



The Cupola

Newsletter of the Pardee Home Museum

Fall / Winter 2013

Oakland City Landmark
1975

National Register of Historical Places
1976

Alameda County Historical Society Landmark
1985

California Historic Landmark
1998

PARDEE FAMILY DRESS MAKER

By Cherie Donahue

Aura Prescott was born in a log house on a Minnesota farm on March 31, 1871. Her family moved eight miles south to Albert Lea, Minnesota in 1876. This was the first time Aura had ever seen a town. She and her siblings could now attend Sunday School and participate in group activities. In 1880 the Prescott's moved to the newly opened Dakota Territory. Aura taught school in the Dakota Territory before taking the train to the 16th Street Station in Oakland, CA at the age of 16 in August, 1887. She joined her sister, Mattie, in a dress-making shop in Oakland.



Aura Prescott
Modiste for the Pardees

Aura became a Modiste (dress designer) and had many well-known clients including the Pardees. Aura designed and sewed the beaded gown Mrs. George Pardee wore to the governor's inaugural ball in Sacramento. This dress has recently been located in storage in Sacramento. She spent six weeks each summer in Sacramento in the Governor's Mansion while George Pardee was governor.

Miss Helen and Miss Madeline related memories of Aura living at the family's Oakland home while designing and sewing clothing for the Pardee women. Aura would entertain George's daughters with stories from her Minnesota and Dakota childhood as she fitted their clothing. These tales grabbed the girls' attention and kept them from squirming! An example of one of Aura's childhood recollections:

When I taught school in Dakota Territory we had school entertainment nights at the close of each term with either a drama, musical comedy or a program of separate numbers. All the families attended the evening program. In the winter, families came in bobsleds which were two big

sleds with wide runners so that they would not sink into the snow. On these was a wagon-box. The bottom was covered with straw and then hot stones and jugs of hot water were placed and all covered with blankets. The family was seated at both sides and then more blankets. All the way the family would sing in concert.

Aura Prescott's great granddaughter, Cherie Donohue, is a Pardee Home Museum board member, docent, and tea committee member. PHM benefits from Cherie's family ties to the Pardee family and her memories of Miss Helen and Miss Madeline.

Upcoming Events Calendar

Sunday, February 9, 2014 from 3-4:30pm the PHM Board will be hosting a Members and Friends Event to thank our loyal supporters. There will be a light tea and an historical talk on "Inside the Pardee Family" by Ron Bachman. Please come early for a tour at 2pm where you will be shown some of the restoration projects recently completed. RSVP required – by phone: 510-444-2187 or email: office@pardeehome.org – Members are free, others \$20 including tour.

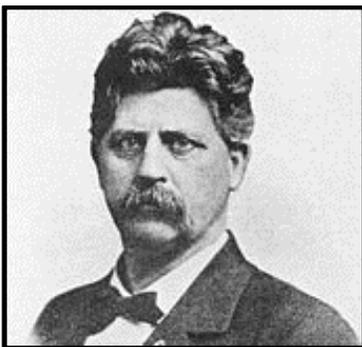
Saturday, March 8 from 7pm to Midnight we will be having our 7th Ghost Investigation. These have always been a lot of fun. Details to come so mark your calendars now.

POLITICS, PLAGUE, AND PARDEE

By Ron Bachman

George Pardee may have never been elected Governor of the State of California if not for the San Francisco Bubonic Plague epidemic that started in 1900. This epidemic was almost completely in the San Francisco Chinatown and among the Chinese community. Despite the fact that Public Health officials recommended quarantine, California Governor Henry Gage denied the existence of a plague outbreak and refused to introduce measures to halt the outbreak. He also waged a war of words against the Public Health Service doctors.

You might recall that it was Governor Gage who took the 1888 Republican nomination, narrowly surpassing Pardee with votes. Gage was heavily backed by the Southern Pacific Railroad, which was the probable reason for his nomination and subsequent election as Governor (1889-1903). He had always been considered “a pawn” of the railroad.



California Governor Henry Gage

In 1900 Gage denied there was a Bubonic Plague epidemic because of his concern it would have on the California economy, such as the exportation of fruit and vegetables to the rest of the nation as well as a decline in

tourism. By 1902 when the existence of an epidemic was more certain, Gage lost credibility. The Southern Pacific felt he had become an embarrassment and switched their backing to Pardee, who was considered a moderate in terms of the railroad. George narrowly won beating Franklin Lane (S.F. City Attorney).



Governor Pardee worked quietly with the Public Health Service and supported their efforts to control the epidemic. He signed the Bill to manage the Chinatown cleanup, which included laying traps and poisonous bait for rats, hiring individuals to catch rats (salary based on the number of killed rats), utilization of carbolic acid, smoking sulfur pots, and chlorinated lime (released chlorine gas) to control the rat population. These efforts led to the end of the epidemic in 1904 but reemerged after the 1906 earthquake. Since Chinatown had been destroyed by fire in the earthquake, the outbreak occurred in other areas with poor sanitation, such as the refugee camps established for the earthquake and displaced fire survivors (Golden Gate Park and the SF Presidio).

The history of Bubonic Plague dates back to antiquity with the first recorded cases in the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century. In the 14th Century the

Black Plague, as it was called, killed over 25 million people which were 1/3rd of the population. Although rats have always been associated with the plague, it was not until 1897 that it was determined that a certain species of flea that lived on rats carried the plague bacteria. After the host rat died, the flea would move on to another rat. It carried the bacteria (*Yersinia pestis*) in its stomach and would deposit it when they bit and sucked blood from a human. The only treatment until antibiotics were discovered was the natural immunity of the individual and a somewhat ineffective and dangerous antiserum and a vaccine.

The word “bubonic” is derived from the word “bubo” which is a swollen lymph gland that occurs in the groin, armpit, or neck in individuals with Bubonic Plague.



A Swollen Inguinal Lymph Node – a Bubo

If the Plague epidemic did not occur in SF in 1900, it is likely that Governor Gage would have been supported by the Southern Pacific Railroad and Dr. George would not have been elected our only physician Governor (1903-1907). It is ironic that the Chinese New Year that was celebrated in 1900 was The Year of the Rat.



The Pardee Garden Venue



The Pardee Home Museum garden was a popular venue for many events between May and October. Tables were set up under the Oak Tree with double layered tablecloths and lovely porcelain teacups. We had birthday parties, showers and family and friends gatherings. A special treat was Trustee Paul Silverstein filling teacups from a silver teapot. Guests enjoyed savories, scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam and a variety of desserts, including our signature dessert of lemon tarts by Dawn Muller.

The POWER (Progressive Oakland Women for Empowerment & Reform) group held their second annual event for over 200 persons in the garden. They chose to bring their own delicious delicacies and fed an impressive crowd.

The garden has been the site of the annual July 4th celebration for over 15 years. As in years past, we had live music by Fredrick Hodges and Ann Gibson, games for the kids and of course a BBQ. The Deco Bells come again in their traditional gowns of the early 1900's adding a wonderful touch.

Tour and Tea Price Increases

Beginning January 1, 2014 the Pardee Home Museum will be increasing its tour price to \$10 pp. This will also affect the Teas with the Dessert Tea now becoming \$20 and the High Tea becoming \$30. Events already scheduled will remain at the original price. Also, large groups of 15 or more will be charged \$5 for a Tour.

Restoration Projects

Keeping up on restorations at the Pardee Home is a major item for the Board of Trustees. Each year new projects are selected. In 2013 the painting of the exterior of the carriage house was completed. This historic building contains the beautifully carved redwood horse stalls and the original horse drawn carriage owned by Enoch Pardee. In 1911 George Pardee took the big step of purchasing a horseless carriage, a Winton touring car. This was the end of hay being pulled up through the top barn door on 12th street and also a good by to the groomsmen who lived in the small room on the 2nd story of the carriage house.

Trustee John Nichols built new shelving for items stored in the upstairs of the carriage house. Now we are painted on the outside and reorganized on the inside!

Also completed this year was the painting of the gift shop, a much needed face lift to display the lovely items for sales.:



Donation and

Membership Application

This is the time of year we send out our special donation letter. If you did not receive one but would like to include the Pardee Home Museum in the list of organizations that you value – Thank You!

YES! I want to become a member of the Pardee Home Museum.

- Student \$15
- Individual \$35
- Family \$50
- Benefactor \$75
- Patron \$100 - \$249
- Sustaining \$250 - \$499
- Sponsor \$500 - \$999
- Visionary \$1,000 & up

New Member Renewing

Please make check payable to
Pardee Home Foundation
and mail to

Pardee Home Museum
672 11th St,
Oakland, CA 94607-3651

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

1st Member's Name (or Gift Name)

2nd Member's Name (if applicable)

Address

City State Zip

Home Phone Work Phone

E-mail

Thank You for your Help!

Pardee Home Museum
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Oakland, CA 94607-3651



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The Pardee Home Foundation is a private non-profit foundation established in 1981 to preserve, interpret, and keep open to the public the historic home and gardens of the Pardee family.

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Catalina, The Pardee Home Museum Cat, in Her New Home

For many years the Pardee Home Museum had a house cat – Catalina. She was originally brought to PHM as a kitten by our previous Museum Director, David Nicolai. He fell in love her striking facial markings and her sweet demeanor. David told how she disliked large groups of people, often going into hiding until they left. With smaller groups she would come out to socialize. She loved sitting in a window surveying the beautiful Pardee Home gardens.

As Catalina is now 17 years old, it became apparent that she needed to be watched over in a more direct way than was possible at the Pardee Home Museum. Jose Rivera, the PHM Caretaker, took great care of her and loved having her around but was out often away with his own work. The PHM Board decided it would be best for her if she could be found a home with a family who would give her the constant care and love that all cats want.

One of our great volunteers, Karen Zimmerman (she leads all of our public Ghost Investigations)

knew someone who had just lost an older cat and was hoping to find another. Rebecca Young told Karen she and her family (husband, a son and daughter) would love to take over the care of Catalina. Her two kids now would keep Catalina active and shower her with affection. Rebecca came by on August 9 to pick up Catalina and since then our house cat has been living the high life with her new family.

Thank you Rebecca and your family for taking care of our beloved Catalina!



Catalina Surveying her new backyard



Catalina watching over Leah Young