

PARDEE HOME MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Oakland City Landmark, 1975
National Register of
Historic Places, 1976
California Historical Landmark, 1998

JUNE 2000

Mayor George Pardee's Fight with the Southern Pacific Over Access to the Oakland Waterfront

Although this might make a good debating point at a convention of maritime historians, it would not be farfetched to assert that the epic struggle between the citizens of Oakland and the Southern Pacific Railroad over the rights to our invaluable waterfront is unmatched in the evolution of other major U.S. ports. Worthwhile pages on this struggle are found in Beth Bagwell's well-known *Oakland: The Story of a City* and in the brand new *Pacific Gateway: An Illustrated History of the Port of Oakland*, written by Woodruff Minor, designed by Terry Lim, and published by the Port of Oakland as a partial mitigation for the demolition of a portion of the historic Grove Street Pier in 1995.

According to these accounts, when Oakland was first incorporated in 1852, the city's co-founder and first mayor, Horace Carpentier, was given the exclusive right to operate port facilities, and, in exchange for five dollars, a public schoolhouse, three wharves, and 2% of annual dockage fees, was granted ownership of the Oakland waterfront "forever." According to the Great Compromise of 1868, completed on April

1, 1868 and dismissed by the more farsighted citizenry as an April Fool's trick, Oakland was guaranteed the western terminus of the new transcontinental railroad, but in exchange, Carpentier merged his interests with those of the Central Pacific Railroad into the new Oakland Waterfront Company, and neither this new entity nor the railroad had any obligations to the city. The Central Pacific, known as the Southern Pacific after 1885, was to enjoy its waterfront monopoly for some four decades afterwards. In the words of an excellent WPA history of the Port written in 1934,

"The entrepreneur had given way to the giant organization; in the vernacular of the day, the 'shark' had vacated in favor of the 'octopus' . . . Oakland had been hoodwinked. It was to the railroad company's interest to favor the rival city across the bay and that was done. As a result, San Francisco flourished steadily, and Oakland wilted. . . . For years, more than a quarter of the century, the town lay supine, bound, whipped, and under the heel of the railroad corporation."

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Museum Receives Prestigious Federal Grant

In April the Pardee Home Museum received word from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) that it had been awarded a highly competitive Conservation Project Support (CPS) grant for the year 2000. Our museum received a \$2,663 grant to create a professional archival storage room to better care for the Pardee family's collections of personal diaries and scrapbooks, their very extensive financial records, school textbooks and yearbooks saved by the Pardee daughters, German medical texts from Dr. Pardee's student days at the University of Leipzig, and more.

Although the museum's main office has contained the main holdings of historic documents and photographs for some time, the museum's two staff members began noticing many boxes of archival materials which were, contrary to professional museum practice, scattered throughout the house's closets and drawers. They gradually collected these materials in one small and underused room upstairs (next to the curio or trunk room), and applied for this grant in order to fund the purchase of supplies — shelving, archival boxes and folders, dehumidifier, etc. — which would allow them to re-organize, re-house these holdings and guarantee their long-term preservation.

In the letter announcing the award, Beverly Sheppard, the

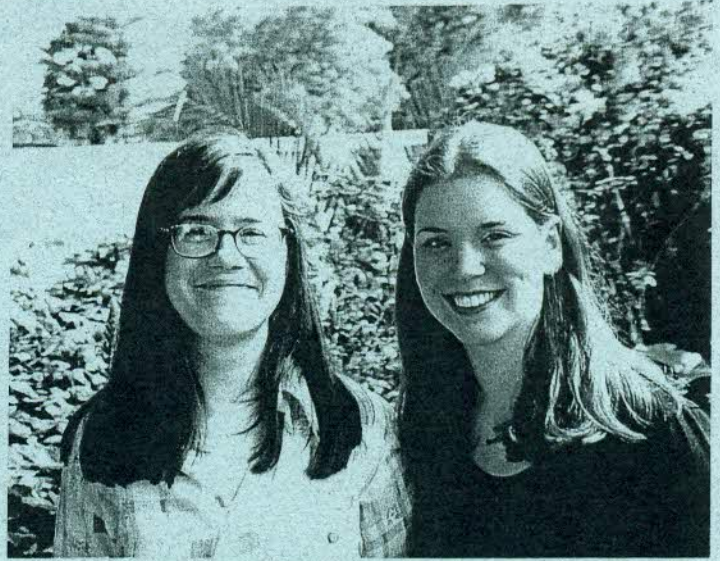
IMLS director, noted that the museums which did receive funding in this cycle were those "which could best demonstrate that the projects were a high institutional conservation priority, were technically appropriate, cost-effective, and involved qualified project personnel and consultants. . . . these museums preserve their collections so that future generations may share the treasures that are our artistic, historic, and scientific heritage. These awards promote long-range planning and commitment to sound practices in collections care."

Museum Director David Nicolai points out that "although \$2,663 is not a huge sum, it does represent the entire amount of funding we requested and the entire cost of supplies for this important project. We are very proud to be the only East Bay museum awarded in the CPS competition this year, and one of only three in Northern California. We have a one-year deadline to complete this work, but I am certain that under the able supervision of Registrar Vicki Wiese, the work will get done and get done properly."

(Special thanks to Foundation Treasurer Marion Reich for the many volunteer hours he spent compiling the detailed financial data required for this grant application.)



Mia Perkov and Mayra Rivas



Kirsten Kvam and Susanne Boles

Second Class of SFSU Interns Records Great Progress in Cataloging Our Collections

Following up on the success internships completed last year at the Pardee Home, Professor Linda Ellis, Chairperson of the Museum Studies program at San Francisco State University, sent another outstanding group of interns from her collections management class to our museum this year. On certain days between the months of January and May, one could hardly walk around the upstairs registration office, as it was so crowded with interns and their projects, all working under the able supervision of registrar Vicki Wiese.

All four of the interns are pursuing master's degrees in museum studies at SFSU. Two of them received their undergraduate degrees from UC-Santa Cruz — Mia Perkov (art history) and Kirsten Kvam (history and literature). Mia, a native of Southern California who also completed course work in Renaissance Studies at the University of Sussex in England in 1995, works in the bookstore at San Francisco's Museum of

Modern Art, in addition to her coursework at "State" and her internship here. Mia undertook the important task of cataloging and rehousing a valuable collection of ceramic tableware which Madeline Pardee purchased in Mexico in 1949 (see related photos). Kirsten, who is from Albuquerque, New Mexico, has also worked at the Museum of Art and History in Santa Cruz and recently completed another collections management internship at the California Historical Society in San Francisco. This summer she will be working at the archives of the National Park Service in the Presidio, where she is also fortunate enough to live! At the Pardee Home Kirsten worked on "cleaning up" the walk-through closet between Madeline's bedroom and the twin bedroom — mainly scores of boxes, which needed to be cleaned, photographed, catalogued, and rehoused.

Mayra Rivas, a native of El Salvador whose family immi-

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Docents Needed at Pardee Home

The Pardee Home Museum is always looking for individuals interested in leading or assisting with guided tours of the house. We have a particular need for docents who are available during the week to assist with our large group tours of local school children and senior citizens. Individualized training can be geared towards those interested in leading the tours or to-

wards those wishing just to assist. Come and learn how pleasurable it can be to share one of the most beautiful homes in Oakland and one of the most important historic sites in the region with our many visitors.

If you are interested, please call David Nicolai at:
(510) 444-2187.

***Don't forget to visit the Pardee Home's website
at www.pardeehome.org***

