

*Continued from page 5*

expected to submit recommendations on the overall residential zoning pattern of the City, but it is unclear when the recommendations will be received.

The Brooklyn Neighborhood Preservation Association requested that the OLD BROOKLYN COMMERCIAL CENTER (roughly bounded by East 8th Street, 11th Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, and 14th Avenue) be included in the City's S-7 Preservation Zone.



*China Building, downtown Brooklyn*

Brooklyn was once a separate town, extending from Lake Merritt to just beyond 23rd Avenue, before being annexed to Oakland in 1872. The old commercial center is highlighted by a number of Victorian structures, some of which are threatened with demolition or alteration.

### PLANS TO BURY TEMESCAL CREEK IN CULVERT

The Alameda Flood Control and Water Conservation District is proposing to bury a half-mile stretch of Temescal Creek in an underground culvert between Grove and Adeline Streets. This section of the tree-lined creek presently runs in a natural channel whose depth ranges between ten and twenty feet.

The Flood Control District wants to bury the creek in order to eliminate the possibility of a hundred-year flood (that is, a flood with a one percent chance of occurring any given year) and to protect abutting properties from bank erosion, which in some cases has undermined buildings. Once the culvert is in place, the earth on top would be backfilled and graded, leaving a shallow bare earth channel (swale) where the creek now runs. (The buried section of Temescal Creek running south of Adeline Street in Emeryville provides an approximate example of what the creek channel will look like when the project is completed.)

The project is one of many similar projects developed by the Flood Control District throughout Oakland and the rest of Alameda County. Most of the other sections of Temescal Creek below Lake Temescal have already been culverted by the District, as have sections of other creeks. Similar projects are planned in the future for portions of other creeks in Oakland.

OHA believes that the creek should be retained in as natural a condition as

*Continued on page 7*

## OHA Committees Need You

*Oakland Heritage Alliance* committees are the real action of our organization. To be effective, they need your active participation. Any member is welcome.

Community Awareness monitors developments on selected issues related to OHA concerns. Recommends OHA actions and policy on these issues. Chair: Leslie Flint, 658-4915.

Programs and Education plans and executes lectures, tours, or other activities sponsored by OHA. Chair: Leslie Flint, 658-4915.

Public Information/OHA NEWS plans and manages OHA News, press releases, and contacts with other organizations. Chair: Beth Bagwell, 653-5968. News Editor: William Sturm, 465-1321.

Membership Development seeks ways to broaden membership; also maintains records of current members. Chair: Jon Good, 655-7477.

Fundraising plans and implements methods of raising funds, such as contacts with potential donors, grant applications, etc.

Chair: Marlene Wilson, 832-8700.





*Continued from page 6*  
 possible and questions whether the project's benefits as presently proposed justify its \$3.2 million cost. OHA also believes that several alternatives capable of achieving the project's objectives while still preserving the creek's character have not been adequately explored. OHA believes Temescal Creek and the other creeks in Oakland represent important amenities which have not been used to their full potential and which have too frequently been abused or ignored. The Open Space Conservation and Preservation Element of the Oakland Comprehensive Plan (prepared by the City Planning Department), for example, proposes that the creeks be used as routes for pedestrian or bicycle paths or as setting for parks. The Flood Control District's project, if implemented as presently proposed, would essentially eliminate the use of the creek for scenic or recreational purposes.

Other organizations concerned over the project include the Sierra Club, the California State Department of Fish and Game, and the North Oakland Community Council, one of the important neighborhood groups in the area.

The project still requires approval by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors, which is not expected to act before early April.

Detailed information on the Temescal Creek project, as proposed, can be found in the Flood Control District's Final Environmental Impact Report. Copies can be obtained by writing or calling Rick Baker at the District's office, 399 Elmhurst

Street, Hayward, CA 94544, 881-6470.

Persons wanting to know more about the alternatives being explored and OHA's role in the project should call Marlene Wilson, 832-8700.



*Temescal Creek, Genoa St. near 52nd*

**TEMESCAL CREEK - A HISTORY VIGNETTE**

Flowing down from four distinct branches in the hills of Oakland north of Piedmont, Temescal Creek is rich in the history and folklore of the City's past. Nearly 1500 years ago, a peaceful group of Indians, known now as the Costanoans, settled in the East Bay area. A tribelet of these people formed a village near the present junction of Telegraph and Claremont Avenues. There, they built sweathouses, or

*Continued on page 8*

Oakland Heritage Alliance, 5569 Lawton Avenue, Oakland, California 94618

**JOIN OHA TODAY!** Your annual tax-deductible membership dues include the **OHA News** and announcements of all OHA activities. Additional contributions and your active participation will make OHA a more effective organization.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Numbers (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_

- \$ 5 Senior/student/limited income (1 vote)
- \$10 Individual (1 vote)
- \$15 Family (2 votes)
- \$25 Organization (1 vote)
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional contribution

I am willing to participate in the following ways:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



*Continued from page 7*

temescals, as the Spanish later called them--solid structures of sturdy poles, made air-tight by thick slabs of mud. Around a roaring blaze within these huts some fifty people would dance in a great frenzy, their bodies becoming living furnaces of heat and sweat. When near collapse from their exhausting ritual, the dancers would flee from the huts and dive into the cold stream. From these sweathouses, Temescal Creek derived its name.

In 1770, Spanish explorers arrived in the Bay Area, and in 1820, much of the area now called Alameda and Contra Costa counties was deeded by the Spanish officials to Don Luis Maria Peralta as a reward for military services to the government. One of Peralta's sons, Vicente, built an adobe at the present site of 5521 Vicente Street. Temescal Creek became a source of water for his horses and fish for his table.

Americans, drawn by the lure of redwood

timber in the Oakland hills, soon ended the bucolic life of the Peraltas. In the 1850's, the creek which slaked the thirst of the Don's horses became a source of water to the neighborhood growing up near the stream. Water flowing down from the creek percolated into the ground to feed the many wells dotting the countryside. During the 1860's, abandoned wells were turned into cesspools, causing contamination of active wells nearby. The need for clean drinking water soon became urgent for the citizens of Oakland.

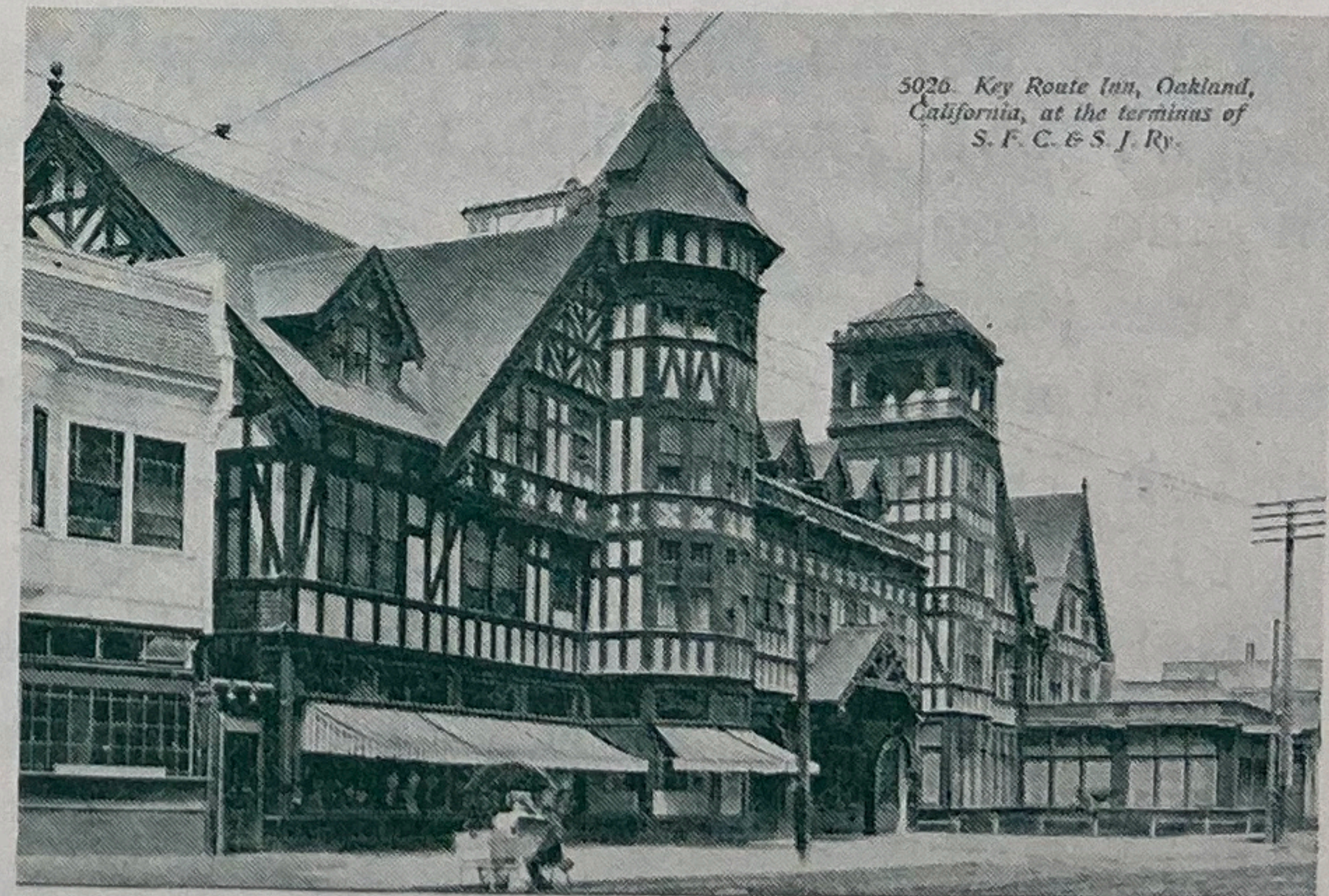
In 1866, the Oakland and Alameda Water Company began damming Temescal Creek to "conduct the water of Temescal Creek to the City of Oakland" for human consumption and fire-fighting purposes. The Lake Temescal Reservoir held one of Oakland's principal water supplies for well over fifty years, until Mokelumne River water from the Sierras began flowing through Oakland's water mains.

Temescal Creek is a natural--and vital--link with Oakland's past.

## OAKLAND HISTORY NOTES

The Key Route Inn, built in 1907, stood astride Grand Ave. at Broadway. A railway station for Key Route interurban trains, the Inn was also a hotel of 130 rooms, a congregation of varied shops and restaurants, and a social center for community activities. Damaged by fire in 1930, then remodeled, the Inn was demolished in 1932.

*Courtesy Oakland History Room, Oakland Pub. Library*



5026. Key Route Inn, Oakland, California, at the terminus of S.F.C. & S.J. Ry.

Oakland Heritage Alliance  
5569 Lawton Avenue  
Oakland, California 94618

Non-profit organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Oakland, California  
Permit No. 31