffordable for most (Barber, 2018; Rothstein, 2017).

In 1950, Berkeley's population was 113,805 (essentially the same as it is now in 2024), a steep increase over its 1940 population of 85,547. While Berkeley's overall population increased 30 percent between 1940 and 1950, the number of African Americans living in Berkeley increased more than 300 percent (from 3,395 to 13,289) during that same time period. The concentration of wartime manufacturing in the Bay Area provides one explanation for the population growth and change in racial composition of Berkeley. However, there was a related but much broader phenomenon underway that affected urban areas across the north and west of the United States: America's “Great Migration”:

The Great Migration was one of the largest movements of people in United States history. Approximately six million Black people moved from the American South to Northern, Midwestern, and Western states roughly from the 1910s until the 1970s. The driving force behind the mass movement was to escape racial violence, pursue economic and educational opportunities, and obtain freedom from the oppression of Jim Crow. (National Archives, undated)

When the migration began [in 1910], 90 percent of all African-Americans were living in the South. By the time it was over, in the 1970s, 47 percent of all African-Americans were living in the North and West. A rural people had become urban, and a Southern people had spread themselves all over the nation. (Wilkerson, 2016)

In 1950, two houses on Block 36 were lived in by African American families. Wilkerson (2016) described three main corridors through which the Great Migration proceeded. Indeed, the people who moved onto Block 36 followed one of the corridors described by Wilkerson: the stream of people who came to California from Louisiana and Texas.

The downward economic blip that occurred in the East Bay due to the changing post-war realities that negatively impacted housing and employment was just that, a blip. With an unmatched number of government subsidies, the post-war economy took off:

From 1946 to 1964, the United States underwent the most sustained period of economic growth in world history, effectively tripling the average income of Americans. Any white male high-school graduate could reasonably expect to support a family with his paycheck, to own a home, a car, and plenty of other goods, and to send his children to college. Given that only a few years before, Americans had faced a crippling depression in which more than a quarter of adults were unemployed, this middle-class lifestyle seemed miraculous. Up until World War II, the middle class had been a distinct minority in America. Now, thanks to unprecedented government subsidies, millions of veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill to go to college. The quadrupling of university enrollments in a single generation was paralleled by a boom in home construction and home ownership, mainly in vast new suburbs outside of the major cities, again subsidized by government loan guarantees. (Gosse, 2005)

But what did the 1950s look like if you were a person of color and not entitled to government loan guarantees, or if you were restricted from purchasing a home in the many new housing developments? This included African and Asian Americans and Jewish people, as well as those who had worked on the “home front” and did not receive the range of benefits that GIs did.

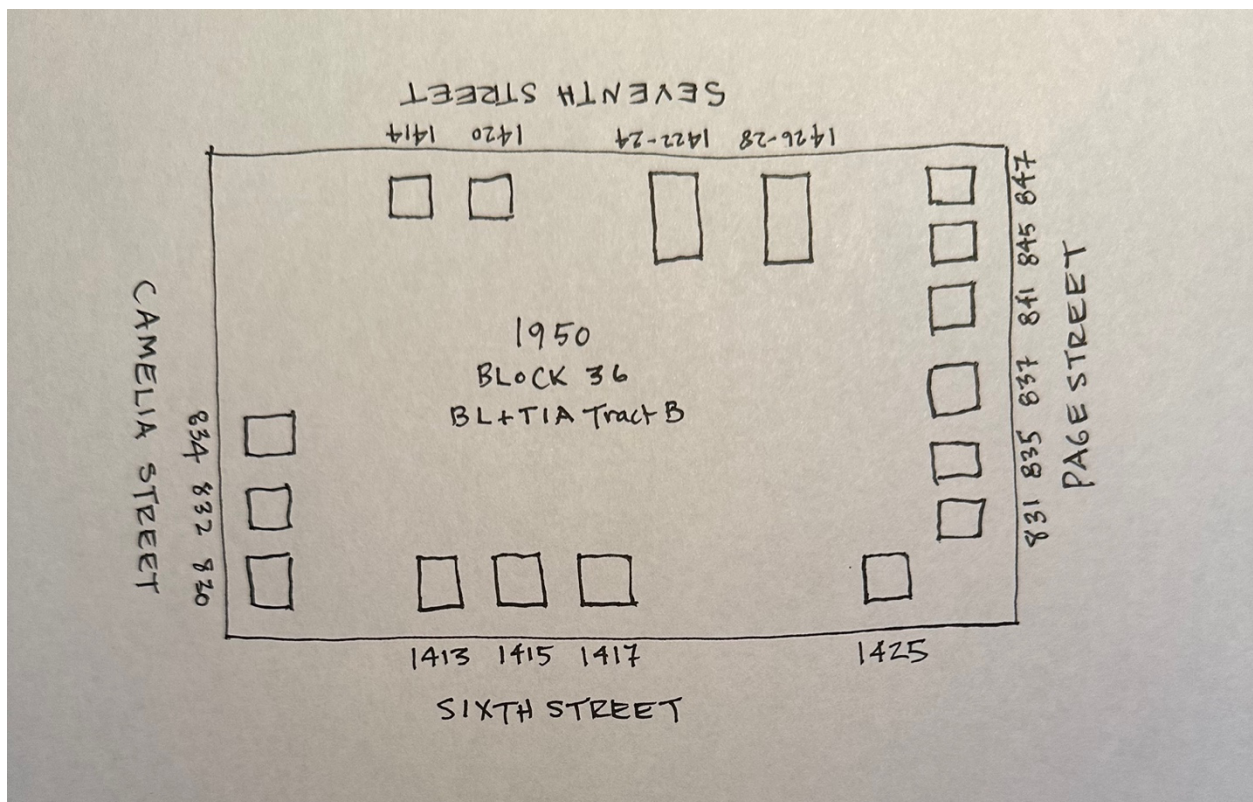
One solution was created in Richmond. Actually, it was located in an unincorporated area just north of the city with virtually no infrastructure (electricity, phone lines, schools, etc.). In 1949, Reverend Guthrie John Williams, a Black minister, and Fred Parr, a Richmond real-estate developer, set out to create what they called a “community for all Americans.” Four hundred single-story homes were developed, priced to not require bank loans, and open for purchase by anyone. They called it Parchester Village. Parr would build the houses if Williams would sell them. Williams got together fellow pastors, and they reached out to the community, many of whom, especially those otherwise excluded from purchase, were hungry to be able to buy a home:

Parchester was a deliberately planned community, at first planned as an integrated community. The people who moved in were mostly African American, and they voted and were engaged more than many other parts of the city right from the beginning. Parchester Village was a community of politically astute people, many of them solidly middle class and very active in their community. But the idea proved ahead of its time, and instead of an integrated community, Parchester Village emerged a solidly black—and increasingly black middle-class—community. (Richmond Confidential, undated)

The eldest son of an African American family living on Block 36 bought his first home in Parchester Village.

By 1950, the number of houses on Block 36 was close to what it is now, in 2026. There are six additional houses since 1940. These include two new houses on Seventh Street that were built as duplexes, three new cottages on Page Street, and a new house on Sixth Street. In addition, an existing house was transformed into a duplex.

Most of these new houses were built in the fever to provide more housing during the World War II population explosion that accompanied the wartime manufacturing job boom. Nearly all the new houses were bought by veterans, taking good advantage of the G.I. Bill.



1413 Sixth was still occupied by widow Marguerita Rosano (age 81) and her divorced and widowed daughter, Christine Musso (age 50). But instead of living upstairs where they had lived

for the past 50-plus years, elderly Marguerita and daughter Christine lived downstairs and rented out the upstairs. Christine still worked fulltime. Their renter, Vera Koski (age 64), the same woman who lived in the house in 1940, had moved upstairs. Russian-born Vera's husband died in 1947, so she is now a widow.

1415 Sixth is still owned and rented by the Rosanos to Irene Myrtle McKenzie (age 50). She, too, is a widow. Her husband, Andrew McKenzie, died at age 48 in January of 1950.

1417 Sixth is still owned by widowed John W. Brown. He now lives there alone, along what I think of as "widow's row."

1425 Sixth, the new house on the Sixth Street side of the block, is owned by Alfred E. Olsen (age 37) and wife, Margery Margaret Nuzman (age 36). They live there with their 15-year-old son, Alfred Jr. Alfred Sr. works as a teamster in the trucking terminal warehouse.

Alfred Sr.'s parents were both born in Sweden. His father was a sailor who emigrated to the United States in 1884. Alfred was born in San Francisco in 1912. Alfred Sr.'s wife, Margery, was born in 1913, in a Mormon community in Utah.

Son Alfred Jr. went to Berkeley schools and enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

The house was built in 1943–44 by contractor James L. Rich and purchased by the Olsens in 1944. They paid off their loan on the house in 1946.



Alfred Olsen Jr, age 15.
(Burbank Junior High
School Yearbook, 1950)

831 Page was purchased by Carl Helmer Landin (age 46) as a brand-new house in 1942, for \$3,100. It was built by James L. Rich, the same contractor who built 1425 Sixth Street. Carl lived there with his Swedish-born mother, Ida Johnson (age 72). Carl worked at the sawmill.

835 Page was owned by Jerry John Dunn (age 40) and his wife, Viola Laura Warren (age 48). They lived there with Viola's daughter from a previous marriage, Joan L. Robertson (age 18).

Jerry worked as a foreman for a paint, roofing, and linoleum manufacturer. He was the oldest of eight children, all living in the Bay Area.

James L. Rich, the contractor who built 1425 Sixth and 831 Page, also built 835 Page.

Jerry's younger brother, George, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, was killed in 1945 in the war, at Iwo Jima in Japan.



Jerry's younger brother, George Dunn, was killed in action in World War II. (Family photo, 1939)

837 Page was still owned by Noboru Fukuchi and his wife, Chiyo Aso. Noboru was now working as a gardener; Chiyo worked as a domestic. Living with them were their two sons Takao (age 19) and Kenji (age 16).

Takao (who went by Tak) graduated from Berkeley High School and attended Merritt Business College (which would become Merritt College). In 1952, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, in the Finance Disbursing Section, where he was posted to Japan. When he returned four years later, Tak finished his business training at Armstrong Business College in downtown Berkeley. He married wife Ruth Kozuye Sato, who was studying at UC Berkeley as a microbiologist. They first lived at 1754 Tenth Street in Berkeley. Tak went on to a career with the U.S. Treasury Department. Tak and Ruth had two sons.



Tak Fukuchi (Armstrong College yearbook, 1956) and Ruth Sato. (University of California, Berkeley, yearbook, 1955)

Noboro and Chiyo's son, Kenji went by the name Fred. He was three years younger than brother Tak. Fred graduated from Willard Junior High School and Berkeley High School. He was very involved with the Berkeley YMCA, serving as a counselor at the sleep-away camp at Camp Gualala, near Healdsburg, California. He served as the sports editor of the Berkeley High student newspaper, *The Jacket*. As a teen, he also worked as a grocery clerk at the local Lucky's on San Pablo Avenue. Fred went on to attend college at Washington State University, in Pullman, where he also served as sports editor for the university's daily newspaper. He was president of his fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi, which a few years after his departure would become a professional fraternity known as the Society of Professional Journalists. Fred moved to New York City, where he worked in a series of corporate positions, mostly related to marketing and communications. He married Linda Palmer Townley in 1970, and they had one daughter. In 1988 he became the executive vice president of the public relations division at Par Communications, Ltd.



Fred Fukuchi. Berkeley High School yearbook, 1952

841 Page was owned by David Winn (age 49) and his wife, Mary Delia Jones (age 45). They were the parents of 11 children: 10 boys and 1 girl. All but the last of the children (their daughter) were born in Winnsboro, Louisiana, where David operated a farm, on which all members of the family worked. The family lived in Louisiana, with David's parents, until the opportunity for wartime employment in the Bay Area beckoned, and they moved to California. David and Mary lived on Page Street with the 7 youngest of their 11 children: David Jr. (age 24), Lucius (age 19), Nathaniel (age 17), Nathan Joe (age 15), Venius (age 9), Bobby Ray (age 7), and Mabel Jean (age 3). They bought the Page Street home in 1949.



David Winn Sr. Family photo, circa 1950.

In 1953 they had defaulted on their payments. The outcome is unclear, but it appears that they continued living in the Page Street house. The remaining four offspring—Isaiah (age 31), Willie (age 29), Snyder (age 27), and Fred (age 22)—were married, had families, and lived and worked in Richmond, California.

David Sr. worked as a laborer at the insulation factory—a big change from farming.

In 1950, all five adult Winn sons worked either at the Richmond Shipyards or at the Naval Supply Center on Point Molate, where most had also worked in the 1940s. David Jr. became a pastor. Several others of the family were deacons in their churches. Venius was active in the Civil Rights Movement and became president of the Hayward branch of the NAACP.

Of the 10 boys in the family, seven served in the military sometime between 1940 and 1968: three in World War II, two in Korea, and two in Vietnam. Isaiah was seriously wounded. Among the seven, they served in the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Marines. Imagine, a family that contributed so much to the defense of our country and yet whose members were systematically denied the opportunity to own a home.



Ten of the eleven Winn children standing around their mother, Mary Jones. Family photo, circa 1956.

In 1950, three of the four adult brothers lived in public housing units in Richmond. Isaiah, the oldest, was the first in the family to purchase a home. He and his family were among the first inhabitants of Parchester Village. His downpayment on the modest home was \$99.

845 Page was lived in by the Tichenor family: Gerald (age 39) and his wife, Beverly Doran (age 30), and their two daughters, Edith (age 2) and Geraldine (an infant). A third child would arrive

soon. Gerald (Gerry) grew up in Oregon, one of nine children of Grover Cleveland Tichenor and his wife, Anna Delilah Devlin. His grandfather, Captain William Tichenor, was a famous sea captain and pioneer of the Oregon Territory. A long, rambling interview with Captain Tichenor conducted in 1883 reveals a colorful life, including Gold Rush-era trips sailing back and forth between San Francisco and Oregon Territory, transporting people and cargo. William's father fought in the Civil War, and his two brothers both served in the military as well, with one brother eventually becoming a colonel in the U.S. Air Force in World War II and the Korean War. Gerry worked as a truck driver for Sears, Roebuck and Company. With Gerry coming from a family that served so prominently as military officers, one wonders why he did not enlist during World War II.



Beverly and Gerry Tichenor
with daughters Edith Ann and Geraldine.
Family photo, 1952.

Beverly was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, to Mormon parents. Both her mother and her father were raised in Mormon families with multiple wives. Gerry and Beverly raised their three children in the Mormon faith.

847 Page was lived in by Gregorio Ignacio Flores (age 24) and his German-born wife, Erika Marie Reuschel (age 31). Gregorio ran the packer machine at the sulphur manufacturing plant. Wife Erika worked as an inspector and packer at the battery separator plant. Battery separators maintained the separation between the positive and negative sides of a battery to keep batteries from short-circuiting.

Gregorio was born in San Antonio, Texas, to Mexican-born parents. He enlisted in the U.S. Army on his eighteenth birthday, in May 1944, and served in World War II.

Wife Erika was seven years older than Gregorio. Born in Germany, Erika immigrated with her family to the United States when Erika was age 2, to Illinois, where she grew up. Erika completed high school and married right away. When both of her parents died unexpectedly a year later, 19-year-old Erika was left responsible for her 15-year-old sister. When her sister turned 18 and married, Erika divorced her husband and moved to California. She and Gregorio were married in 1946, soon after Gregorio's release from the Army.

I wonder how they met.

In 1960, Gregorio (who then went by the name Ray) and Erika will have a son, Tony Ramon Flores. Gregorio and Erika will live at 847 Page Street for the rest of their lives.

1428 Seventh was half of a duplex, lived in by the Fry Family. The family included Francis Dooley Fry Jr. (age 33), wife Catherine Mary Trotter (age 37), and daughters Barbara (age 6) and Patricia (age 2). Francis served in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

In 1950, Francis worked as a signalman for the railroad. The family would move to San Lorenzo, California (the suburbs), later in the 1950s.

Francis and Catherine Fry. Family photo, circa 1942



1426 Seventh was the other half of the duplex, shared with the Fry family. It was occupied by the Hermann family. Jack Jerome Hermann (age 39) and wife Alma Sophia Fosvick (age 36) lived there with their children, Linda (age 3) and James (an infant). Jack and Alma were both from Iowa. Jack was a sergeant in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and in 1950 he worked at the Alameda Naval Air Station as a tool and die maker.

The Hermanns moved to El Cerrito, and then, after Jack died, Alma moved to Albany.

Jack and Alma Hermann. Photo from the Joyce M. Steele Collection, 1946.



1424 Seventh was one half of another duplex. It was the home of the Turner family, including Mortimer Darling Turner (age 29), his wife, Laura Mercedes Perez Mendez (age 25), and their two children, Satia (age 4) and Ylla (an infant). A third child would be born very soon. The Turners had moved to Seventh Street after living several years in Codornices Village. Mort was from Greeley, Colorado. Wife Laura was from San Sebastian, Puerto Rico. They met in Puerto Rico.

Mort earned his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, in geological engineering while serving as an ordnance technician in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, he worked with the California Bureau of Mines and Geology, from 1948 to 1954, and earned his master's degree in geological engineering, also from UC Berkeley. In 1954, he, wife Laura, and their children went back to Puerto Rico, where Mort conducted the first state geological survey of Puerto Rico.

Mort was recruited by the National Science Foundation to manage the U.S. Antarctic Research Program in 1959. It was a time

when Antarctic research was just emerging from a period of geographic exploration to its present status of multi-disciplinary and multi-national scientific achievement of importance to understanding global climate change, earth structure, and the evolution of life. (Meier, 2004)

Mort made 27 trips to Antarctica, as well as trips to Europe, Japan, India, Nepal, Chile, and China. He earned his doctorate at the University of Kansas in 1972 (called Kansas University back then) and published more than 70 scientific papers of his findings as a polar geologist, particularly in the areas of glacial and archaeological geology. A mineral, two fossils, and a group of hills in Antarctica are named after him. Though a highly respected scientist, he was best known as the big-picture visionary who guided the scientific investigation of the Antarctic.

I always wonder what shapes the lives of people like Mort, who take off like a rocket, chasing goals, driven by curiosity. Mort had some early influences that attracted my notice. His father, Clarence, was an educator. His grandfather, Wilson, was also an educator, before settling down to become a farmer in Greeley, Colorado, where he had come at age 4 with his family, in a covered wagon. Mort spent much of his childhood in rural Colorado. There are stories of Mort going on long walks searching for interesting rocks, fossils, and Indian artifacts with his grandfather. Mort's family traveled widely across the U.S. in the summers. Each time they stopped for gas, Mort would pick up a new roadmap to read in the car. Mort's collection of more than 7,000 roadmaps, going as far back as the 1920s, is on display at the Smithsonian Museum of History and Technology.

After he retired, Mort continued his involvement in scientific research, broadening it to search for the first humans who came to the Americas, a quest that focused his work in Colorado and sent him to Montana, China, and South America.

1422 Seventh is the other half of the duplex where the Turner family lived. It was occupied by the Bates family: William (age 38), wife Ruth (age 35), and children Lorna Ruth (age 11) and Charles William (age 7). William was from Missoula, Montana. He was a graduate of Michigan College of Mining and Technology (now Michigan Tech), where he earned a B.S. and an M.S. in metallurgical engineering. Most of his professional career was spent working with the Anaconda Company in Chile, where he met and married his wife, Ruth Bown.

The Anaconda Company where William worked was an American mining company that specialized in mining copper. With its first mine established in Montana, the business expanded to Nevada, Mexico, and Chile, where its Chuquicamata mine was one of the largest copper mines in the world.

It appears that William and Ruth moved back to the United States to raise their



Ruth Bown Bates' Passport

children. After giving birth to their first child, they relocated to Nevada, where their second child was born. The family then came to California, first living in Berkeley and then, apparently, San Lorenzo, where the neighboring Fry family had also moved. Both of their children went to Colorado College. When their children left home, William and Ruth moved back to Chile, returning to the U.S. in the early 1970s, when Chile's newly elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, confiscated the copper mine from the Anaconda Company.

Upon William and Ruth's return to the United States, Ruth attended the University of Arizona and received a B.A. in Spanish literature at the age of 70. She died at the age of 100, in 2015.

1420 Seventh was the home of the Bettega family, including Emil Joseph (age 34) and his wife, Elsie Jane McDonald Martin (age 28), and their children: Beverly Ann (age 8), Carole Lynne (age 7), and Michael Stephen (age 1).

Emil was born in Corte Madera, in Marin County, and grew up in nearby Kentfield. He graduated from San Rafael High School. His parents, Stephano and Antonia, were cousins. They immigrated from neighboring towns on Lake Como, in the north of Italy, to San Francisco—Stephano in 1903 and Antonia in 1913. Stephano and Antonia were married in 1914. Emil was the oldest of their

three children, born in 1915. Stephano worked as a masonry contractor. When Emil grew up, he would also work in the construction business, first as a carpenter, then as a contractor, and finally as part-owner of a large commercial construction business in Berkeley.

Elsie was born in San Francisco, raised by her mother, Gertrude Funkhouser, eventually joined by Elsie's stepfather, Robert Martin, a San Francisco police officer. Elsie graduated from Balboa High School and went to work as a waitress at age 18. Emil and Elsie were married a year later, in 1940. Their three children were born in San Francisco, before they moved to 1420 Seventh Street on Block 36.

The Bettegas attended St. Ambrose's Church on Gilman Street, the Catholic church just above San Pablo Avenue, one of two Catholic churches that many in West Berkeley attended. Sometime before 1960, the Bettegas moved to El Cerrito, the town where their three children mostly grew up. Despite the move to El Cerrito, the family never left St. Ambrose's Church in Berkeley and the community there. Emil's memorial service was conducted there in 2002 when he died.

All three of Emil and Elsie's children pursued further education after high school: Beverly at Armstrong Business College in downtown Berkeley; Carole at San Jose State University, after which she became a medical technician and then a realtor; and Michael, first at Menlo College and then at UCLA. Michael also pitched in the Minor Leagues on the Bakersfield Dodgers. He finished his education back at UC Berkeley with an engineering degree.

1414 Seventh was still the home of Walter Lundquist (age 45), his wife, Mary Klier (age 34), and their three children, now ages 13, 13, and 12 years.

834 Camelia was sold by the Klier family in 1949 to the Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church. Ignatz Klier (age 74) and his wife, Frances (age 72), residents of 834 Camelia for nearly three decades, moved in with their youngest son, Walter (age 38), an unmarried cabinet maker in Concord, California.

The church's website reported:

In 1945, Rev. Neal Lee Peterson had a vision that "one day, somewhere in the Codornices Village of Berkeley/Albany area, a Baptist church would be built." Rev. Peterson set out to give birth to his dream, and after much pondering and meditation, he contacted some believer friends to tell them about his vision. On March 31, 1946, Rev. Peterson, and these believers: Sis. Mattie Mae Peterson, Deacon Fred Williams, Bro. Harrison Williams, Sisters Lula Williams, Ethel Mae Posey, Nora Sargent, Morrell Posey, Maxine Lyons and Thelma A.J. Upchurch met in the home of Sister Maxine Lyons, and the vision was fulfilled. The Berkeley Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church was organized. Rev. Peterson acted as Moderator and became the Pastor. Deacon Fred Williams acted as Deacon Board Chairman and Sister Ethel May Posey acted as Church Clerk. Brother Harrison Williams

prayed the organizational prayer. Services were held in Sis. Lyons home for the next three weeks.

During its very early existence, the Sunday Church School and other meetings and activities were held in the homes of various members, who eagerly and generously made them available. Some church services were held in the Upchurch home on Tenth Street in Berkeley. The first revival was held in the home of Deacon Fred (#1) and Sister Lula Williams. Later, most of the church services were held in the Codornices Village Recreation Center until August 6, 1949.

...In 1949, the property at 834 Camelia Street was purchased by the membership as the first permanent location of the Berkeley Mount Zion Church. Services were held there for 12 years. Though the space was small, the members always demonstrated a large measure of love, concern and caring for the work of the church and for each other, attributes that continue to this day.

Records of Incorporation were filed in Sacramento on October 7, 1949. Our current site, here at 1400 Eighth Street, was purchased in October 1954. Ground breaking services for the new building were held on November 12th, and the deacons began construction on November 22. The congregation marched into the newly completed church on January 22, 1961.

Rev. Neal L. Peterson served from the inception, March 31, 1946, to June 6, 1959. Two ministers and five deacons were ordained during this period.

In addition to serving as the location of the church for the 12-year period from 1949 to 1961, the house was home to five adults. According to the 1950 U.S. Federal Census, 834 Camelia was occupied by Reverend Neal Peterson (age 31) and his wife, Mattie Mae Reed (age 28), a nurse at the local hospital. Living there were also three others: Archie D. Manual (age 28), a firelighter for the railroad; his wife, Katherine M. Manual (age 24), who worked as a maid for a private family; and A. D. Davis (age 60), who, like Neal Peterson, was a preacher. The house at 834 Camelia was the second on Block 36 to become an African American household. All five of its residents were born in Louisiana or Texas and were part of the Great Migration to California in the 1940s.

Reverend Neal Lee Peterson was born in 1919, in Longview, Texas, to Alex Peterson (age 48) and Lutishie Boyd (age 22), the fourth of seven children. His father abandoned the family when Neal was four. Mother Lutishie supported those seven children herself for a few years and then remarried and had three more children. Not only was their family situation difficult; being a person of color in Texas in the early twentieth century, or anywhere in the Jim Crow South, was also dangerous.

The year of Neal's birth, 1919, was the year of the "Red Summer" in the United States—and Longview, Texas was one of the Red Summer locations.

The Red Summer was a pattern of white-on-black violence that occurred in 1919 throughout the United States. The post World War I period was marked by a spike in racial violence, much of it directed toward African American veterans returning from Europe, where they were often treated much better there than by white Americans, despite their brave service to the country. The bloodiest incident occurred in Elaine, Arkansas, where it is estimated that over 100 African Americans were killed. The racial violence of the Red Summer erupted in many other Southern locations as well as in the North, most notably in Chicago. The presence of racial hostility in the North was partly a reaction of Northern whites to the large influx of African Americans into Northern cities during the Great Migration, though this hostility did not prevent large numbers of African Americans from heading North. (National Archives, undated)

While the Red Summer was a particularly frightening moment in time, make no mistake: both before and after 1919, Longview, Texas, and the rest of Gregg County saw its share of racial violence. Lynchings, most often of Black men, still occurred in the American South up through 1960 (Lynching in Texas, undated; NAACP, 1919).

It must have been a heady time for this group of somewhat young, Black people establishing a church of their own—most were in their 20s or 30s, all of them relatively new to the area, fresh from the Jim Crow South. They connected with like-minded individuals, established a shared organization, and built a community of believers.

Neal Peterson and “believer” Mattie Mae Reed had both been previously married. Neal was married twice before (both times in his recently departed state of Texas). Mattie Mae’s husband had accompanied her to the Bay Area from Louisiana, but they were no longer a couple. Childless, Neal and Mattie Mae divorced sometime before 1957, when Mattie Mae married another man.

There is much I haven’t been able to figure out about Neal Peterson and his life, and many unanswered questions remain. What we know is that in 1959, the year that Neal Peterson stepped down as pastor of the Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, he was tried and convicted by a jury of the rape of a 15-year-old girl, a member of his congregation, who then became pregnant (*Oakland Tribune*, October 21, 1959; *Pasadena Independent*, October 22, 1959; and many other media sources). The jury recommended a sentence of one to 50 years; the judge sentenced Neal Peterson to 50 years. It is difficult to access prison records from this era, so I can’t verify if and where he served and for how long. I also cannot find evidence of an appealed decision or a dismissal or the timing of a possible parole. However, there is evidence that Neal Peterson moved back to his birthplace, Longview, Texas, married a woman named Geneva Harveena Simpson, a Texan, 16 years his junior, and that the two of them had as many as five children between 1959 and 1973. Neal and Geneva divorced in 1978. Sometime after that, Neal Peterson came back to the Bay Area. He died in Oakland at the age of 71, in 1990.

832 Camelia was a duplex still owned by the Noble family. Upstairs, widowed Mary (age 57) lived with 5 of her 10 children, all now adults. Son Ernest (age 33) was a World War II veteran

and worked at the paper manufacturing factory. Milton (age 26), also a World War II veteran, was a warehouseman, working at the trucking terminal. Both of these sons will marry in the next several years and move out. Howard (21) played baseball in the Minor League, having a fling with the Albuquerque Dukes. In 1950, Howard enlisted in the Army and served for six years. The youngest son, John (age 20), worked as a bottle-feeder at the apple cider factory. The youngest daughter, Alice (age 18), was married but wasn't living with her husband. Perhaps he was serving in the military.

Downstairs, daughter Lorraine (age 30) lived with her husband, Joseph Dedrick (age 33), and their two sons, Ronald (age 13) and Robert (age 10). Joseph worked as a scavenger in the City Garbage Department.

830 Camelia is now owned in 1950 by the next generation of the Hernandez family. Parents Aniseto and Rose both died in the mid-1940s. Eldest son Merced (age 42), now divorced for the third time, is living at 830 Camelia. The house is still owned jointly with his three other siblings. Merced lives there with two boarders: Dave Trujilo (age 41) and wife, Eve (age 42). Merced works at "an open-hearth steel mill," perhaps Pacific Steel Castings at Fourth Street and Camelia. Dave works as a machinist's helper at a diesel engine manufacturing plant.

Brother Alfred (age 34) was in Santa Rita prison in 1950. He had been arrested nine times for various offenses since 1941, including repeated battery of his wife, Annie Rippon Bellamy; breaking the nose of an Albany police officer; and pushing a carriage holding his baby onto the train tracks and then knocking his wife down as she tried to move the carriage. The couple had four children; all of them were put into foster care, one by one.

Then in 1949, Alfred's brother Merced called the police after finding his sister-in-law, Annie, nearly unconscious in her room at 830 Camelia after an extended beating by Alfred.

Since 1950

I moved to 1413 Sixth Street in 1988, several decades after when I left off recounting the history of Block 36. My house had been sold by the Rosano family in 1966 (after 64 years of ownership) and subsequently owned by three different families before my husband and I bought it in 1988. The original two-story redwood barn was still standing in the backyard, rescued by the previous owner, who built a new foundation for the old building before it fell down, but who were shut down by the City of Berkeley before completing the structure for doing construction work without a permit. It became our job to finish the restoration of the barn, which now houses people, not livestock.

When we moved onto the block, three families/owners were still there from 1950. One was Mary Klier, who was born at 834 Camelia Street in 1916 and married and moved 30 yards away to 1414 Seventh Street. Mary maintained an enormous garden and was full of stories about the past. I arranged for one of my children's third-grade classes from Berkeley's Oxford School to

make a field trip to our yard to ask Mary questions about what Berkeley was like when she was little. She told about taking a bucket and going to collect milk from a family in the neighborhood with cows, hauling garbage in a little wagon, and swimming at Berkeley's Bath Beach. Mary also had a candy drawer that was an attraction for the neighborhood children (including my own). A second was the Gregorio Flores family, who lived at the northwest corner of Seventh and Page streets (847 Page). I believe it must have been Gregorio's grandson who rode his bike, endlessly, on the sidewalk, around the block. The third was the Berkeley Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, which still owned Mary Klier's former house at 834 Camelia, though it stood vacant for more than 10 years after we moved onto the block. The house attracted vagrants of all sorts, both human and animal. In 2001 the church sold the battered building to an individual, who transformed the house back into living space, restoring many original features. Today, none of the 1950 inhabitants of Block 36 still reside on the block.

Since 1950, two additional houses have been added to Block 36, both in 1952. One was a very small house built at 1421 Sixth Street. The second was a house that was moved from 749 Cedar Street to the lot at the southwest corner of Camelia and Seventh streets (890 Camelia). This latter house became the home of Marie Rose Pimentel. Recall that Marie Pimentel was the youngest child of Portuguese immigrants Maria de Arrial Santos and Joseph Pimentel (who lived at Sixth and Camelia). She was also the half-sister of Jack Medes (owner of the Berkeley Wicker Works).

What has changed in our neighborhood since we moved in nearly 40 years ago? A lot. On a large scale, some of the noisy and odor-producing nuisances in the neighborhood have diminished. Notably, this includes the odors from Pacific Steel Castings and Cal Ink, both of which were on the disclosure statement when we bought our house. Now that these two industries have departed, it is mostly the dust, noise, and truck traffic from the sand factory that continue to remind us that we live in the industrial part of Berkeley. We are happy for the increasing presence of quiet, low-impact industry in the neighborhood, such as wine-making businesses, breweries, and ceramicists. Noise and particulates from the freeway have likely increased over the past 40 years, while the noise of the trains has remained a constant, though a welcome one, at least to me.

On a smaller scale, the character and overall feel of our neighborhood have also changed since we moved in. In 1988, there were places in the neighborhood where there were no sidewalks, for instance, on Camelia Street below Sixth, giving the neighborhood a little of a sleepy feel. There were also several very small houses, one across the street from Block 36 on Camelia, and another behind the block on Seventh, that have since disappeared to development. The vacant lots that were here and there throughout the neighborhood are mostly all gone, new homes inserted, and many of the older homes have been "fixed up." While there is still an eclectic and somewhat homey feel to the neighborhood, there is definitely an air of increasing prosperity, backed up by the growing number of landscaped front yards.

Finally, just as the composition of neighbors changed from 1900 to 1950, since then the neighborhood demographics have continued to change, shaped first by families with recent

immigrant roots and then by the influx of Black families and of Latino families, and now by the influx of wealthier white people. This shift in the residents of Block 36 contributes to what is perhaps the most notable change: that no longer is West Berkeley a haven for the newly immigrated or people of modest means.

Conclusion

The months I have spent investigating the history of Block 36, figuring out how societal opportunities (or lack thereof) and challenges played out in individual people's daily existences, has provided me with a deep and rich understanding of my place and of its history. What initially seemed like it would be a narrow endeavor of investigating the lives of a handful of people who lived on one block, on one side of one town, has felt oddly expansive. Delving into the history of this one tiny place has shed light on many of the salient issues, ideas, and refrains of the years 1900 through 1950 in Berkeley, in California, and beyond, providing insight more broadly about this period in history. Many of these themes still reverberate in our community today.

In addition to providing a remarkable window into time and place, my deep dive into a narrow slice of history has also caused me to temper my inclination to romanticize the past. Imagining a neighborhood reflecting the cultural richness of people recently arrived from multiple countries is a distinct pleasure. Thinking about a block filled with people speaking different home languages, eating different foods, and shaped by different background experiences conjures a vivid picture. However, recognizing that difference brings the potential for conflict and exclusion is a reminder of a disposition of humanity: that tendency to seek out those who are like us and, under threat, disdain those who are not. This tendency, illustrated by many stories of the time that played out in Berkeley, its West End, and Block 36, is perhaps an underlying factor of some of the biggest problems that people in our country have faced. Whether Block 36 was a place where diversity was appreciated or feared is probably the wrong question, as in the end, I imagine it was both at different times, between different people, and to different extents.

A limitation of my methodology, and the methodology of any historian, is the nature of the evidence sources employed. I worked to make use of a broad range of both primary and secondary sources, including census, birth, marriage, and death records; property records and city permits; reports from local agencies and commissions; maps, yearbooks, and city directories; oral histories and personal accounts; family histories; newspaper articles; historical exhibits; and scholarly articles and books. I am lucky to have had access to some world-class resources, such as UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library. And yet, each of these sources has limitations.

As just one example, my fairly heavy use of local newspapers gave me access to hyperlocal news. It also meant that I was learning about those things that were considered newsworthy at the time. As now, that often included sensationalized issues and news about unfortunate situations, presenting what was likely a skewed view of reality. It is far easier to find multiple pieces about a notorious person or tragic event than anything about an "ordinary" person or

everyday interactions. Which is to say that what I've written is only as good as the sources I used and the subsequent inferences I made.

Perhaps reading this piece will inspire you to investigate your own place on this Earth.

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