Outside Lands

San Francisco History from Western Neighborhoods Project

Volume 14, No. 3 Jul Sep 2018

Outside Lands

History from Western Neighborhoods Project
(Previously issued as SF West History)

July-September 2018: Volume 14, Number 3

EDITOR: Woody LaBounty

CONTRIBUTORS: Julie Alden, Glenn Koch, John Martini, Nicole Meldahl, Dennis O'Rorke, Chelsea Sellin, and Nick Wand.

Board of Directors 2018

Chelsea Sellin, President
Jamie O'Keefe, Vice President
Anisha Gupta, Secretary
David Gallagher, Treasurer
Richard Brandi, David Chang, Nicole Meldahl, Kyrie Whitsett, Arnold Woods

Staff: Woody LaBounty, Dave Lucas

Advisory Board

Cammy Blackstone, Al Harris, Gretchen Hilyard, Brady Lea, Felicity O'Meara, Nate Tico, and Lorri Ungaretti

Western Neighborhoods Project
1617 Balboa Street
San Francisco, CA 94121
Tel: 415/661-1000
Email: woody@outsidelands.org
Website: www.outsidelands.org
facebook.com/outsidelands
twitter.com/outsidelandz
instagram.com/westernneighborhoods/

Cover:
Unical 76 gas station and Pontiac dealership on southeast corner of 16th Avenue and Irving Street, 1920s. (wnp4.1604, courtesy of a private collector.)

© 2018 Western Neighborhoods Project. All rights reserved.

Inside

1 Inside the Outside Lands

2 Where in West S.F.?

3 OpenSFHistory Highlight
John Martini tracks the changes of the Ocean Beach Pavilion from 1885 to 1972

6 Slot Car Racing at the Beach
by Nick Wand

8 Charlotte Estes' Missing Sundial
by Nicole Meldahl

11 Goodbye to Goldsworthy Gas Station
by Woody LaBounty

13 Historical Happenings
The WNP Event Calendar

14 The Last Word

In case you just did a double take…no, your eyes do not deceive you. This edition of "Inside the Outside Lands" does NOT come to you from the quill of our venerable Executive Director, **Woody LaBounty.** We decided to shake things up a bit with a message from the Board President (that's me). I have a big hat to fill, so let's give this thing a go…

Events Past and Future

A great time was had by all who came by to celebrate our 19th birthday at the Richmond District's classic watering hole, The Plough and the Stars. There was beer and balloons, cupcakes and cheer, and most importantly, a chance to hang out with the people we love, talking about the organization we love. We even raised a little money to help us as we continue to outfit our Balboa Street "home for history." Nothing gets us excited like a new vacuum! Thank you to everyone who showed up. We're already plotting how to ring in the big 2-0 next year.

As for future events, the OpenSFHistory Top Ten of the Month is back! Yes, it's true, we haven't exactly held one of these events each month. But "Top Ten of Every Few Months" doesn't exactly roll off the tongue. If you attended the last one, you know this is a quick and fun slide show of historical San Francisco images we have scanned in the past month. Accompanied by colorful commentary, and this time even more so, because **Nicole Meldahl** will be joining **David Gallagher** and Woody, it's happening at 1617 Balboa Street on July 14 (Saturday) at 11:00 a.m.

Also in July, come to Balboa Street for "Vanished Golden Gate Park." Woody will chat with Golden Gate Park historian **Christopher Pollock** about the park's vanished landmarks, structures, and oddities. Did you know the park used to contain a casino? And kangaroos?! Historical photos, maps, and postcards will be shown as well. It's happening on July 26 (Thursday) at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are $10 for these events. More information is on page 13, including how to reserve your seat.

Personally, I like events where we can highlight how other people are putting our OpenSFHistory photos to some really interesting and creative uses. Back in May, **Alex Snyder** and **L. J. Moore** gave a talk about how our images helped them to digitally reconstruct the old Odd Fellows Cemetery on the western slope of Lone Mountain. This in turn helped them to identify the remains of a young girl discovered a few years ago. And in June, WNP board member **Anisha Gupta** interviewed **Chris Arvin** about his website, *Where the Streetcars Used to Go.* Using our photos, Chris created an interactive historic streetcar map, exploring San Francisco streetcar routes past and present (http://sfstreetcars.com). It's fascinating to see how people take our images and remix them to create something completely new. I hope we see more of this in future.

OpenSFHistory Update

Over at our OpenSFHistory site, we're up to 31,400 images online at the time I'm writing this. And in case you've missed them, we've also had some great online articles lately which exemplify one of the things we do best: connecting the past with the personal. Woody took a closer look at the corner of Eddy and Jones Streets, orienting his grandmother's history with the changing faces of that intersection. Nicole provided a new chapter in our ongoing series, *The San Franciscans,* with the tale of Lucky Baldwin (owner of the Baldwin Hotel), and how his story ended up colliding with her own origins.

For myself, just in browsing some of the site's recent uploads, I found a photo of California Street near Montgomery Street, taken about six months after the 1906 earthquake and fire.

continued on page 12

View northeast from California Street near Montgomery Street, 1906. In the distance, the Appraisers Building, ruins of Cowell Building, and Brown & Powers, Co. at 418 Sansome Street. (WNP Collection, wnp26.958)

Where in West S.F.?

The mystery photo from last issue received some interesting (if ultimately incorrect) guesses.

Dignitary at a microphone, children dressed in royal splendor, all standing on a baseball infield—maybe this had something to do with King Norman from the old children's television show and toy stores? Or could it be a scene from the visit to the city by King Frederick IX and Queen Ingrid of Denmark, which took place in October 1960? Alas, no.

Patty Shanahan had it right: "The dignitary at the microphone is Mayor George Christopher. It is approximately 1956. He is at McCoppin Square at 22nd Avenue between Santiago and Taraval Streets.

"He is addressing the Queen of May Day Festival and her entourage. She will soon be crowned, probably by the mayor, as 'Queen of the May.' Young dancers from local dance schools danced by weaving over and under each other with ribbons around maypoles.

"I attended a May Day Festival at McCoppin Square and watched my neighbor dance around the maypole. It was magical and beautiful event for this girl from the Parkside! I am a new member of Western Neighborhoods Project and am delighted to be playing 'Where in West S.F.?'"

We're delighted to have you, Patty, and well done. In addition to other large May Day events in Golden Gate Park and other locations around the city, the Parkside District Improvement Club hosted a pageant with neighborhood children from the 1930s to the 1970s, drawing in state and local officials to help with the festivities (and take a publicity photo or two.)

Mayor Christopher at McCoppin Square, about to introduce the Parkside May Queen in 1959.

Other correct guessers included Julie Alden and Margie Whitnah. This one was kind of hard, but entertaining.

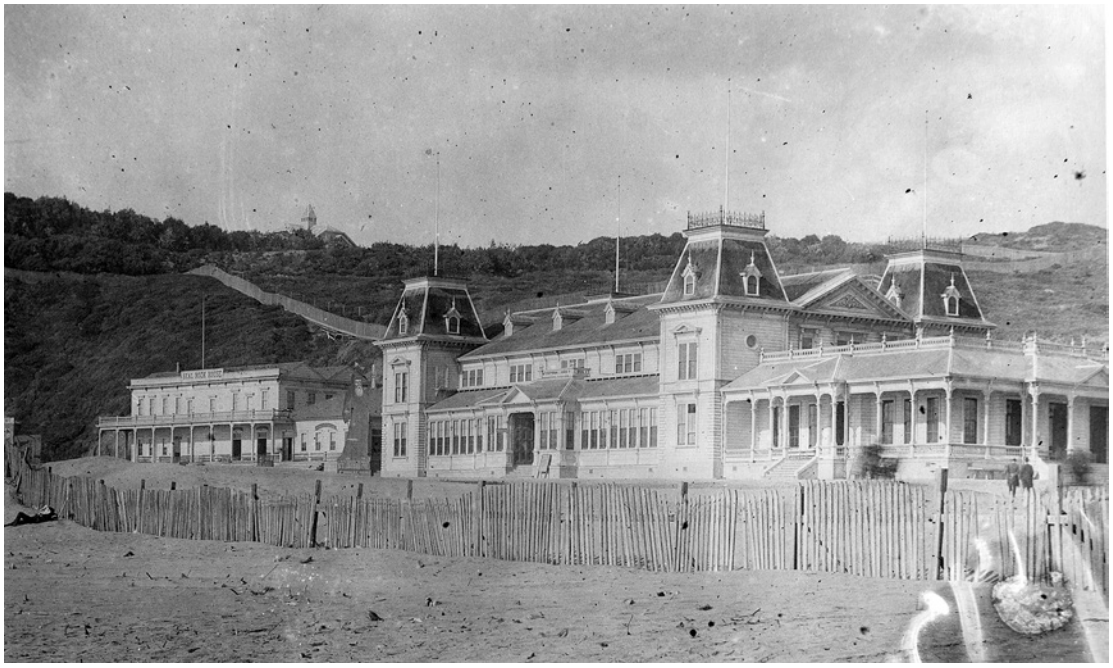
All right, time to try again! What can you tell us about the image below? Email woody@outsidelands.org, or use the Western Neighborhoods Project contact information on the inside cover.

Familiar view? Where are we? What is that small structure for and why are there vases lined up above? Tell us what you know…or guess!

Ocean Beach Pavilion

by John Martini

WNP member John Martini is a retired National Park Service ranger helping us process our OpenSFHistory collection of historical San Francisco images. Visit opensfhistory.org to learn more and see thousands more photos.



Seal Rock House and Ocean Beach Pavilion with Sutro Heights and conservatory above, circa 1886. (WNP Collection, wnp4.0962)

It's amazing the Ocean Beach Pavilion lasted as long as it did.

Originally built in 1884 as a seaside event hall, the grande dame of Great Highway survived three fires, at least four major face-lifts, and innumerable interior remodelings and name changes. It actually lasted 88 years, finally disappearing in 1972 during the wholesale clear-cutting of Playland at the Beach. When it was finally demolished, the Pavilion bore no resemblance to the plush Victorian destination of its youth.

To understand why it was built, we have to remember that Ocean Beach was once a long ways from downtown San Francisco, and the attractions of the Cliff House and Seal Rocks were the near-exclusive domain of the upper classes and their carriages. The only public transportation was an omnibus line (i.e., stagecoaches) that ran out the old Point Lobos Toll Road, but its $1 fare was beyond the reach of most working class folks.

In December 1883, though, the new Park & Ocean Railroad began service to the beach from Stanyan and Haight Streets at the remarkably low fare of 20¢ round trip. Reportedly, the steam line carried over 10,000 passengers on its first day of operation.

Aside from the Cliff House, the only real destination for the arriving crowds was the old Seal Rock House (lately called the Long Branch), which dated back to 1858. To handle the throngs of visitors being disgorged from the trains, the wholesale liquor entrepreneur A. P. Hotaling constructed a lavish "Ocean Beach Pavilion" at the end of the line in early 1884. The two-story, turreted structure stood immediately adjacent to the old Seal Rock House, occupying the northeast corner of today's Balboa Street and Great Highway.

The Pavilion was an impressive edifice. Newspaper reports stated it could accommodate 2,000 guests at a time in its main hall, which measured 170'x110'. The room doubled as a dancing hall featuring "the best floor ever laid in the State." A stage was located at the north end for band concerts and oratory presentations. Balconies surrounded the great room, from which patrons could look down on the proceedings on the main floor. Elsewhere, the interior included private drawing rooms for small gatherings, telephone connections to downtown, and "gas and water in all parts of the edifice."

The Pavilion featured turrets at its four corners, with Mansard-type roof lines topped with flagpoles. Telescopes in the towers provided patrons with views of the Pacific Ocean, Seal Rocks, and ships entering and leaving the Golden Gate. Attached to the south end was an expansive restaurant and bar featuring fine wines and liquors sold by, not surprisingly, the Pavilion's owner, Mr. A. P. Hotaling.

What was the Pavilion designed for? Advertisements of the time touted it as the perfect venue for school and club outings, lodge activities, society meetings, family gatherings, and luncheon and picnic parties. The lessee of the new Pavilion was Nicholas Hochguertel, who had been managing the adjacent Seal Rock House/Long Branch since 1873, but which he now re-christened the "Seal Rock Hotel." Hochguertel managed the two facilities as a joint operation, featuring dancing and parties at the Pavilion and overnight accommodations—and yet another bar—at the Hotel.

By the late 1890s the Pavilion and Hotel had become the haunt of what the *San Francisco Call* described as "dancing parties frequented by people of a certain class," which was surely a euphemism for disreputable goings-on, at least by Victorian standards. The complex was also being used as a training ground for boxers due to its location adjacent to Ocean Beach where they could do their "road work" by

jogging along the wet sand. The public would come and watch the boxers work out and put on sparring matches, possibly in the great room within the Pavilion. The best-known pugilist to train there was Jack Johnson, the first African-American heavyweight champ, whose entourage stayed at the Hotel in 1910 (see back page).

In 1898, the Pavilion and bar nearly burned down as the result of an arson fire. Luckily, a night watchman spotted the fire under the south porch and was able to alert residents in the Seal Rock Hotel in time to evacuate. The nearest fire station was too far away to help, so the self-reliant residents formed a bucket brigade and grabbed a garden hose to put out the fire.

The Pavilion's exterior didn't change much over the first thirty years, but another fire in June 1914 severely damaged the western facade and the northwest cupola. The damage was severe enough that the tower top was removed. At the same time, two other cupolas were taken down, likely as a cosmetic gesture to update the aging roadhouse. (For some unrecorded reason, the northeast tower remained in place through the late 1920s.)

Over the next sixty years, the Pavilion would go through cycles of garrulous activity and cheerless doldrums, hosting a parade of tenants that included several nightclubs, a chicken shack, a rental hall for parties and conventions, a slot car racing track, and a rock concert hall before ending as a performing arts theater. Each of these uses would result in alterations to the building's exterior, sometimes to modernize its appearance but frequently to repair (or obscure) the constant weathering effects of ocean winds and spray. Sometime around 1915, the wing housing the restaurant and bar on the south side of the pavilion was demolished.

Drastic alterations started in 1927, when "Hawai'Land" (sic), a Polynesian-themed nightclub, moved in. To upgrade the facade, the owners removed the last surviving cupola and much of the Victorian trim, and installed elaborate electric lights facing Great Highway. "Topsy's Roost" soon took its place, a nightclub/chicken shack with the most politically incorrect decor imaginable. In 1946, the entire facade was slathered with stucco when the building was transformed into the Edgewater Night Club, which over the next twenty years morphed into Great Barnum's and the Surf Club. Each new club further modified the exterior.

In 1965, the building was converted into a slot car racing center, with racetracks of varying length (and rental costs) installed in the central ballroom. A giant west-facing sign was installed reading MODELCAR RACEWAYS. The craze was short-lived, though, and the raceway closed in 1968.

Following the demise of the race cars, the Pavilion stood vacant for a year, then re-emerged as a rock concert and dance palace. The first tenant was Chet Helm's famous "Family Dog on the Great Highway," which used the motto "Magic at the edge of the western world." Chet went out of the concert business in 1970, but the music continued, first under the name "Poor Richard's," then "Friends and

Top to bottom:
Seal Rock House and Ocean Beach Pavilion viewed from near the Cliff House, circa 1890 (wnp4.0801); the Pavilion remade as "Hawai'Land" in 1928 (wnp26.872), and then as "Topsy's Roost" in 1935 (wnp4.1019).

Top to bottom:
View south along Ocean Beach with Surf Club and Skateland on left, circa 1964 (wnp25.0145); Front of the Family Dog on the Great Highway, circa 1970 (Dennis O'Rorke photograph); Interior of the Family Dog, circa 1970 (John Martini photo).

Relations Hall," and finally, "Friends and Relations Theater." This last group used the hall for the rock opera *Tommy,* the play *Eve and Adam,* and for musical productions.

The last tenant of the Friends and Relations Theater was the Blue Bear Waltzes school of music which offered live concert performances in the summer of 1972. During its occupancy, at least one more fire broke out.

The building survived the initial scrapping of Playland in September-October 1972, but the reprieve was only for a few weeks. Although the exact demolition date is unknown, the building was gone by the end of the year.

Today, the former site is an open space parcel at the foot of Sutro Heights, jointly administered by the National Park Service and the City of San Francisco.

Following are the documented uses, tenants, and names the old Pavilion went by, along with confirmed dates of occupancy:

- Ocean Beach Pavilion, opening on June 14-15, 1884
- Jack Johnson training camp, 1910
- Beach Pavilion, beer and dance hall, 1914
- Baghdad, 1921
- Sahara, 1925
- Hawai'Land, 1927
- Topsy's Roost, 1929
- Edgewater Ballroom, 1946
- Great Barnum's at the Beach, 1952
- Surf Club, 1954
- Modelcar Raceways, 1965-1968
- Family Dog on the Great Highway, 1969-1970
- Poor Richard's, 1970-1971
- Friends and Relations Hall, 1971-1972
- Blue Bear Waltzes, 1972

(Note: This list is begging to be added to!)

Demolition of the Ocean Beach Pavilion building in 1972. (Dennis O'Rorke photograph).

Slot Car Racing at the Beach

© Nick Wand
Excerpted from a full-length photo illustrated memoir of growing up in San Francisco

In the mid-1960s an escape from my grammar school tedium was building Revell model cars or airplanes made by Monogram or Hawk. In addition, to satisfy my curiosity, I read *Car Craft, Field and Stream, Hot Rod,* and *Popular Mechanics,* windows onto the smorgasbord of American possibility.

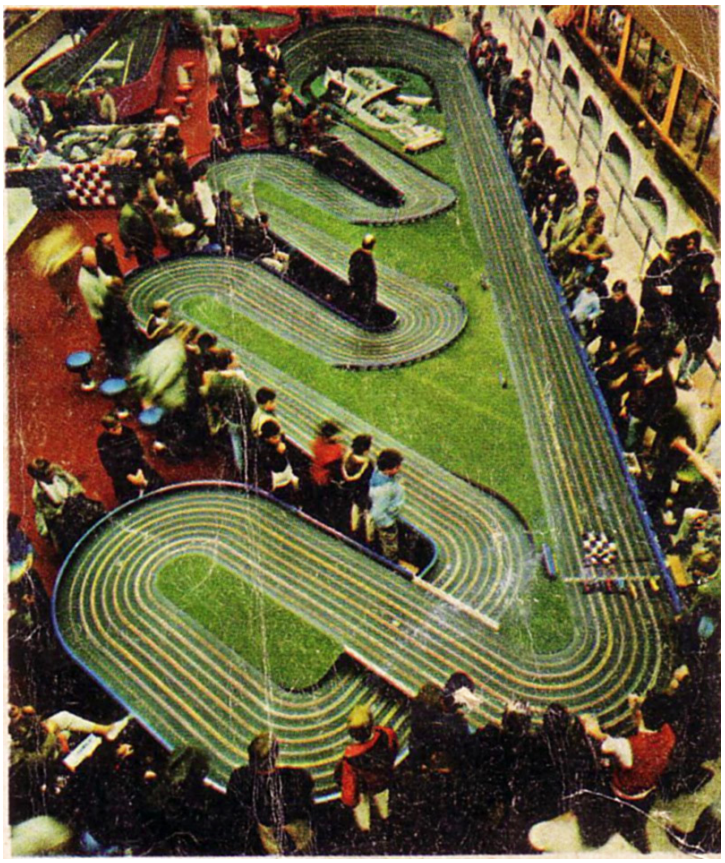
The magazines I read at the drugstore, but rarely bought, offered different ways of life to a kid to sample and dabble in, and maybe dedicate part or all of your life to pursuing. You could be nourished by and swallowed up in these different pastimes as you made your way into American adulthood, which required you to perfect some kind of hobby or dedicated distraction within the promised overall ease of life to come.

In the summer of 1966, slot cars took hold of our imagination very quickly. My friends and I rode the cable car and the 38 Geary bus all the way across town to the new model cars raceway at Playland at the Beach. At our end of the City it would be sunny and in the low 60s. Going toward the beach, five miles away around the endless numbered avenues, the sky would go gray. We got off the bus at Playland in cold wind and fog, then walked along the last sidewalk on the edge of North America. Stands sold messy salty oozing Pronto Pup hot dogs and Bullpup enchiladas. Dessert was a creamy *Frosty* pumped out of a machine with swirls of chocolate and vanilla, or a brick of pink popcorn. The smell of driftwood fires and seaweed blew across the Great Highway and mixed in our clothes with that of burning spun sugar from the cotton candy machines at Playland.

A couple of blocks from the bus stop, we reached the mustard-yellow slot car racetrack building with its colorful medieval banners snapping in the wind. My mother, a self-employed interior decorator, had chosen the colors for the building and designed their logo and flags. They hired her after she had done the colors for a house in Belvedere owned by George Whitney, the owner of Playland. I thought they should let me race my car for free because of that, but I never had the nerve to ask.

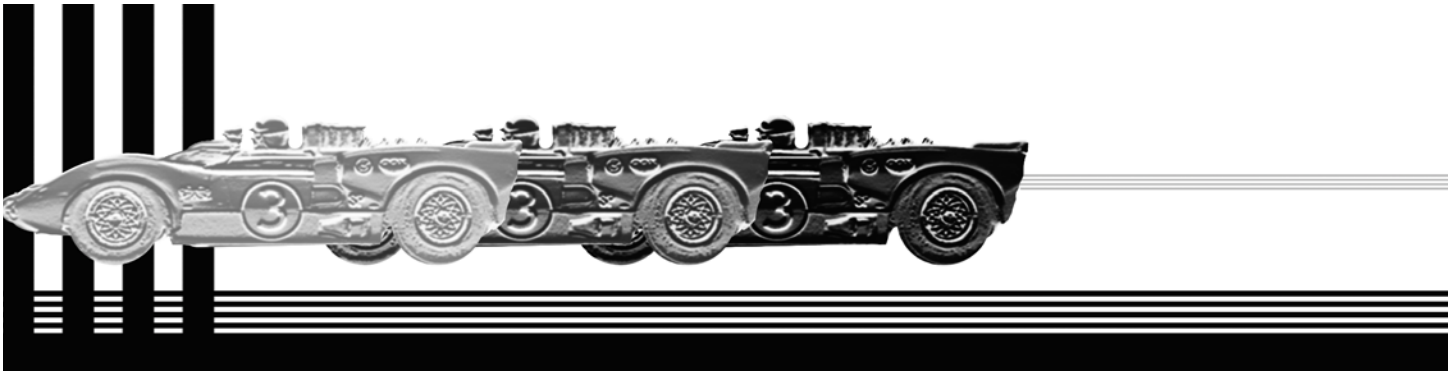
In the slot car building the smell of warming plastic, electricity, and soldering irons mixed with a constant background whine of electric motors accelerating. Loudspeakers played KFRC along with ads for Gensler Lee diamond engagement rings or clothing from Macy's between the three-minute songs, which always had a beginning, middle, and end. Donovan's *Mellow Yellow* was popular the month we first entered the slot car temple. Some little kid walked around repeating the lyrics and was laughed at by an older guy. Because we were still boys, we thought it was important to call each other "Man."

You paid escalating amounts for time on the smallest black track, then the larger red, orange, yellow, or the biggest most expensive blue track, which was where the real pros raced their cars. If you didn't get there early enough, you were left with only the yellow or orange track with their lower banks and smaller size. The slot cars had electric motors powered by flat pickup brushes on either side of a swiveling plastic wedge under the front of the car that followed a slot running down the middle of your lane. By squeezing the trigger on a rented blue pistol-grip controller, you applied more power to the copper strips on your lane and the faster your car traveled.



Postcard image of slot car track inside the old Ocean Beach Pavilion building at Balboa Street and the Great Highway, 1970s.

The cars were either store-bought, like ours, or were exotic things custom-made by clever fellows with great skills who were older and had money. These were the kind of guys who always seemed to excel at doing things better, going one step beyond, Yankee tinkerers who knew electronics and wore hats with magnifying glasses hanging from the bill while they worked on their cars. They either had the long hair of proto-Hippies, or were the opposite, exceedingly neat and organized, the kind of guy who wore aftershave and striped button-down businessman shirts. The draft and Vietnam threatened them all.



The pros soldered their slot car frames together from fine brass rods. The car bodies were vacuum-formed clear plastic. It took great skill to apply the racing stripe or number decals backwards on the inside and then spray colors on top of that. They had their own expensive Cox custom-controllers that fit in your hand like a pair of brass knuckles and were either clear sea green or blue plastic with a thumb plunger for more control. Their cars went really fast, were low-slung, and had special traction goop applied to the tires, which was against the rules. The drag strip track up against a wall was their domain.

The pros guarded their multiple cars, equipment and spare parts in elegant suitcase-sized hand-made wooden toolboxes. These were inevitably covered with car accessory decals like the Moon Racing Equipment eyeballs, the Headman Headers logo, or the various car racing parts companies that were located around Southern California, having sprung up from the excess of aerospace industry suppliers, something that I learned about from reading *Hot Rod* magazine.

My slot car was a 1/24 scale Cox Chaparral bought at the Emporium on Market Street for $12. I painted the driver as realistically as I could. One friend had a Ford GT, another a Cox La Cucaracha. Mama bought me a small wooden box with a shelf and a little brass hook. She did a great job varnishing it with her artistic talent. I put a free Gulf Oil decal on it, ordered with a coupon from a *Car and Driver* magazine. Our clunky cars fell off the banked blue track for lack of speed. Older guys who knew how to do everything better sneered at us. We were an odd mix of little kids, adults and old people sitting around watching the serious business of racing our cars. Some lucky boys raced with their dads.

Slot car tracks inside Ocean Beach Pavilion building, February 1966. (Durden Slide Collection at the San Francisco History Center of the San Francisco Public Library.)

Grab bags were for sale for a dollar but usually only contained cheap Monogram Tiger brand wheels and decals. We'd open them up hoping for the real plum, a Miura Japanese motor to power our slot car. These were for sale for $15 at the supply counter where you would buy your time on whatever track was still available.

One especially foggy day, mud formed on the insulators of the power poles nearby and shorted them out. We were outraged that the mechanical clock timers of the slot track kept winding down, eating up our time and our money. We could not race without power, yet there were no refunds.

After a year or so I lost interest in slot cars. The next new thing around the city were ten-speed bicycles imported from Italy, England, and France. They bristled with energy and quality. The ram's horn handlebars were expertly wrapped in brightly colored tape. They smelled of natural rubber tires and lubricant.

When I rode all the way across the city I saw that the slot car raceway had been abandoned. The building later became the Family Dog, a venue for free-form music that went on and on, in long sets, along with psychedelic dancing. It was the beginning of the Hippie Scene that was to change everything and seize our lives.

More viewable in the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' Semaphore *(www.thd.org/semaphore) in Issue 217: "Seeking Shelter in North Beach"*

Author Nick Wand can be contacted at nicknorthbeach@protonmail.com

Charlotte Estes' Missing Sundial

by Nicole Meldahl

This year we're celebrating the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Twin Peaks Tunnel. This tunnel not only connected San Francisco to its west side, but it also created a 1.9 acre property that became the West Portal Playground. If you frequent this playground, maybe you've noticed a very small and unassuming granite pillar that reads: "In Memory of Charlotte Estes, Principal, West Portal School, 1927-1940," and includes a lovely quote by poet Thomas Campbell which reads, "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die."

Who was Charlotte Estes? It bothered us that time seems to have forgotten her, so I did a little digging to restore the eternal memory intended by this neglected monument. As it turns out, Charlotte Estes was a uniquely accomplished San Franciscan.

Charlotte Virginia Estes was born into a pioneering Colorado family on September 8, 1884, the daughter of Elizabeth (Edgerton) and Albert G. Estes. Her grandfather, Albert H. Estes, led a life described as "remarkable as it [was] commendable."[1] A native of Maine, Albert H. was a miner in the California Gold Rush, served in the Maine State Legislature, and moved to Denver, Colorado, where he owned hotels, built the first four-story edifice in town, owned stock in the South Park Railroad, and was a preeminent citizen and leading advocate for the establishment of City Park.[2] Charlotte may have been named after Albert H. Estes' first wife, Charlotte Goodrich.

Although Charlotte's grandfather left a fairly deep historical record, her father and mother did not. Albert G. was a charter member of the Sons of Colorado state heritage society. Her mother Elizabeth's Edgerton family roots went back to the Revolutionary War, and Charlotte was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Either Albert died or the pair divorced, because by 1900 mother and daughter were in California, with Elizabeth remarried to Dr. Clarence E. Edwards, "an old newspaper man [that had] a wide reputation as a writer of feature articles," and acted as the Chief of the Publicity Bureau for the California Promotion Committee.[3]

Charlotte never took her stepfather's name; she was an Estes for life. She attended school in San Francisco, and at Girls' High School was heavily involved in extracurriculars. She played on the school basketball team and served on planning committees for school dances before she graduated in 1904.

Detail of Charlotte Estes monument in West Portal Playground.

Charlotte continued her education at the Normal School, training to be a teacher, and living with her family at 1734 Laguna Street in the Western Addition. After the 1906 earthquake, Charlotte and a friend, Lilly, went down to inspect the rubble of her school. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that what they found there was "one of the strangest incidents following the great fire."[4] The news must have been running dry after the earthquake and fire that destroyed most of San Francisco, because what the two friends discovered that the *Chronicle* found so remarkable was…a turtle. The two climbed down to the basement to rescue it out of the ashes, before releasing it into the wild.

Charlotte spent the summer of 1906 with family in Denver, Colorado, before returning to a busy life during the post-earthquake years of 1907 and 1908. She was president of her student body at the Normal School, attending assemblies of the Aloha Nui Cotillion Club and hosting Normal School dances at the Paris Tea Garden. She passed her teacher examination and became a member of the California Normal Graduates Guild after her graduation in June 1908. Charlotte sailed with her parents for a month's visit to Tahiti and neighboring islands before beginning her career in the San Francisco school district. She was placed on the list of Substitute Teachers in August, and assigned to Lakeview Primary School at Plymouth and Grafton Streets.

By 1910, she had completed her probationary term and was elected as a regular elementary school teacher. In 1913, she earned her permanent certificate for grammar grade.

Her stepfather, Dr. Edwards, was a diversely accomplished man. During World War I, he was president of an incorporated health and condensed foods manufacturer called the Keepwell Company in Oakland, and, in 1918, he purchased and became the main editor of *The WASP*, an illustrated periodical that had been a San Francisco favorite since 1876. Not surprisingly, a "pretty tea" Charlotte hosted in honor of Miss Ann Moroney at her home on Green Street appeared in the society column of the first issue published under his reign.[5]

Charlotte and her mother may have accompanied Dr. Edwards around town as he sampled local restaurants while writing his book, *Bohemian San*

Francisco, "a remarkable guide to the elegant art of dining." *Goodwin's Weekly* said the book painted "a graphic picture of the gustatory delights of this romantic cosmopolitan city from the earliest days of its history."[6] I picture Dr. Edwards escorting his wife and accomplished step-daughter on a drive out west to breakfast at the Cliff House while researching the following passage:

> Select a table next to one of the western windows and order a breakfast that is served here better than any place we have tried. This breakfast will consist of broiled breast of young turkey, served with broiled Virginia ham with a side dish of corn fritters. We have discovered nothing that makes so complete a breakfast as this.

Charlotte spent World War I at Emerson School (now known as Cobb Elementary School) until she requested and was granted an extended leave of absence in 1920. This leave allowed her to retain privileges of return to the same school, and I believe this is when she enrolled for the first of two higher degrees she received from Columbia University in New York City; her second was acquired in 1926.

She returned to San Francisco as principal of West Portal Elementary School, which opened in 1926 to support a growing number of kiddos on the west side (thank you, West Portal Tunnel). She would remain in this position until her death, and, under her guidance, the school became one of the most progressive in the United States, famous "as a model…visited by educators from all parts of the nation."[7]

Charlotte was a prominent member of the California Elementary Principals' Association in the 1930s, helping to coordinate meetings and the annual state conventions, and was elected president of the local Bay Section in 1935. During her tenure as president, she led influential committees and made presentations to the State Superintendent of Public Instructions.

In addition to her devotion to the field of elementary education at large, she was ever present at, and dedicated, to West Portal School. On June 12, 1936, she arranged the text for a radio dramatization by West Portal students, performed in the Galileo Little Theatre studio, on the life of Robert Louis Stevenson for radio station KYA. Such engaging and innovative programs put West Portal Elementary on the map, and endeared the principal to her students and the extended community from which they came.

When Charlotte Estes died in San Francisco at age 55 on July 5, 1940, she was unmarried and living with her parents, having spent her entire life in service to the city's children. She was remembered by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as a "Friend of children—one who understood their problems, helped them out of their shynesses and over the barriers of complexes and inferiorities to confidence and poise and achievement."[8]

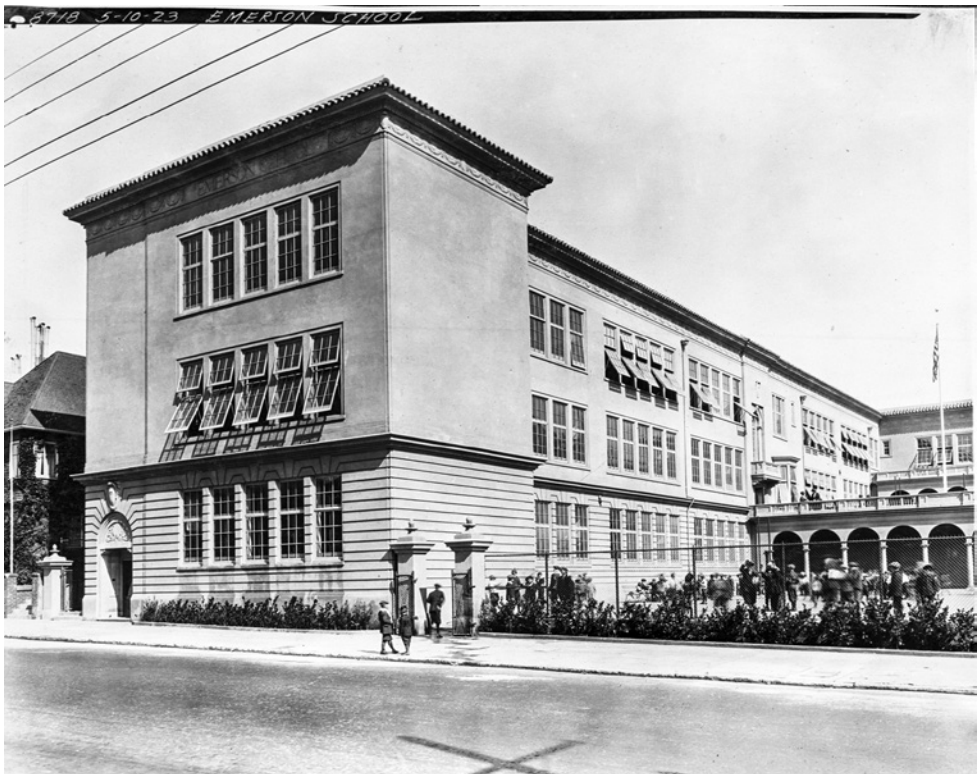
Parents, students, West Portal PTA members, educators who worked with Estes, and two clubs for which she was an active member—University Women and the Women's Athletic Club—launched a campaign to have the West Portal Playground renamed in her honor; they signed petitions and wrote letters.

The Playground Commission didn't go for renaming the whole park, but they did allow for a small memorial and suggested a tasteful sundial or a drinking fountain.

The West Portal PTA gathered donations and a memorial was approved by the Playground Commission in its meeting minutes from June 4, 1942, at which time Miss Mosgrove was conferred a committee of one to select an appropriate sundial.

On November 8, 1942, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that "a handsome bronze sundial set in a concrete base will be dedicated at impressive ceremonies next Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock on the playground adjoining the school, Lenox avenue and Taraval street."[9]

Impressive ceremonies for an impressive, beloved educator; but the location in which you'll find her memorial today is not where it was



Emerson School, one of Charlotte Estes' early elementary school assignments as a teacher, on Pine Street between Scott and Divisadero. (Horace Chaffee photograph, Department of Public Works, May 10, 1923. (wnp36.03047)

first placed, and it also no longer looks much like a sundial.

In 1976, the playground underwent major renovations and, with Resolution 975, the Art Commission approved the relocation of Charlotte's sundial to its current location on a walkway that leads to the clubhouse. This is the last time the memorial is referred to in print as a sundial, and it may be the last time the city remembered Charlotte Estes' memory was under its care.

Sometime after the late 1970s, the bronze top of the sundial (you know, the part that makes this memorial a sundial) went missing, leaving only the granite base behind. The San Francisco Art Commission web page that tracks and maps historical markers and public art by district has no listing for Charlotte's sundial. This may explain why it was stashed between a recycling bin and a broken traffic cone when I went by to see it.

Teacher posing with kids playing in West Portal Elementary School in Fall 1940, the year Charlotte Estes died. (WNP Collection, wnp27.0780)

This made me wonder: how many San Franciscans are we missing? Nothing is sadder to me than someone once remembered, now forgotten. If you've seen me speak or read some of my OpenSFHistory blog posts, you'll know that I believe no one should suffer this injustice—especially if a city-funded organization is responsible for the upkeep and care of your memorial.

Do you think the San Francisco Art Commission should restore Charlotte Estes' sundial? Write us and let us know. I certainly believe it's time.

Footnotes can be found on page 12

Current location of Charlotte Estes' sundial monument, missing its top and forgotten between a recycling receptacle and a traffic cone. (Author photograph taken on June 15, 2018.)

Goodbye to Goldsworthy Gas Station

by Woody LaBounty

You are never sure when it will happen, only, that it will.

We constantly got messages from people asking what we knew about the history of the charming little tan brick structure at the southeast corner of 16th Avenue and Irving Street.

Dating back to 1926, and primarily associated with Jack Goldsworthy, who owned it and lived next door until his death in 2012, the defunct gas station from the early days of the personal automobile sparked many schemes and dreams. Most had some sort of "slash" in the vision: a coffee stand/bike repair store, a smoothie stand/outdoor BBQ joint, a mini-art gallery/concert garden.

The 16th Avenue service station in 1978. (Courtesy of Julie Alden.)

Here was the power of architecture built with stylish intent, the potency of a place with character. Eight decades after construction for a utilitarian purpose (while there may be romance in the open road, there is none in pumping gas), a little defunct service station, a symbol of what is commonly understood in San Francisco as everything that is wrong with our modern society (polluting automobiles running on fossil fuels killing more people each year than any disease or war, etc, etc.) gave so many of us poetic fantasies of a community hub, an open-air commons for Sunset District neighbors. We would reclaim and reimagine.

To those who wrote, I dished out encouragement with a dash of cynicism. The structure was the last of its kind in the city, perhaps for many, many hundreds of miles. I knew city planners who recognized its significance and, I assumed, would defend it in any development proposal for the corner. But I knew a large, mostly empty lot would be a target sooner or later, especially in a city which today sings hymns to density, offers homilies on housing, and sermonizes on new construction as salvation for any and all modern ills.

Goldsworthy died and his house sold. The small garage and restroom building at the back of the lot were demolished. They could go. No one would miss them.

Then a chain link fence went up, no doubt for liability reasons and to discourage potential vandals. The years passed and the small office and bay where Goldsworthy's grandfather had sold Pontiacs, where Ludwig Glowacki waited to fill the tanks of Oldsmobiles, and where Tim Grace offered small repairs and tune-ups of Volkswagen Beetles, continued to prove an inspiring curiosity to those who passed. Heartened by its sturdiness, I did wonder if the next earthquake would do the job that the big 1989 tremor couldn't accomplish.

In the first few months of this year we noticed bricks missing and others broken at the top of the bay, as if someone had been chipping away to see how tough the underframe really was. It was worrying, but I was confident some notice would be given if any proposal was made, that we would all have warning and time to negotiate a future for the lot that kept the small building. While it didn't have the official designation, the office and service bay structure was a Sunset landmark.

On April 24, 2018, a backhoe showed up and a few guys who didn't seem particularly adept at the job ripped the Goldsworthy station down. The owner had applied for an emergency demolition permit from the city, citing the structure as a hazard (although it stood ten feet behind a fence) and without a peep or second thought from anyone at City Hall, the permit was approved. In one short day, all those dreams of coffee music gardens ended.

There was some small outcry from longtime neighbors, but just as

many tweeted their good riddance and jumped on worn soapboxes with dog-eared talking points.

No doubt new units will fill the site soon enough. Housing a dozen people at that corner will not make the slightest change in the affordability of the San Francisco, but it doesn't matter these days. The landmark is gone and the argument for its preservation never got to happen. Reasonable arguments are likely not possible anymore anyway.

The Goldsworthy station's fate was written long ago it seems. We knew it would happen, just didn't know when. San Francisco land is too valuable, the profit margins on smoothies too slim, and the Sunset District too foggy for any kind of outdoor concert venue. It's understandable that, no matter how cute the station was, a decade with a fenced-off concrete slab was no neighbor's idea of an attractive corner.

But give us for our mourning period, and suffer our gauzy dreams of a romantic city of do-it-yourself artists that make beauty from the formerly mundane. We are girding for the next loss and see it coming thirty blocks west. The school property known as the Francis Scott Key Annex, with its mock Tudor Style and neighborhood roots back to the days of open sand dunes, is on the clock. In the last couple of years, encouraged by the District 4 Supervisor's office, the old school yard around the building was made into a play space, a community garden, and a neighborhood commons. But now it all will go away, building and yard, for housing—affordable we're told, for teachers we're told. Let's hope it all works out that way.

If we can't save these pieces of the Sunset's past, we will at least try to record their histories. Read Lorri Ungaretti's article on Jack Goldsworthy at outsidelands.org/goldsworthy.php.

In the meantime we will draft our next eulogy.

Inside the Outside Lands:

Clean up has begun in the photograph, but it's clear there is still a long way to go. The image caught my attention because I work near this intersection, and pass through the area twice a day on my way to and from the bus stop.

In the 1906 photo, one of the few intact structures is Brown & Power Co., a building that was probably starting to get lost amongst all the tall office buildings, before they came down. What is their story?

Now that area is dominated by the old Federal Reserve Bank (visible from my office window), a building so substantial that it looks like it always has been there, and always will be. But it's less than a century old, built on the ghosts of what came before.

Photos like these remind me of all the stories layered into this city, and how my own story is becoming a part of that strata. Find a piece of your own story in our photos.

—Chelsea Sellin

Charlotte Estes Notes:

1) *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado,* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1880), pg. 412.

2) "The Passing of the Pioneer," *Sons of Colorado,* February 1908, pg. 17.

3) "Will Write About San Pedro," *San Pedro Daily News,* October 29, 1906.

4) "Find Terrapin Alive in Ashes," *San Francisco Chronicle,* May 3, 1906.

5) *The WASP,* February 2, 1918.

6) "Bohemian San Francisco," *Goodwin's Weekly,* October 17, 1914, pg. 11.

7) "Miss Estes Will Be Long Remembered," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 8, 1942.

8) "A Move Under Way to Name Playground for Charlotte Estes," *San Francisco Chronicle,* February 8, 1942.

9) "Miss Estes Will Be Long Remembered," *San Francisco Chronicle,* November 8, 1942.

The backhoe does its work on the old Goldsworthy gas station, April 24, 2018.

Historical Happenings

outsidelands.org/events.php

OpenSFHistory Top Ten of the Month

July 14, 2018 (Saturday) 11:00 AM–12:00 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)

Come join Nicole Meldahl and Woody LaBounty for a fast-paced illustrated presentation of the top ten historical San Francisco images scanned in the past month and uploaded to OpenSFHistory.org. Tickets are $10 (a mere dollar an image). Space is limited, so reserve your spot today.

Vanished Golden Gate Park

July 26, 2018 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:30 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)

Renowned Golden Gate Park historian Christopher Pollock will join Woody LaBounty for a conversation and presentation on the vanished landmarks, structures, and oddities of the park. From an iron suspension bridge over Middle Drive, to a casino next to the Conservatory of Flowers, to deer, sheep, and kangaroos, we will explore the park of the past using historical photographs, maps, and postcards. With the 150th anniversary of Golden Gate Park's creation just two years away, we will also speculate on its future and what may be next to vanish. Tickets are $10.

Playland Balboa Music Festival

August 4, 2018 (Saturday) 12:00 PM–4:00 PM
Balboa Street between 35th and 38th Avenues

Come find us at this neighborhood celebration with a Playland theme: music, art, kid activities, plus we will bring as much material and memorabilia on Ocean Beach's old amusement zone as we can carry. Free of charge.

Outside Lands Music Festival

August 10-12, 2018 (Fri–Sun) 12:00 PM–8:00 PM

Coming to the Outside Lands Music and Art Festival in Golden Gate Park? Drop by the Western Neighborhoods Project tent for a dose of local history between hearing the bands and seeing the sights.

We add events frequently and sometimes things fall together quickly, so not every listing finds its way into the Outside Lands magazine schedule. For the most accurate and complete events calendar, visit outsidelands.org/events.php.

More good ideas for staying up to date: follow our social media channels (listed on inside front cover) and be sure you are on our email news list by entering your address in the box at the bottom of the front page of outsidelands.org

Kezar Stadium Memories

September 6, 2018 (Thursday) 7:00 PM–8:30 PM
1617 Balboa Street (between 17th and 18th Avenues)

Now the "San Francisco" 49ers play in a massive state-of-the art stadium in Santa Clara, but it wasn't that long ago that the city's professional football team played in Golden Gate Park, with fans pouring out into the streets of the Haight and Inner Sunset District after games. For the opening weekend of the 2018 National Football League season we will take a look back with rare historic images and memories of football days at Kezar Stadium. Tickets are $10.

Ocean Avenue History and Beer

September 15, 2018 (Saturday) 4:00 PM–6:00 PM
Unity Plaza, Ocean Avenue near Harold

As part of Ocean Avenue Association's Art Bazaar, Woody LaBounty will share local history stories and images at three Ocean Avenue bars with drink discounts. More information soon, so check the Events page.

West Portal Avenue History and Drinks

September 22, 2018 (Saturday) 1:00 PM–3:00 PM
West Portal Avenue

Nicole Meldahl and Richard Brandi will tell the story of the West Portal neighborhood while leading a tour with stops for liquid refreshment at local drinking establishments. Tickets are $20, and space is limited to 20 individuals. More information soon, so check the Events page.

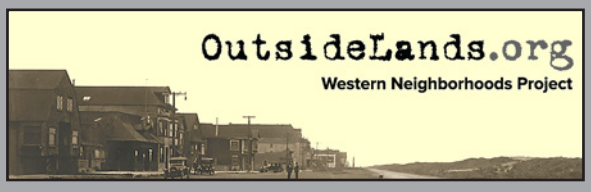
The Last Word

Jack Johnson (third from left) and team posing behind the Ocean Beach Pavilion, June 26, 1910. (WNP Collection, wnp37.02042)

Jack Johnson, then heavyweight boxing champion of the world, prepared for his July 4, 1910 fight against Jim Jeffries in Reno, Nevada, by training at San Francisco's Ocean Beach Pavilion. Here he poses with his trainers against the Sutro Heights cliff side on June 26, 1910. In the background at left a stashed awning sign advertises dancing at the pavilion each week.

Johnson rented a beach cottage in the Sunset District during his time in the city. His magnetic celebrity drew big crowds of admirers, but speeding in an expensive automobile got him attention he didn't want: a citation from the police. The newspaper reports of Johnson's appearance in court used racist cartoons and transcribed his testimony phonetically in stereotyped caricature.

In front of a crowd of 30,000, Johnson beat Jeffries (who had been dubbed the "White Hope") in 14 rounds.



Not a WNP Member?

Outside Lands magazine is just one of the benefits of giving to Western Neighborhoods Project. Members receive special publications as well as exclusive invitations to history walks, talks, and other events. If you like what you've read, please join hundreds of other west side fans as a member. Visit our website at **outsidelands.org,** and click on the "Become a Member" link at the top of any page.