

CITY OF BERKELEY
Ordinance #4694 N.S.
LANDMARK APPLICATION

Captain John Slater House
1335 Shattuck Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94709



Figure 1. Captain Slater House c. 1906–10 (Slater family collection)



Figure 2. Captain Slater House, September 2016 (photo: Daniella Thompson)

1. **Street Address:** 1335 Shattuck Avenue
County: Alameda **City:** Berkeley **ZIP:** 94709
2. **Assessor's Parcel Number:** 60-2455-50 (Property of the Berkeley Villa Association, Block 21, Lot 7)
Dimensions: 135 ft. x 69.85 ft. x 134.64 ft. x 60 ft. (8,765 sq. ft.)
Cross Streets: Berryman Street & Rose Street
3. **Is property on the State Historic Resource Inventory?** No
Is property on the Berkeley Urban Conservation Survey? Yes
Form #: 28516
4. **Application for Landmark Includes:**
 - a. **Building(s):** Yes **Garden:** Front Yard **Other Feature(s):** Rusticated concrete retaining wall & twin curving concrete staircases from street level
 - b. **Landscape or Open Space:** Yes
 - c. **Historic Site:** No
 - d. **District:** No
 - e. **Other:** Entire Property
5. **Historic Name:** Captain Slater House
Commonly Known Name: N/A
6. **Date of Construction:** 1894
Factual: Yes
Source of Information: Contract notice, 2 August 1894
7. **Architect:** Thomas J. Welsh (1845–1918)
8. **Builder:** Charles Murcell (1863–1925)
9. **Style:** Colonial Revival
10. **Original Owners:** John & Louise M. Slater
Original Use: Single-family residence
11. **Present Owners:**
KAE Properties, LLC
4200 Park Blvd #525
Oakland, CA 94602

Present Occupant: Residential tenants
12. **Present Use:** Apartment building
Residential: Multiple
Current Zoning: R-2AH **Adjacent Property Zoning:** R-2AH & R-2H
13. **Present Condition of Property:** Good
Exterior: Good **Interior:** Unknown **Grounds:** Good

Rugby teams and was captain of the 1924 team. “Babe” was the earliest athlete to be inducted into the Cal Aggie Hall of Fame. In 2012, he was inducted into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame and the World Rugby Hall of Fame. The annual Colby E. “Babe” Slater Memorial Athletic Award and the “Babe” Slater Perpetual Athletic Trophy are given each spring to the U.C. Davis student selected as Athlete of the Year. On 30 July 2016, the U.C. Davis Library held a special celebration of “Babe” Slater’s legacy, marking the first time since 1924 that rugby was played in the Olympic Games.

In the early 1920s, the Captain Slater House became the home of former Berkeley mayor Samuel C. Irving (1858–1930), who lived here until his death.

When it was built, the Captain Slater House joined the earlier Captain Seabury House (1322 Shattuck Avenue, demolished) and the Captain Maury House (1317 Shattuck Avenue, greatly altered) to form a close-knit enclave of famous sea captains’ residences. The Captain Slater House is now the only historic sea captain’s house surviving on this block with its intact original façade, as well as the only recognizable 19th-century house on the block.

The Captain Slater House retains integrity of location, design, materials, setting, feeling, and association.



Figure 4. Captain Slater House in Block 2455 (Apple Maps)

14. Description

The Captain John Slater House is located at 1335 Shattuck Avenue, north of the North Shattuck commercial district and south of Live Oak Park. Surrounded by 20th-century apartment buildings, it is the only surviving visual reminder of the street as it used to be in the 19th century (one other 19th-century building on the block, the landmark Captain Maury House, was completely altered in 1922).

The house is a one-and-a-half-story, redwood-framed building with basement. It was designed in the Colonial Revival style, which was just coming into fashion in 1894, and is rich in neo-classical architectural details.



Figure 5. Street façade and retaining wall

Initially, the Slater House was a single-family residence containing eight large rooms on the first floor. Later, the Slaters added five rooms on the attic floor.¹ The widowed Mrs. Slater sold the house in 1912. In 1937, it was converted into three apartments. Since then, the building has been repeatedly subdivided. In 1940, the number of units grew to six, and by 1950, there were two apartments and seven rooms. In 1970, there were six units in the attic and six in the basement, while the main floor was occupied by the owners. By 2001, the building comprised 13 units, eight with kitchens and five without.²

The original exterior and interior were described in detail in the *Berkeley Herald* issue of 1 January 1896, within a review of contractor Charles Murcell's recent projects. Headlined "**Charles Murcell—The Handiwork of This Popular Contractor and Builder,**" the article (Fig. 7) characterized the Slater house as "one of the most notable buildings of the past year," continuing:

[...] The first [house] was erected for Captain John Slater, on the east side of Shattuck avenue near Rose street, North Berkeley, commanding a magnificent view of the Golden Gate, the city of San Francisco, San Francisco bay and the ocean beyond.

This residence is classic-Colonial in architecture.

A notable feature of the exterior is a pleasant porch, running the entire width of the building, at the front entrance.

The walls are covered from foundation to first story in rustic [wide wood siding] and from first story to cornice with clapboard. It is painted in Colonial yellow, with white trimmings. The roof is of slate. The building is 42x80 feet, which includes the front piazza. It contains eight large rooms, well arranged for

¹ Information from one of Marguerite Slater Messenger's photo albums, included in a handwritten note under the photo in Fig. 1.

² Sources: Building permits; Sanborn maps; 1970 U.C. class report; realtor files. BAHA archives.

light and heat. The front vestibule is trimmed in oak. The spacious exterior hall is trimmed with curly, native redwood, wainscoted with Lincrusta-Walton [an embossed, linoleum-like material] and lighted from transoms over doors of French bevel plate-glass.

The staircase is separated from the main hall, the posts of which extend to the ceiling. Between the posts are spindle transoms supported on ornamental brackets. The parlors are finished in natural redwood and are provided with open fireplaces of Roman brick; hearth of same, and mantels of curly redwood of unique design. The dining-room is trimmed and finished in antique oak, including paneled wainscoting. The divan is built with arm-rest and lockers underneath. There is a spindle arch across the bay-window, resting on turned columns. The fireplace is built of Roman brick facings and hearth, mantels made of oak of exquisite design, including lockers and bevel plate mirrors. The walls are tinted a deep sea green, ceiling of Nile green.

The kitchen, pantry, butler's pantry and china closet are trimmed and finished in natural redwood and fitted up in modern style. Chambers fitted up in like manner, with closets and dens attached to each apartment. The bath-room is of oak, with tile floor and tile wainscoting five feet high, and containing a porcelain bathtub with shower bath attached, oval wash-basin, all plumbing exposed, with locker and medicine closet attached. Cost of building to complete, \$5,750.



Figure 6. The Slater House as depicted in the Berkeley Herald, 1 January 1896

CHAS. MURCELL.

The Handiwork of This Popular Contractor and Builder.

The HERALD presents herewith two illustrations, showing two of the most notable buildings of the past year, in Berkeley, by Mr. Murcell, an East Oakland contractor and builder, whose local headquarters are at the lumber

to the ceiling. Between the posts are spindle transoms, supported on ornamental brackets. The parlors are finished in natural redwood and are provided with open fireplaces of Roman brick; hearth of same, and mantels of curly redwood of unique design. The dining-room is trimmed and finished in antique oak, including



RESIDENCE OF CAPT. JNO. SLATER—Built by Chas. Murcell.

—Photo by Wilcox

office of Barker and Hunter, corner of Dwight way and Shattuck avenue.

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Figure 7. Description of the Slater House in the Berkeley Herald, 1 January 1896



Figure 8. Southwestern aspect (Apple Maps)

Massing and Roof

Rectangular in mass, the Slater House is clad in clapboard on the main and attic floors and in wide shiplap (imitating stone) on the basement floor.

The roof is hipped³ and was originally surmounted by a widow's walk—a raised platform surrounded by ornate railing. Boxed eaves, a molded cornice, and a wide, dentiled frieze surround the building. Pediment-gabled dormers were once centrally located on at least three sides of the roof. As a result of successive remodels over many decades, only the front third of the roof remains unaltered. The rooftop platform still exists, albeit without the railing, but the rear two-thirds of the roof have been lined with dormers on the north, east, and south sides. Two red-brick chimneys are visible: a double-flue rectangular chimney on the southwestern side of the roof, and a single-flue square chimney on the northeastern side.

Retaining Wall & Front Garden

The house is located on a berm, behind a retaining wall of rusticated concrete mimicking stone masonry, known in its time as “artificial stone.” The wall is crowned by a smooth concrete molding that steps down in two wavy formations on either side.

To the right and left of the wall, twin curved concrete stairways lead from the sidewalk onto the front yard. Each stairway comprises six stairs flanked by low rusticated concrete parapet walls and fronted by two squat, square posts of the same material. The simple yet attractive wrought-iron rails are a later addition (Figs. 11, 12).

On either side of the twin stairways, the wall continues in scored smooth concrete interspersed with short rusticated pilasters.

³ Some would call it a mansard roof, although it is not as steep as the typical mansard.



Figure 9. Rusticated concrete retaining wall built by John A. Marshall



Figure 10. John A. Marshall's stamp

The retaining wall was constructed by the well-known Berkeley contractor and builder John Albert Marshall⁴ (1868–1924), whose stamp appears on a post next to the right-hand stairway (Figs. 9, 10).



John A. Marshall (*San Francisco Call*, 29 March 1906)

⁴ http://berkeleyheritage.com/berkeley_landmarks/marshall-lindblom.html



Figure 11. Right-hand stairway. John A. Marshall's stamp is visible on the left post.



Figure 12. Left-hand stairway



Figure 13. Scored retaining wall



Figure 14. Scored retaining wall & rusticated pilaster



Figure 15. Aerial view of front garden (Apple Maps)

The front garden is fairly symmetrical. Comprising planted beds separated by curving concrete paths, its layout resembles a wide candelabrum.

In the middle of the garden, a central red-brick staircase ascends to the front porch, flanked by triple-stepped, shiplap-clad parapet walls with molded caps. A landing separates the bottom ten steps from the top four. The brick is a latter addition (the original steps were wooden), as are the wrought-iron rails, which match the rails on the curving stairways below.



Figure 16. Central staircase



Figure 17. Pedimented front dormer & porch entablature

Street (West) Façade

The street façade of the Captain Slater House is symmetrical and remarkably unaltered, retaining a very high percentage of its original features.

Positioned directly above the entrance is a pediment-gabled dormer with a molded cornice and dentiled frieze resting on two pairs of short Tuscan columns set on top of two square, capped plinths (Fig. 17). Two recessed double-casement windows are set under the dormer's pediment. As shown in historic photos, a classic balustrade used to connect the two plinths, forming a mini-balcony.

The entablature under the principal roof incorporates a frieze decorated with a row of dentils. Four Tuscan columns—two on either side of the porch entrance—support the entablature.

Along the front of the porch, each pair of columns is linked via a classic balustrade of turned double-urn spindles, with top and bottom moldings (Figs. 19, 20).

Ceiling beams connect the Tuscan porch columns to four plain pilasters with molded capitals on the inner porch wall. A wide plain frieze runs along the porch interior wall above the windows and the entrance door.

On either side of the front door there is a large polygonal window bay containing four wood-sash windows (Figs. 18, 19, 21).



Figure 18. Street façade (Google Street View, Jan. 2015)



Figure 19. Tuscan columns & balustrade



Figure 20. Double-urn balusters



Figure 21. Porch bay

Each porch window is divided into two sections separated by horizontal molding. The lower section is long and rectangular, glazed with an undivided pane. The upper section is square, with muntins that divide the glass into four diamonds surrounded by eight triangles.

The windows' lower sections are separated by fluted pilasters with molded capitals, while the upper sections have plain wide moldings.

Under the windows, the porch bays are clad in clapboard finished with a wide baseboard.

The floor of the porch is made of narrow wooden boards.



Figure 22. Bay window & pilaster detail

The front entrance door is set in the center of the porch, recessed within a wood-paneled niche behind a framed open doorway. Two decorative iron lanterns with bulbous glass globes flank the doorway.



Figure 23. Front door



Figure 24. Front door niche



Figure 25. Doorway pilaster & capital

Fluted pilasters with molded capitals (Fig. 25) form the lower three-quarters of the open doorway framing, reaching the same height as the top of the double doors inside the niche. From the tops of the pilasters, the horizontal line of molding continues within the niche until it reaches the doors (Fig. 24).

The entire niche is wood-paneled, including the ceiling. Flanking the doors are shallow fluted pilasters with molded capitals. The doors are half-glazed, featuring a wood panel in the bottom half and a rectangle of beveled glass above. Curved wooden muntins resembling the outlines of vertically crossed canoes divide the glass into nine sections.

Above the doors, a glazed transom repeats the crossed-canoes motif, this time horizontally.



Figure 26. Ground-floor recessed lobby to basement apartments

On the ground floor, to the south of the central staircase, a wide recessed open vestibule leads to the basement apartments, whose designated address is 1333 Shattuck Avenue. Its walls are clad in the same wide shiplap seen elsewhere on this level. On the vestibule's east wall, a fixed, full-length wood-framed window with wooden muntins is divided into nine (3-over-3) panes. The window encloses what used to be an open doorway.



Figure 27. Fixed window in ground-floor open lobby



Figure 28. Door to basement apartments

At the west end of the open vestibule, a glazed door leads into the basement apartments.

On the left side of the central staircase, under the porch balustrade, the basement wall features two adjacent double-hung windows in a plain wooden casing that doesn't match the original window casings and sills. The sashes are aluminum.



Figure 29. Double-hung windows under porch

Historic photos show that both sides of the central staircase used to contain recessed vestibules, and there was a window facing the street within the southern vestibule. (Fig. 30).



*Figure 30. An early photo of the Captain Slater House fronted by a boardwalk
(Louis L. Stein Collection, Berkeley Historical Society)*

North Façade

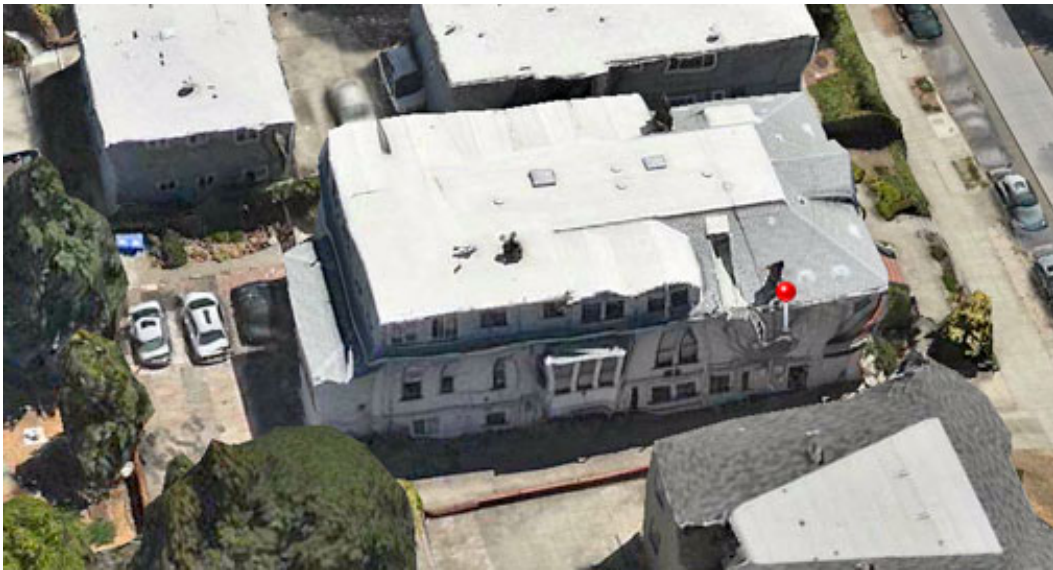


Figure 31. North façade (Apple Maps)



Figure 32. North façade, western part



Figure 33. North façade, eastern part

Like the other façades, the north-facing one is clad in clapboard on the main and upper levels and wide shiplap on the lower level. A molded water table runs along the façade, separating the main level from the lower one.

Also intact are the boxed eaves, the molded cornice, and the wide frieze with dentils.



Figure 34. Dormers & chimney, north façade

Two attached dormers are centrally positioned over the north façade. They feature pedimented gables and dentils, and are assumed to originate from the Slaters' early attic conversion. Each dormer contains two double-hung windows with plain wood casings and aluminum or vinyl sashes. To the west of the dormers rises a square red-brick chimney with a stepped collar. To the east is a flat-roofed attic addition containing four windows (one double-hung, three sliders) with aluminum or vinyl sashes.



Figure 35. Boxed window, north façade

The most notable feature of the north façade is the boxed window on the main level. Its roof is flat, with boxed eaves and a plain frieze. The cladding is clapboard, executing a slight flare toward the bottom. Three double-hung, wood-sash windows face north, while single windows of the same type face east and west. The upper sashes feature diagonally criss-crossed wooden muntins, creating diamond-shaped panes (Fig. 35).

In addition to the box window, there are five other windows on the main level of the north façade. All these windows are double-hung with aluminum sashes. Four have narrow molded casings and molded sills that appear to be original (Fig. 37), while one has a plain wide casing.



Figure 36. North façade, east end



Figure 37. Window casing & sill detail

A plain square pilaster with molded capital finishes the northeastern corner (Fig. 36). A hip-roofed addition is attached at the eastern end, containing an entrance in the rear of the building. This addition may be the sunroom indicated in a 1937 alteration permit.

It is difficult to speculate on the age of the ten windows at the basement level, since they come in a baffling variety of shapes and sizes. The semi-glazed door below and to the east of the boxed window could be the oldest element on this level.

An interesting feature on the north façade below the front porch is the slight recess in the shiplap wall. This recess may indicate the location of an open doorway from the time when there had been an open vestibule at the lower level.

South Façade



Figure 38. South façade (Apple Maps)

An open gateway at the entrance to the path running along the south façade is marked by a thick square column that rises to the height of the porch floor. It is clad in shiplap and supports an overhanging lantern pending from a wrought-iron fixture with four decorative curlicues (Fig. 39).



Figure 39. Gateway to south side

On the roof, three attached pediment-gabled dormers resembling those on the north façade are assumed to be of the same early age (i.e., dating from the Slaters' attic conversion). Attached to them on the east are two dormers of more recent vintage.



Figure 40. South façade

On the main level, six fenestrations appear to survive from the original design. They are: a pair of tall double-hung windows in the center; a smaller double-hung window to their west; a small double-hung window within the porch; and two tall double-hung windows behind the porch, to the east. All these windows feature the same narrow molded casing and molded sills, although the sashes have been replaced with aluminum. A small, sliding vinyl window just west of the porch replaces an original double-hung window that was boarded up.

A fixed triple-paned horizontal window toward the front end is of a more recent vintage, but its narrow molded casing and molded sill match those of the original fenestrations, and the sash is made of wood. On the inside, it is glazed with three matching panels of stained glass in a floral motif (Fig. 41).



Figure 41. Horizontal window at west end of south façade

Midway to the rear, a side porch crowned by a hip roof with boxed eaves is supported on square columns and pilasters with molded capitals. The porch is accessed by way of a wooden staircase with 13 steps. The staircase's railing incorporates a thick, square newel post, a curved handrail, and 11 turned double-urn balusters of the same type seen in the front porch (Fig. 44).



Figure 42. South porch



Figure 43. South porch



Figure 44. South porch staircase

Historic photos show that the porch was initially open on three sides; it is now enclosed on the south and the east. As a reminder of old times, the railing and balustrade continue along the interior of the south wall, backed by wood plank siding. Above it, a large fixed wooden window with a grid of 30 square panes (6-over-5) fills the remaining space. On the east side, a small addition is attached to the porch, entered via a glazed wooden door with 10 (2-over-5) divided panes.



Figure 45. South porch interior



Set in the porch's north wall is a tall wood-framed door that appears to be located in the original doorway, judging by its height and the molded wood casing surrounding the door and the transom above it.

The door incorporates three glazed panels, of which the top one is square and the bottom two are horizontally oriented rectangles.

The transom is glazed with a single rectangular pane.

As mentioned on the previous page, the double-hung window to the left of the door retains its original molded casing and sill.

Figure 46. Door on north wall of south porch



Figure 47. Ground floor, south façade



Along the ground floor of the south façade runs a low, capped brick wall that does not appear in any historic photo of the house. None of the fenestrations on this level appear to be original except the vestibule's formerly open doorway, which is enclosed with a large, 3-over-3 fixed window (Fig. 47).

The built-up area below the porch and the addition attached to the rear of the porch on the east are of unknown provenance.

Figure 48. Ground floor below the porch and rear addition to porch, south façade

East (Rear) Façade



Figure 49. East façade



Figure 50. East façade

The rear façade's cladding matches that of the building's other three sides: clapboard on the main and attic floors and wide shiplap on the basement exterior. The wide entablature seen elsewhere continues along the east side, albeit without dentils. The square corner pilaster at the southeast corner matches those at the other three corners.

A long, flat-roofed attic addition with four windows and a porch at the northeastern corner are of unknown age. The projecting addition at the northeastern corner may be the sunroom noted in a 1937 alteration permit. The fenestrations on the basement floor are of a later date, since no basement rooms were allowed in the 1937 permit. Three long double-hung windows on the main floor—two under the porch roof and one at the southern end—retain original molded wood casings and sills.



Figure 51. Corner pilaster, east façade



Figure 52. Rear yard

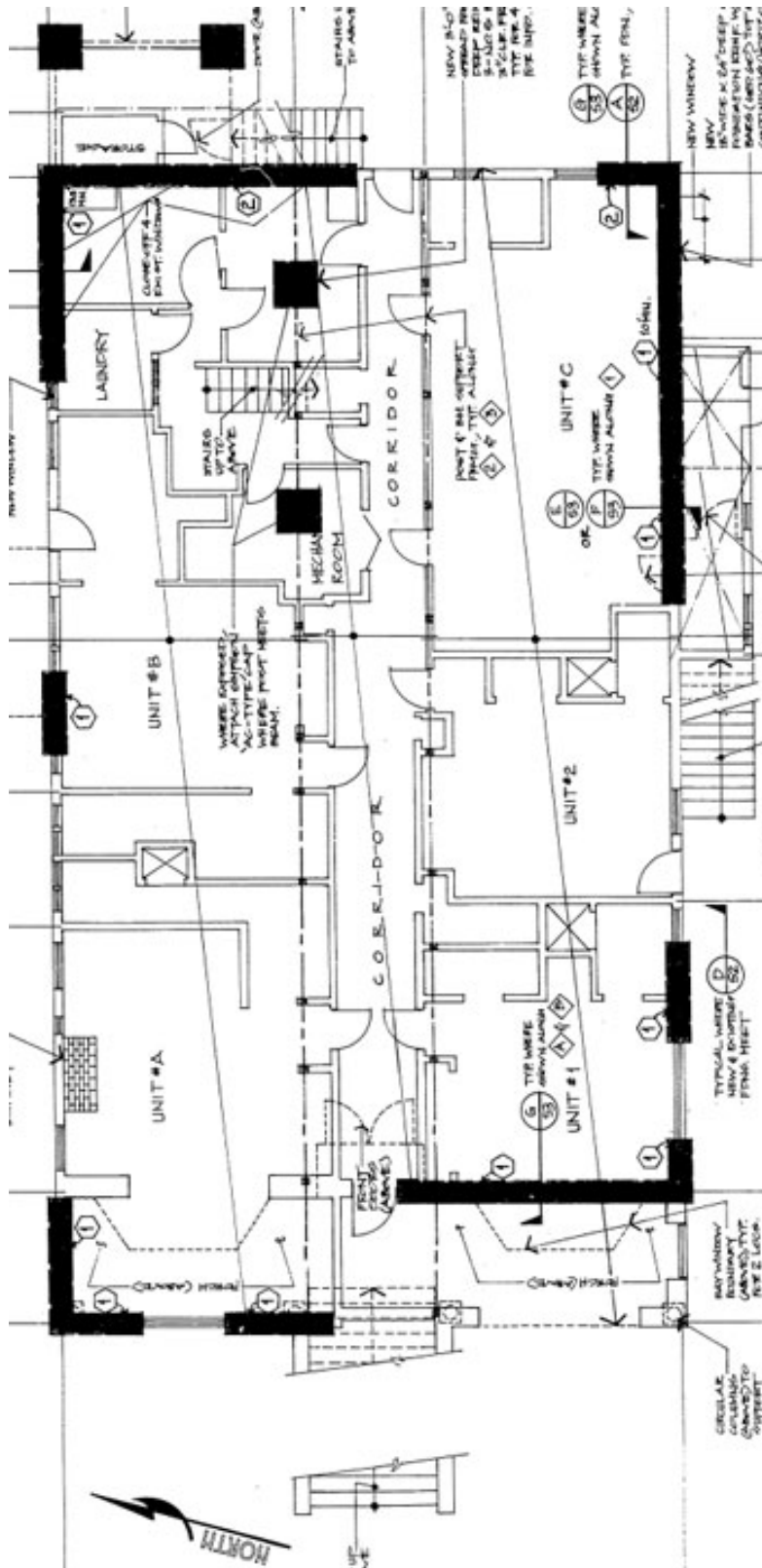


Figure 53. Slater House foundation plan, 2000 (City of Berkeley Planning Department)

Features to Be Preserved

The distinguishing features of the Captain Slater House include:

- Rusticated concrete retaining wall with J. A. Marshall's stamp
- Twin curved concrete stairways from street
- Landscaped front yard with curving paths
- Rectangular massing
- Symmetrical façade
- Hip roof with raised "widow's walk" platform
- Two red-brick chimneys on the western part of the roof
- Boxed eaves and wide entablatures decorated with dentils
- Clapboard cladding on the main and attic floors and wide shiplap cladding on the basement floor
- Four square pilasters with molded capitals at the building's corners
- Pediment-gabled west-facing dormer with a molded cornice and dentiled frieze on two pairs of short Tuscan columns set on two square, capped plinths
- Front porch with four Tuscan columns, plain pilasters, and classic double-urn balustrades
- Two wood-framed polygonal bay windows in the front porch, featuring diamond panes and fluted pilasters with molded capitals
- Wood-paneled entrance door niche, featuring horizontal molding and fluted pilasters with molded capitals
- Double front door with transom, each glazed with beveled glass in crossed-canoes pattern
- Central staircase with triple-stepped, shiplap-clad parapet walls with molded caps
- Recessed open vestibule on ground floor to the right of the central staircase
- Two attached pediment-gabled dormers over the north façade
- Boxed window on north façade, with boxed eaves, a plain frieze, and five wood-framed, double-hung windows with diamond panes in the upper sashes.
- Four window openings on main level of the north façade, featuring narrow molded wood casings and molded wood sills
- Three attached pediment-gabled dormers over the south façade
- Hip-roofed south-side porch with staircase featuring a thick, square newel post, curved handrail, and double-urn balusters
- Handrail and double-urn balusters within the south-side porch
- Fixed wooden window with 30 square panes (6-over-5) in south-side porch
- Tall, wood-framed, 3-panel glazed door within the south-side porch
- Six window openings on main level of the south façade, featuring narrow molded wood casings and molded wood sills
- Three window openings on main level of the east façade, featuring narrow molded wood casings and molded wood sills

15. History

The Berkeley Villa Association tract, in which the Captain Slater House is located, was part of Rancho San Antonio, a 44,800-acre Spanish land grant given to Sergeant Luís María Peralta (1759–1851) in 1820 by the last Spanish governor, Don Pablo Vicente de Sol, in recognition of Peralta's forty years of military service to the Spanish king. The rancho included lands that form Oakland, Alameda, Piedmont, Emeryville, Berkeley, and parts of San Leandro and Albany.

In 1842, Luís Peralta divided the rancho among his four sons. Domingo and José Vicente were given the land that now comprises Oakland and Berkeley.

Within less than a decade, squatters overran the Peraltas' properties, stole their cattle, and sold it in San Francisco. Worse, parcels of rancho land were sold without legal title. Domingo and Vicente Peralta fought the appropriations in the courts. In 1856, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed their title, but by then the brothers had been forced to sell most of their lands to cover legal costs and taxes. The various buyers engaged cartographer Julius Kellersberger⁵ to map the Peralta Ranchos for subdivision purposes.



Figure 54. Plots 84 & 85 (shaded) in Kellersberger's Map

⁵ Map of the Ranchos of Vincente & Domingo Peralta. Containing 16970.68 Acres. Surveyed by Julius Kellersberger. Surveyed 1853. Partitioned 1854. Filed Jan. 21st 1857. Courtesy of Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps, Inc. <http://www.raremaps.com/gallery/enlarge/39956>

As related in *Berkeley, the First Seventy-Five Years*, “during the late 1850s and early 1860s Domingo Peralta’s former property was the subject of almost continuous parcelings, mortgagings, and transfers. Most of the transactions were made for speculation or investment; a few, to provide homes and ranches for new settlers.”⁶



Napoleon Bonaparte Byrne

One of the new settlers was Napoleon Bonaparte Byrne (1817–1905), a prosperous plantation owner from New Madrid, Missouri, where he raised thoroughbred horses and cattle.⁷

In the 1850s, malaria was rampant along the Mississippi and Missouri Valleys.⁸ Byrne, whose plantation was located by the Mississippi River, decided to move his family to California. He sold the plantation, freed his slaves, and undertook a six-month journey across the plains in a covered wagon, arriving in Oakland in the fall of 1859.

In addition to the Byrne family, the overland party included two freed slaves, Peter and Hannah Byrne, the first African-Americans to settle in Berkeley.

Figure 55. Napoleon Bonaparte Byrne (Berkeley Historical Society)

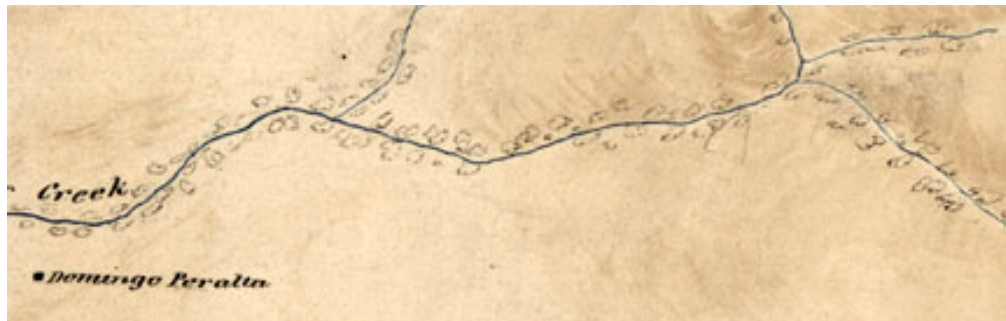


Figure 56. Codornices Creek in March 1861 (detail from James G. Stratton’s land case map, Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley)

⁶ *Berkeley, the First Seventy-Five Years*. Writers Program of the WPA in Northern California. Berkeley: The Gillick Press, 1941.

⁷ Mary Tennent Carleton. The Byrnes of Berkeley, From Letters of Mary Tanner Byrne and Other Sources. *California Historical Society Quarterly*. San Francisco, 1938. Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 41–48.

⁸ Sok Chul Hong. The Burden of Early Exposure to Malaria in the United States, 1850–1860: Malnutrition and Immune Disorders. *J Econ Hist*. 2007 Dec; 67(4): 1001–1035.

In March 1860, Napoleon Byrne began purchasing land along Codornices Creek. In June 1860, the U.S. Census enumerated the Byrne household in Oakland (Berkeley was not yet named). The household included ten persons: Napoleon and Mary Byrne; their four children; two white laborers, and two African-Americans—Peter, a laborer, and Hannah, a nurse. Byrne's real estate was valued at \$7,000, and his personal estate at \$4,000.

Napoleon Byrne continued to acquire land from four different sellers; by April 1861, he was in possession of 827 acres in plots 84 and 85 of Kellersberger's Map.

In 1868, the Byrnes built an elegant Italianate villa surrounded by a large garden, located at what is now 1301 Oxford Street. In 1870, the U.S. Census recorded the value of Byrne's real estate at \$100,000, and his personal estate at \$10,000. The household numbered 12 persons, including three new Byrne children, a Canadian-born laborer, an Irish-born woman servant, and a Chinese waiter. The former slaves were no longer part of the household; Peter Byrne changed his surname to Wilson and established himself as a whitewasher in Oakland.



Figure 57. The Byrne house, built in 1868 (Pettitt: Berkeley, the Town and Gown of It)

Although the farm was "good enough to pay for itself with one or two crops," Napoleon Byrne was not pleased with the soil, feeling that it was "not of the first class," as Mary Byrne wrote to relatives in Missouri. He had begun to sell portions of his land in 1868. Having heard of the enormous crops that could be raised in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, Byrne joined three friends in 1873 and purchased the marshy, 3,100-acre Venice Island, where he moved with his family. He financed the purchase by selling the final large chunk of his Berkeley land to businessmen Henry Berryman and Felix Chappellet for \$49,000, reserving for himself the family house and the surrounding 11 acres. The Byrnes would never again occupy their villa.

Henry B. Berryman & the Berkeley Villa Association Tract

Henry Burpee Berryman (c. 1842–1903) was born in New Brunswick, Canada. As a young man, he moved to San Francisco and began working for another New Brunswicker, a wealthy coal merchant named James R. Doyle. Doyle died in 1872, leaving a sizable estate. Shortly thereafter, his widow, Louisa McKevo Doyle, married Henry Berryman, who “took entire charge of the affairs of her husband’s estate.”⁹

The Doyle estate enabled Berryman to join the French-born merchant and former mining operator Felix Chappellet (1828–1902) in purchasing Napoleon Bonaparte Byrne’s land in 1873.

Berryman and Chappellet had the land surveyed in October 1873. On 27 July 1875, a subdivision map of the Berkeley Villa Association tract (Fig. 59) was filed in the Alameda County Recorder’s Office.



Figure 58. Felix Chappellet

As drawn in the 1875 map, the tract was a grid comprising 32 rectangular city blocks bounded by Rose Street to the south, Josephine Street to the west, and Eunice Street (then Durant St.) to the north. East of Arch Street, eight blocks stretched deep into the hills, ending with the imagined East Street. The eight eastern blocks were never realized as drawn.

Blocks 22 and 23 remained Napoleon B. Byrne’s property. However, Byrne soon ran into financial difficulties on Venice Island, as the cost of employing Chinese labor to build levees and reclaim the marsh proved prohibitive. In 1877, Byrne sold his Berkeley house to Henry and Louisa Berryman, who made it their home.

⁹ Mrs. Louisa Berryman’s deposition in a trust court case brought against the Berrymans. *Daily Alta California*, 26 January 1890, page 8, column 1.

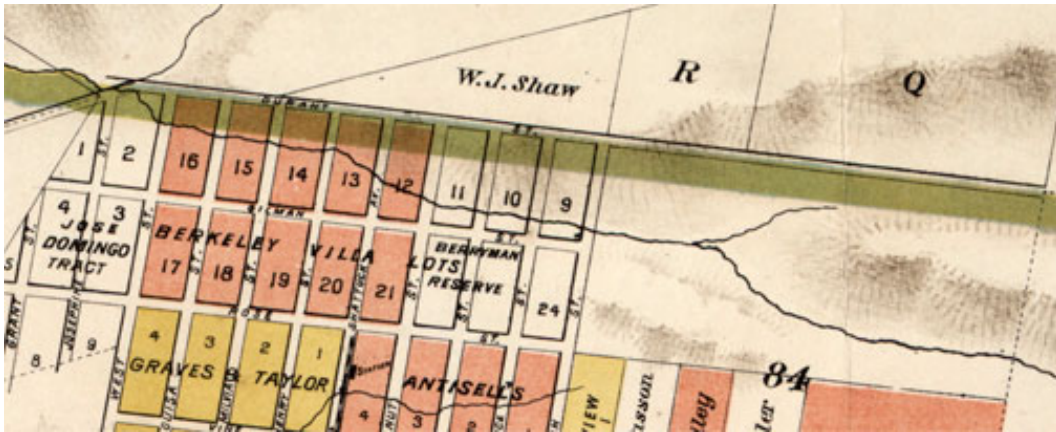


Figure 61. The Berkeley Villa Association tract in the Carnall & Eyre map of Berkeley, 1880

Even before the first subdivision map of the Berkeley Villa Association tract was filed, Berryman and Chappellet began selling lots, as evidenced by newspaper advertising (Fig. 62) published in June 1875.

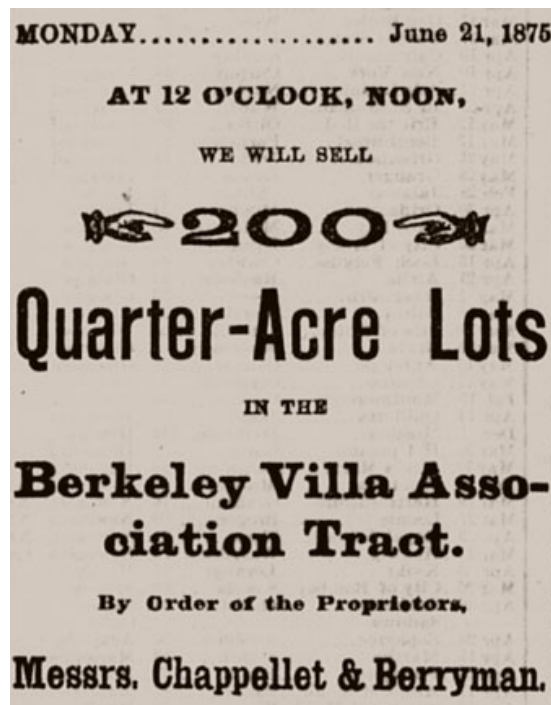


Figure 62. Detail from an ad by Olney & Middleton in the *Daily Alta California*, 4 June 1875, page 3.

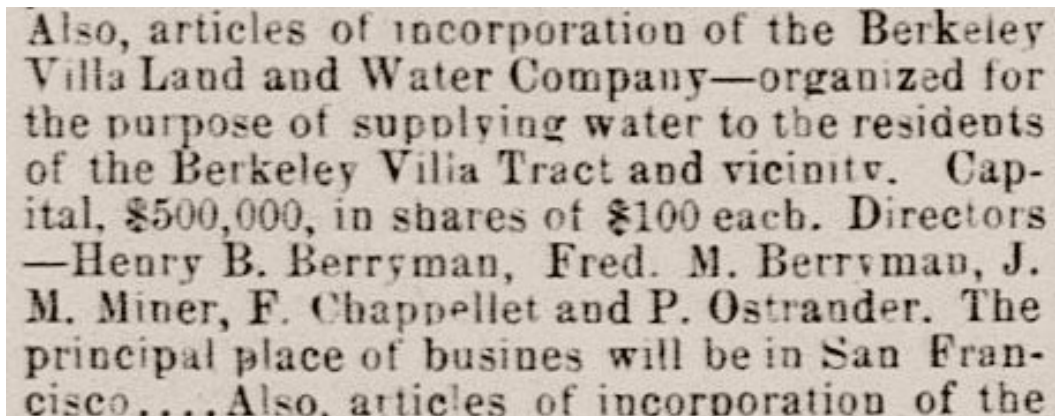
A nearly full-column ad, taken by the real estate auctioneers Olney & Middleton in the *Daily Alta California* on 4 June 1875, promised unsurpassed views, comprising “a panorama extending from Petaluma on the north to Santa Clara on the south, and including the Bay and its Islands, the Golden Gate, Redwood City and San Mateo, together with New Saucelito [sic] and San Rafael on the west.”

The ad further announced that “This property connects to Oakland by HORSE CARS to the University, which run every seven minutes, and to within a quarter mile of the Tract, and shortly will be extended to it. It connects to San Francisco by the

BERKELEY FERRY BOAT, which makes eight trips a day, the landing being at the foot of University Avenue, distant one mile and a quarter from the property. Arrangements are in progress for a railroad from the landing to the University, and on its completion the time from San Francisco to this Tract will not exceed one hour. [...] The route of the Central Pacific (Bantas) Overland Railroad passes within a half-mile of this Tract."

Just as important as transportation was the question of the water supply, and here, too, the ad made bold claims: "UNSURPASSED WATER FACILITIES are secured to the Tract; first, by a never-failing stream of flowing water running through the centre of the Property, and second, by the incorporation of the BERKELEY VILLA WATER COMPANY, organized for the purpose of constructing a RESERVOIR of sufficient capacity to furnish any quantity of water that may be required for irrigation as well as home use." Purchasers of lots at the auction sale were guaranteed a 15% discount off the regular water rate in perpetuity.

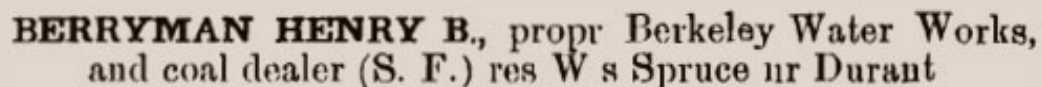
Perhaps the most extravagant promise made in the Olney & Middleton auction ad was that 12 blocks, containing 60 acres, would be set aside as a "magnificent park and garden," and that a "commodious hotel" would be erected "at once."



Also, articles of incorporation of the Berkeley Villa Land and Water Company—organized for the purpose of supplying water to the residents of the Berkeley Villa Tract and vicinity. Capital, \$500,000, in shares of \$100 each. Directors—Henry B. Berryman, Fred. M. Berryman, J. M. Miner, F. Chappellet and P. Ostrander. The principal place of business will be in San Francisco. . . . Also, articles of incorporation of the

Figure 63. Incorporation notice in the Sacramento Daily Union, 27 October 1875

In August 1877, Berryman bought out Chappellet's interest in the water company¹⁰ and built Berryman Reservoir on Codornices Creek. When the Central Pacific Railroad extended its Berkeley Branch Line from downtown Berkeley to Shattuck and Vine Street, the new train depot became known as Berryman Station.



BERRYMAN HENRY B., propr Berkeley Water Works,
and coal dealer (S. F.) res W s Spruce nr Durant

Figure 64. Berryman's listing in the Berkeley City Directory, 1878

But Berryman did not hold onto his water works for long. In August 1884, the property of the Berkeley Water Company was acquired by the recently incorporated Alameda Water Company,¹¹ whose president and major stockholder was Moses Hopkins (1817–1892). Hopkins, who had come to California in 1851 to join his brother,

¹⁰ William Warren Ferrier. *Berkeley, California: The Story of the Evolution of a Hamlet into a City of Culture and Commerce*. Berkeley: William Warren Ferrier. 1933

¹¹ Joseph Baker, Ed. *Past and Present of Alameda County, California*. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company. 1914.

future railroad baron Mark Hopkins, spent decades as a farmer in the Sacramento Valley. The death of Mark in 1878 left Moses a wealthy man, and he used his inheritance to invest in land holdings throughout California. Hopkins Street in North Berkeley is named after him.

During the 1880s, Henry Berryman listed himself as a real estate dealer. On 15 November 1891, the San Francisco *Morning Call* reported, "Henry B. Berryman and wife have sold to Alfred Bannister of San Francisco a large part of their property in the Berkeley Villa Homestead Association Tract." Thereafter, Henry Berryman disappeared from Berkeley, although his wife Louisa continued to be listed in the city directories. Apparently, Berryman spent years in Honduras, but no information has surfaced about his activities there. He died in Honduras on 13 January 1903.

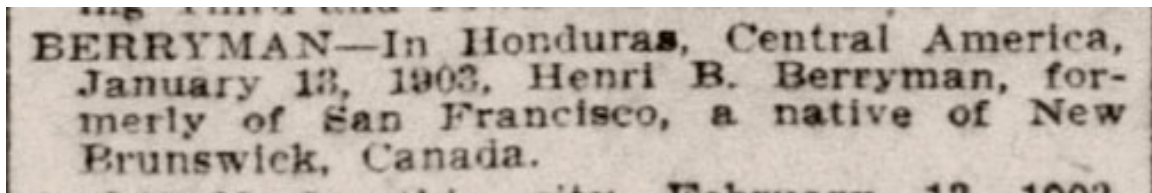


Figure 65. Henry Berryman death notice, *San Francisco Call*, 15 February 1903

Captain John Slater

John Slater (1849–1908) was one of the better-known sea captains on the West Coast. His biography in the *History of California and Biographical Record of Oakland and Environs* outlined his life fully and is therefore being reproduced here in its entirety.¹²

CAPT. JOHN SLATER.

The busy years of an eventful career found their fulfillment in the life of one of Berkeley's citizens, John Slater, who made this city his home during his later years, when not following the high seas. A native of Scotland, he was born on one of the Shetland Islands, July 23 1849, his father having located there as one of the early settlers. Both parents rounded out their years on this island, the mother living to reach the ripe old age of seventy-seven years.

Until fifteen years of age John Slater attended the common schools on his native land, but at this age renounced further school training to follow his natural inclination to go to sea. His island home made the fulfillment of his desires an easy matter, and at the age just mentioned he went to sea in a fishing sloop, remaining thus occupied for about four years. Upon reaching young

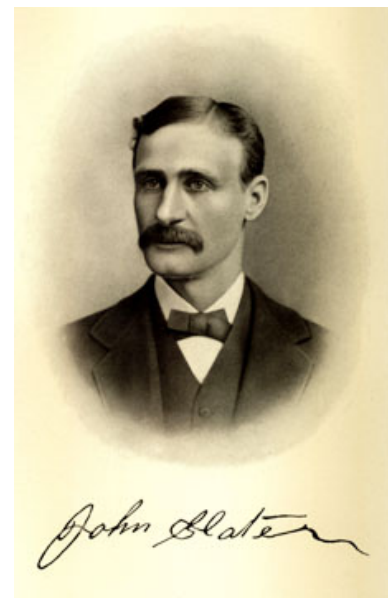


Figure 66. *Historical & Biographical Record*, p. 508

¹² James Miller Guinn. *History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Oakland and Environs, also Containing Biographies of Well-Known Citizens of the Past and Present*, Vol. II, pp. 509–510. Los Angeles: Historic Record Company. 1907.

manhood he went on the deep sea as a sailor before the mast, working up from a menial position to one of authority, and during this time he entered nearly all of the important seaports of the world. As a mate of the ship *Seminole* of Boston he came to California in 1871 for the first time, having no intention of remaining, but so impressed was he with the outlook in California and the Pacific coast, that he decided to make this part of the country his future home. Still following his sea-faring life, he made frequent trips in the coast trade, but after several years gave up the life temporarily to try his luck in the mines. Two years' experience along this line on the Stickeen river, in British Columbia, proved to him that his forte did not lie in that direction and he wisely decided to resume his old-time business. Going back to the sea, he became master of the *Oreola* [*Aureola*], and was successively in charge of the following vessels: *Yosemite*, *Two Brothers* and the *Oriental*, all of the Sam Blair line. At the time Captain Slater was master of the *Oriental* it was the largest vessel entering the bay of San Francisco. In 1889 he became associated with W. E. Mighells [William Edward Mighell] and Charles Boudrow, ship owners, becoming master of the bark *Wilner* [*Wilna*], which plied the waters of various foreign ports, and seven years later, while he was still master of the vessel, it was burned at the docks at Tacoma, Wash. Thereafter he had charge of the ship *Charmer*, and was master of this vessel up to the time of his death, January 8, 1908.

The marriage of Captain Slater occurred in San Francisco in 1888 and united him with Miss Louise M. Colby, who was born in Massachusetts, although from childhood she had been reared in San Francisco, and finished her education in Notre Dame College. Four children blessed the marriage of Captain and Mrs. Slater, named in the order of their birth as follows: James Herbert, Marguerite W., Norman B. and Colby E. As his means permitted, Captain Slater made investments from time to time that produced good returns, which he reinvested in vessels and real estate in Berkeley. In 1894 he erected a residence in this city that was his home at the time of his death, and which is still the home of his widow and children. Personally, Captain Slater was a man of strong character, honest and upright in all of his dealings, considerate and thoughtful of those about him; and as a result he made friends with all whom he met. Added to this he had the happy faculty of retaining his friends, which may be cited as another proof of the genuineness of his character. Honor and love of duty were his prominent features, and the application of these two principles were undoubtedly the keynote of his successful life.

For ten years, Captain Slater was master of the broad-beam bark *Wilna*, breaking several speed records that were documented in the San Francisco press. After this ship was destroyed by fire while loading lumber at Tacoma harbor in October 1899, Captain Slater took charge of the clipper ship *Charmer*, which he commanded on the San Francisco-Honolulu route, occasionally sailing her as far as Australia and South Africa. He retired in 1907.

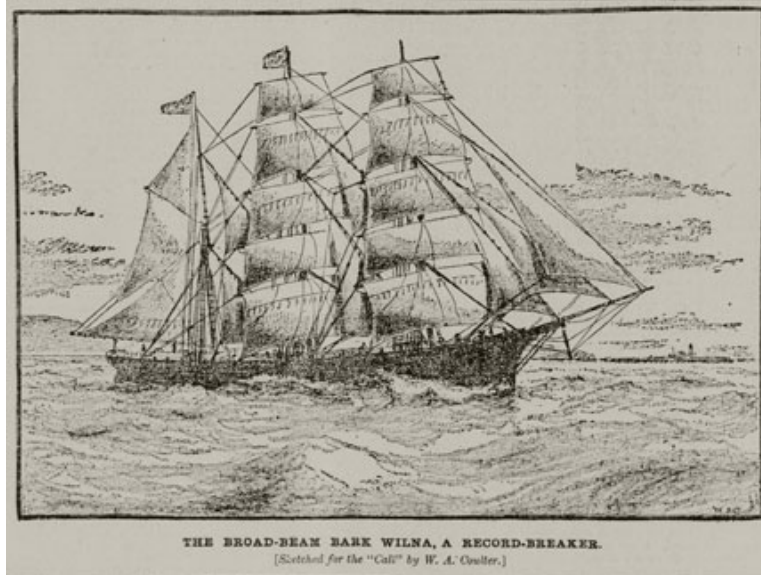


Figure 67. The record-breaking bark Wilna (SF Call, 7 March 1895)

Captain Slater's wife, Louise Margaret Chenery (1867–1937), was the stepdaughter of Captain William Colby who, like Captain Slater, was employed by the California Shipping Company, owned by captains William E. Mighell and Charles C. Boudrow. Prior to building their Berkeley house, John and Louise Slater lived in San Francisco, where their first three children were born. The family's move to Berkeley may have been inspired in part by Slater's employers—both Captain Boudrow and Captain Mighell owned mansions on the 1500 block of Oxford Street. The Captain Boudrow House, a City of Berkeley Landmark, still stands at 1536 Oxford Street.

The Slaters did not settle on Oxford Street. Instead, they chose to build their house in another enclave of famous sea captains, purchasing a double lot on the 1300 block of Shattuck Avenue, north of Rose Street. Their nearest neighbors were captains Jefferson Maury (1826–1895) and William B. Seabury (1840–1906), successive commodores of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Both captains had resided on the block since 1885.



Figure 68. The clipper ship Charmer (courtesy of [The Boodle Boys](#))

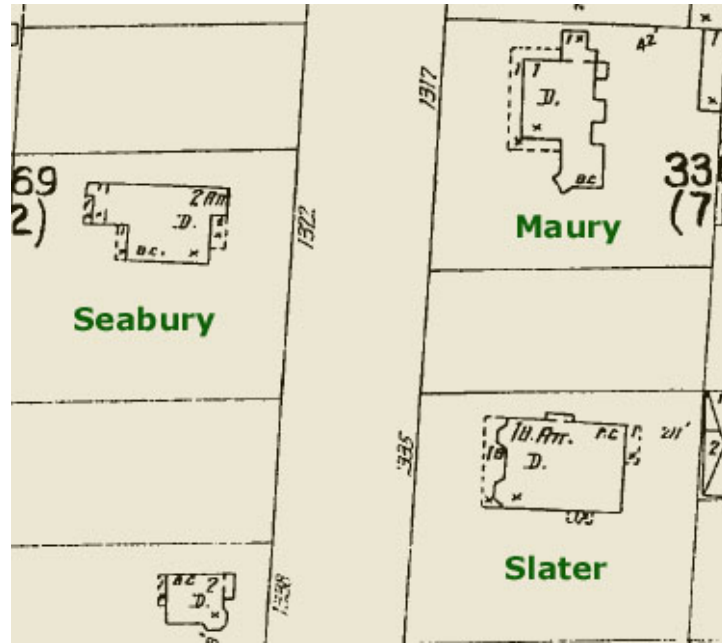


Figure 69. The three captains' houses in the 1903 Sanborn map

For the design of their new residence, the Slaters engaged prominent San Francisco architect and fellow Roman Catholic Thomas J. Welsh (1845–1918). The contractor was Charles Murcell of West Oakland, whose Berkeley quarters were located in the lumber office of Barker & Hunter, on the southwestern corner of Shattuck Avenue and Dwight Way.¹³

The first floor, comprising eight rooms, housed the Slaters and their four children, James Herbert (1889–1969), Marguerite W. (1891–1977), Norman Bernard (1894–1978), and Colby Edmund “Babe” (1896–1965). The basement is said to have housed the servants, although the 1900 census listed only one domestic living with the family, and she was Louise Slater’s Irish cousin. Later, according to family lore, five rooms were built in the attic floor. These are said to have been reserved for guests and were probably the ones used to house refugees of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire. “Everyone who had some room took people in at that time,” recalled Norman Slater in 2007. Louise Slater’s parents, the Colbys, who lived at 1402 Spruce Street, “took in an opera singer and a music writer, as I recall.”¹⁴

Some if not all of the guests were of the paying kind. From 1905 through 1907, one such “guest” listed in the city directory was Andrew H. Irving (1875–1947), plant superintendent at the Paraffine Paint Company, a manufacturer of roofing materials under the Pabco brand name.

The vice-president and manager of Paraffine Paint Co. was Andrew Irving’s elder brother, Samuel C. Irving (1858–1930), future mayor of Berkeley. In 1906, Samuel Irving acquired 1322 Shattuck Ave. from Captain Seabury, who had moved to the Southside eight years earlier. Irving’s dog, Oskiwowo (a variant of the Cal football yell), posed

¹³ “Charles Murcell—The Handiwork of This Popular Contractor and Builder.” *The Berkeley Herald*, 1 January 1896.

¹⁴ Norman Slater’s recollections quoted in Mark Ryan. *For the Glory: Two Olympics, Two Wars, Two Heroes*. London: JR Books. 2009.

with Colby Slater in the undated photo below, probably shot between 1906 and 1910 (Fig. 70).

Following his mayoral term, Samuel Irving acquired the Slater House and lived the rest of his life in it.



Figure 70. Colby "Babe" Slater & the Irvings' dog, Oskiwowo, in front of the Slater House (detail from Fig. 1, Slater family collection)



Figure 71. The Slater children, l to r: Norman, Marguerite, Herbert & Colby (Slater family collection)



Figure 72. Captain Slater & family on board the clipper ship *Charmer* en route to Honolulu, 1901 (Slater family collection)



Figure 73. Captain William Colby (l), Louise's mother, Margaret Colby (r) & relatives on the Slater House steps, 1904 (Slater family collection)



*Figure 74. Louise Slater (l), "Babe," Marguerite, and a family friend, 1906
(Slater family collection)*



Figure 75. A party at the Slater House, undated (Slater family collection)

The Slater House was the scene of society entertainments, one of which was reported in the following article,¹⁵ published in the *San Francisco Call* on 4 October 1896:

A GENUINE surprise party was tendered Mrs. Captain Slater at her beautiful home, 1335 Shattuck avenue, Berkeley, last Friday night.

The charming hostess was invited away from the house that morning and was purposely detained by her friends. In the meantime the Shattuck avenue mansion had been invaded by a score of young people, who set to work decorating every nook and corner. Hundreds of lanterns were strung in festoons in the lovely park surrounding the house and dainty shades enveloped the scores of incandescent lights indoors. The dining-hall was spread with a menu calculated to emulate that of which Lucullus is said to have been so fond, and a string orchestra, hidden in a fragrant bower, awaited the arrival of the lady of the house.

As she stepped on the broad porch and opened the front door Miss Cora Fisk, the generalissimo of the occasion, touched the electric button and the beautiful home, from dome to cellar, was illuminated by electricity. The effect was fairy like.

Prior to the banquet a delightful programme was carried out as follows:

Piano solo from "Faust," Miss Belle Meyers; song, "Florence," Miss Rose Becker; duet, "Answer," Albert Jaquith and James Black; recitation, William Lawton; trio, "Afterward," Miss Slater, Miss Georgia Krause and Albert Jaquith; recitation, Miss Cora Fisk; male quartet, song, "Say Au Revoir but Not Good-by," Messrs. Jaquith, Lawton, Landers and Scanlan; instrumental solo, Miss Rose Becker.

Among the guests present were: Mrs. Charles Black. Mrs. M. Brennan. Miss Minnie White, Miss Marguerite Slater, Miss Cora Fisk, Miss Georgia Krause, Miss Nellie Keenan, Miss Fannie Cook, Miss Belle Meyers, Messrs. Colby Slater, E. G. McDonald, Will Scanlan, Dave Lane, Charles Kline, James Black, Charles Black, Frank Thompson, William Lawton, A. Jaquith, John Planalp, John J. Landers and Herbert Slater.

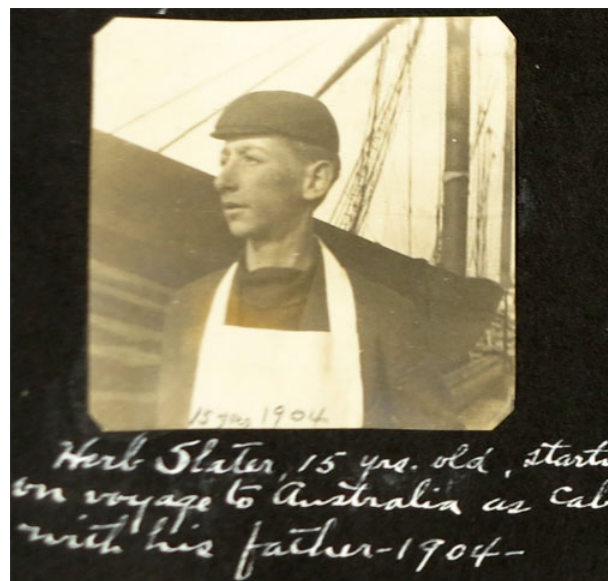


Figure 76. Herb Slater as cabin boy on board the *Charmer*, 1904. The Australian voyage lasted 11 months. (Slater family collection)

¹⁵ "Surprise Parties." *San Francisco Call*, 4 October 1896, page 18.

Captain Slater died on 8 January 1908, aged 58. The following day, an unidentified Berkeley newspaper published the following obituary:

DEATH CLAIMS CAPTAIN SLATER¹⁶

The death of Captain John Slater at his home, 1335 Shattuck avenue, yesterday afternoon marked the passing of one of the best known pioneers of this city.

Captain Slater had been suffering from cancer of the stomach for a year or more and had been confined to his bed for the last four months. He was attended by Dr. Kelsey but little hope was entertained for his recovery. Dr. Kelsey held an autopsy last evening.

A widow and four children are left to mourn the loss of husband and father. Mrs. Slater is prostrated with grief.

The funeral will take place tomorrow at 9:30 a. m. from the Slater residence, thence to St. Joseph's church where mass will be celebrated.

Captain Slater and his family have been residents of Berkeley for about twenty years, and are among the largest property owners in the north end.

Until a little less than a year ago the captain was in command of vessels plying between San Francisco and Honolulu. He retired last April on account of ill-health. He was part owner in steamship companies with Captain Dudreau [Boudrow] and Miles [Mighell].

Captain Slater was a native of Shetland, and was 58 years of age.

Apparently written in a hurry, the obituary not only misspelled names but exaggerated the extent of Captain Slater's wealth, his position within the California Shipping Company, and the length of his residence in Berkeley. A day later, the *San Francisco Call* provided an entirely different account¹⁷ of the captain's illness:

DIES OF FEVER CAUGHT ON COAST OF AFRICA

Well Known Mariner Will Be Buried in St. Mary's Cemetery After Services

Berkeley, Jan. 9.—The funeral of Captain John Slater, one of the best known mariners on the coast, will be held tomorrow morning at 9:30 o'clock from the family residence, 1335 Shattuck avenue. Requiem mass will be celebrated at St. Joseph's church in Addison street at 10 o'clock. Interment will be in St. Mary's cemetery in Oakland.

A fever which he contracted five months ago at Delegeo [Delagoa, now Maputo] bay, South Africa, when he piloted the ship Charmer, owned by the California shipping company, was the cause of Captain Slater's death yesterday. He took the bark from Puget Sound to South Africa. He had been a resident of this city for 12 years, and is survived by a wife, Louise M. Slater, a daughter and three sons, Marguerite, Herbert, Norman and Colby Slater.¹⁸

¹⁶ "Death Claims Captain Slater." Unidentified newspaper clipping in the BAHA archives, hand-marked 9 January 1908.

¹⁷ "Dies of Fever Caught on Coast of Africa." *San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1908, page 6.

¹⁸ *San Francisco Call*, 10 January 1908, page 6.

IMPRESSIVE FUNERAL OVER CAPT. SLATER

The remains of Capt. John Slater, who died Wednesday evening at his home at 1335 Shattuck avenue, were interred today in St. Mary's cemetery. The funeral services were held at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic church, requiem mass being celebrated by Rev. F. X. Morrison. There was a great throng of friends of the dead man present and the floral offerings were elaborate. In design they were emblematical of the sea, on which Capt. Slater spent so many years. Huge anchors of roses, ships wheels of immortelles, helms of camelia and violets were prominent.

Six sea captains acted as pallbearers—Capts. Ryder, Peltz, McDermott, Boudrow, Davison and Walsh.

Figure 77. *The Berkeley Independent*, 10 January 1908

Mariners Honor Seaman

BERKELEY, Jan. 10.—A requiem high mass was celebrated today by Rev. F. X. Morrison of St. Joseph's church for Captain John Slater, the well known mariner of this coast, who died at his home at 1335 Shattuck avenue on Wednesday. The funeral services of the late ship captain were held from the family residence, the remains being interred in St. Mary's cemetery, Oakland. The pall bearers were sea captains—Captains Ryder, Pelt, McDermont, Boudrow, Davidson and Walsh.

Figure 78. *San Francisco Call*, 11 January 1908

Captain John Slater's funeral was a grand affair. Louis Lorenz Stein (1902–1996), an East Bay historian and archivist who as a child lived at 1423 Walnut Street, long remembered the horse-drawn hearse and the procession of dignitaries who accompanied the deceased on the 1.3-mile route from the Slater residence at 1335 Shattuck Avenue to St. Joseph's Catholic Church at 1640 Addison Street. It was, he said, one of the largest funeral processions he had seen in Berkeley.

Property assessment records indicate that the Slater holdings in 1908 consisted of two houses: 1335 Shattuck Avenue and 1426 Spruce Street. Family records inform that the Slaters suffered a reversal of fortune as a result of the captain's death. On 23 October 1909, Louise Slater married Edward A. Phillips, a magazine writer. The 1910 U.S. Census enumerated the couple at 1335 Shattuck Avenue, along with Louise's three younger children, her Irish-born cousin Minnie White (no longer listed as a domestic), and five lodgers. The house was mortgaged.

On 16 January 1912, Edward A. Phillips committed suicide. The following day, the *Oakland Tribune* revealed that the writer had been in financial straits:¹⁹

KILLS SELF WITH BULLET IN HEART.

Edward A. Phillips, Magazine Writer, Ends Life in His Berkeley Home.

Berkeley, Jan. 17.—Edward A. Phillips, magazine writer, newspaperman and member of the San Francisco Press club, killed himself by firing a bullet into his heart at his home, 1335 Shattuck avenue, late yesterday.

Chief of Police Vollmer ascertained that shortly before Phillips went upstairs and shot himself he had received a number of bills in the afternoon mail. It is believed that financial difficulties caused Phillips and his wife, who has considerable property, to quarrel. The couple were alone in the house at the time of the suicide.

Phillips had been unable to sell his writings of late and was out of funds. After Mr. and Mrs. Phillips had discussed their circumstances the former went upstairs.

A few minutes later Mrs. Phillips heard a shot. Rushing upstairs, she found her husband's body on the divan.

Dr. C. Z. Ellis, the family physician, and Chief of Police Vollmer arrived about the same time.

Edward A. Phillips married Mrs. Louise S Slater, widow of his life long friend, Captain John Slater, two years ago, six months after the latter's death.

At that time Phillips was successful in his literary work. A year ago he went on a prospecting tour of Nevada and Northern California, but met with financial reverses.

Phillips had done newspaper work in San Francisco and in Oakland, Berkeley and many eastern cities. He was city editor of a Salt Lake City paper at one time. He had traveled extensively and was 47 years old.

Four stepchildren and his widow survive him. They are Herbert, aged 22; Marguerite, aged 20, Norman, aged 18 and Colby Slater, aged 16.

Mrs. Phillips is prostrated today on account of the sudden death of her husband, and is under the care of a physician.

Miss Marguerite Slater, a daughter of Mrs. Phillips, is a student in the university, and prominent socially.

¹⁹ "Kills Self With Bullet in Heart." *Oakland Tribune*, 17 January 1912, page 13.

In 1912, the younger three Slater kids were still in school, and Louise had a hard time providing for them. She sold the Shattuck Avenue house to Ethel J. Cayce and went to live at 2317 Haste Street with Marguerite, Norman, and Colby. The eldest son, Herbert, had graduated and was now an electrical engineer. He lived with his widowed grandmother, Margaret Colby, in her house at 1402 Spruce Street.

Colby E. “Babe” Slater

Colby Edward “Babe” Slater (1896–1965), the youngest child of Louise and Captain John Slater, was born in the Slater House about a year after its completion and was eleven years old when his father died. He was a 16-year-old student at Berkeley High School when his mother was forced to sell the family house.

The biographical information below is included in the Colby E. “Babe” Slater Collection 1906–2001, which is archived in the Special Collections of the University of California, Davis General Library.²⁰



*Figure 79. Colby Slater, 1924
(Slater family collection)*

Colby E. “Babe” Slater was born on April 30, 1896 in Berkeley, California to Louise and John Slater. Babe, the youngest child, had two brothers and a sister. The Slaters lived in San Francisco before moving to Berkeley. The family’s fortunes reversed when John Slater, a prosperous sea captain, died in 1908. Babe and his older brother Norman attended Berkeley High School, played on the school’s athletic teams, and participated in sporting events on the University of California campus. In 1911 and 1912, Babe Slater led the Berkeley High School rugby team to county, regional, and state titles.

In 1914, Babe Slater left Berkeley High School to attend the University Farm School in Davis (now the University of California, Davis). The University Farm School, a branch of the University of California’s College of Agriculture, offered a three-year course in the principles and practices of agriculture. While at the University Farm, Slater starred in rugby, football, basketball, and baseball. He served as Basketball Team Captain, Junior Class President, House Manager for the Calpha Fraternity, Thanksgiving Day Special Chairman, Picnic Day Parade Chairman, and Picnic Day General Chairman.

²⁰ Inventory of the Colby E. “Babe” Slater Collection, 1906–2001. University of California, Davis General Library, Dept. of Special Collections.
<http://findaid.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5p3020w9/admin/>



Figure 80. Babe Slater trying to block a kick from the Oakland full back in Oakland vs. Berkeley High School rugby game at California Field, 28 October 1911. Berkeley won 10-3.
([Babe Slater Collection](#), U.C. Davis Library)

When Slater graduated from the University Farm School in May 1917, the First World War was underway. America declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. Slater registered for the newly instated draft in June 1917, enlisted in the United States Army in September, and was promoted to Corporal in November. In the spring of 1918, he led a group of Yolo County "Liberty Boys" as they traveled by train from Woodland, California to Camp Lewis, American Lake, Washington, where they underwent intensive training for war. Slater's company arrived in Southampton, England on July 19, 1918 and then spent a few days at a rest camp in Cherbourg, France. Slater served with the Medical Corps, and he and his company were "on the move" from July to November in France and Belgium, tending to wounded soldiers, evacuating them from battlefields to hospitals, and setting up dressing stations. Often they came under fire from German aircraft and shelling, since they had to work near the front lines. On November 11, 1918, an armistice was signed between the Allies and Germany, and the fighting stopped. Colby Slater's company remained in France until April 1919, when they were able to sail back to America. From New York, Slater and other returning soldiers traveled by rail to California. On May 9, 1919, they received a heroes' welcome in San Francisco. Slater's military service ended on May 23, 1919.

After Colby Slater returned from the war, he raised sheep, hogs, and feed in Woodland, California, where he and his friend Robert (Bob) Lockhart managed a section of the Conaway Ranch. Still an outstanding athlete, Slater played and coached for the Woodland, Yolo Post No. 77, American Legion's football and basketball teams. Slater led Woodland's American Legion football team to the Northern California Championship in 1927.

Due to the soaring popularity of American football, rugby had virtually disappeared from the United States except in California. In 1920, when the Olympic Games Committee allowed the formation of a United States Olympic Rugby Team, it was no surprise that every team member was a Californian. Slater was one of the first players chosen for the team. The 1920 Olympic Games were held in Antwerp, Belgium. The U.S. Olympic Rugby Team was the only

team that dared to challenge the powerful French team, and the French eventually condescended to play against the inexperienced Americans. On September 5, 1920, the Americans won gold medals by unexpectedly beating the French, 8-0.



Figure 81. Babe Slater & the 1920 U.S. Olympic rugby team ([Rugby Football History](#))

In 1924, the U.S. Olympic Rugby Team was again made up of Californians. Babe Slater was chosen as team captain. His brother Norman was also on the team. At the 1924 Paris Olympic Games, only three teams entered the rugby competition: France, Romania, and the United States. Although the Americans had been well received in London, where they had played three exhibition games against English rugby teams, the French public was hostile toward the U.S. team. The French rugby team, regarded as the most skilled in the world, easily beat the Romanians, 61-3 on May 4, 1924. On May 11, the United States defeated Romania 37-0. The U.S. Olympic Rugby Team was mainly made up of basketball and American football players who did not have much experience playing rugby, yet their size, fitness, and athletic ability made them formidable opponents.

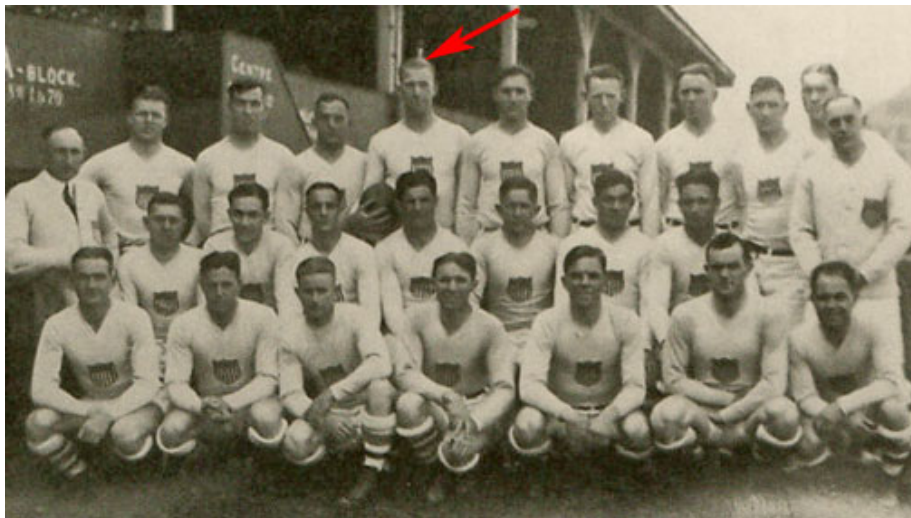


Figure 82. Babe Slater, captain of the 1924 U.S. Olympic rugby team ([California Golden Blogs](#))

On May 18, 1924, the U.S. Olympic Rugby Team won gold medals by defeating France 17-3 at Colombes Stadium. Angry French fans rioted in the stands, assaulted American supporters, and jeered the U.S. Olympic Rugby Team during the medal ceremony. After the American victory, the French government apologized for the behavior of the French fans. Owing in part to the fans' violence, rugby was not included in future Olympic games [returning only in the 2016 Olympiad].

About 1927, Babe Slater moved from Woodland to Clarksburg, California and bought rich farming land located in the Holland Land Company subdivision. Slater farmed there for close to thirty years, raising crops including alfalfa, asparagus, barley, beet and carrot seeds, dry beans, peas, safflower, sugar beets, tomatoes, and wheat. Norman Slater left his job as a mechanic for Associated Oil Company in San Francisco and moved his family to Clarksburg so that he could farm with his brother. Babe Slater married Virginia Cave (1909–1991) in 1932, and they had one daughter, Marilyn. In 1955, Marilyn graduated from the University of California, Davis. She married Richard McCapes in August 1955. Soon after his daughter married, Slater retired from farming.

Slater was active in many U.C. Davis organizations, including the Cal Aggie Alumni Association, Friends of the Davis Campus, the U.C. Davis Alumni Agricultural Advisory Committee, the U.C. Davis Alumni Scholarship Foundation, and the secret society Sword and Sandals. He and Mrs. Slater were often honored guests for Picnic Day at U.C. Davis. Slater was a Picnic Day parade judge in 1956. In 1956 and 1957, he arranged for reunions of the classes of 1916 and 1917 to be held on the U.C. Davis campus during Picnic Day.

Also active in the local community, Slater was a member of the Woodland, Yolo Post No. 77, American Legion and the Woodland Elks Lodge, No. 1299. He was elected president of the Yolo County Farm Bureau in 1951 and 1952, and, over the years, he and Mrs. Slater went on many Farm Bureau trips including travel to Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Japan, and Mexico.

Colby E. Babe Slater died on January 30, 1965. Later that year, the Calpha agricultural fraternity established the Colby E. "Babe" Slater Memorial Athletic Award at the University of California, Davis. This annual award and the "Babe" Slater Perpetual Athletic Trophy went each spring to the Davis student selected as Athlete of the Year. In addition, Slater was posthumously inducted into the Woodland Athletic Hall of Fame (1973) and the Cal Aggies Athletic Hall of Fame (1980) at the University of California, Davis.

Colby E. "Babe" Slater was the earliest athlete to be inducted into the Cal Aggie Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Berkeley High School Athletic Hall of Fame in 2009, and into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame and the World Rugby Hall of Fame in 2012. On 30 July 2016, the U.C. Davis Library held a special celebration of "Babe" Slater's legacy, marking the first time since 1924 that rugby was being played in the Olympic Games.

Subsequent Owners of 1335 Shattuck Avenue

Ethel J. Cayce

Ethel J. Cayce was the second owner of the Slater House, which she acquired in 1912. She was born c. 1855 in Illinois and was listed in the 1912 San Francisco directory as a resident of that city and a salesman [sic] with the Washtonian Company.

Property assessment records for 1913 show her as the owner of 1335 Shattuck

Avenue. In the Berkeley city directories, her name was associated with this address for several years beginning in 1913.

Mrs. Cayce's claim to fame lies in her having masterminded a major pyramid scheme while she owned and resided in the Slater House. As early as 1912, the Domestic Utilities Manufacturing Company, with which Mrs. Cayce was associated, was sued by a client who had been deceived into purchasing 1,667 useless washing machines for \$5,000.²¹

Six years later, the fraud had assumed nationwide proportions. Mrs. Cayce and three male accomplices were indicted for selling fraudulent contracts to utility company agents for the right to sell washing machines and stove flues manufactured by the utility company.

The case made headlines throughout the country. A typical story was published on the front page of the *El Paso Herald* on 16 November 1918:

**WOMAN SHOWS ALLEGED FRAUD
"Endless Chain" Sales Scheme Said to Have Netted Over a Million.**

San Francisco. Calif, Nov. 16.—The arraignment here in court of Mrs. Ethel J. Cayce, arrested under a secret indictment returned at Los Angeles in 1916, charging misuse of the mails to defraud, revealed the ramifications of an alleged "endless chain" sales swindle, through which, it is charged, 9,000 agents throughout the country were victimized in the sum of over \$1,000,000.

[...]

Mrs. Cayce testified before United States commissioner Francis Krull that she had profited to the extent of \$54,000 in operations covering 116 days.

Whether Mrs. Cayce was ever incarcerated is not known. The 1920 U.S. Census enumerated her as a resident in her son's Berkeley house. In the 1930s, now advanced in years, she rented a house at 2339 Oregon Street and engaged in concocting and selling cosmetics under the name Rejuvenate Manufacturing Co. Once again, she was accused of fraud. In 1941, when Mrs. Cayce was 86 years old, a complaint to the FTC charged that Rejuvenate's advertising was false or misleading. The case was dismissed in 1944, when Mrs. Cayce's son claimed that his mother had died. Even after her death, Mrs. Cayce's son continued to compound and sell Rejuvenate until 1948, when the FTC ordered him to cease and desist.

Winfred B. Larsen

The next owner of the Captain Slater House was Winfred Bernard Larsen (1866–1958), a native of Illinois, who appeared in Berkeley in the late 1910s. Larsen spent his entire career in typewriter sales. According to his World War I draft registration card, dated June 1917, he was the West Coast manager of the Royal Typewriter Company, living at 1934 Yolo Avenue and working in San Francisco.

Soon thereafter, Larsen purchased the Captain Slater House, where the 1920 U.S. Census taker found him with his wife and three young children. But Larsen was restless and moved again a year later, this time to 852 Arlington Avenue, after selling the Slater House to his neighbor, former Berkeley mayor Samuel C. Irving.

²¹ "Enjoined During Suit: Stockton Woman, Who Paid \$5,000 for Washing Machines, Goes to Court." *San Francisco Call*, 30 December 1912, page 3.

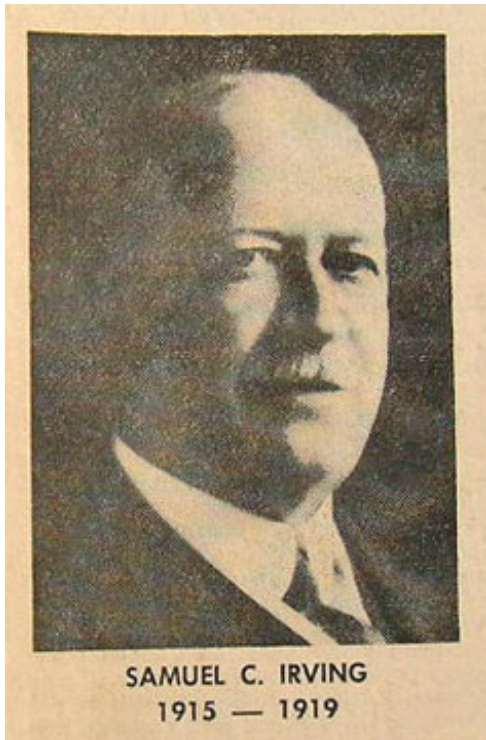


Figure 83. Samuel C. Irving (*Berkeley Gazette*, 9 November 1962)

Samuel C. Irving

Samuel Campbell Irving (1858–1930) was Berkeley’s mayor from 1915 to 1919. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, he was the son of a Scottish-born ship’s carpenter who had immigrated to America in 1853.

The Irving family moved with the father’s employment, residing in Brooklyn, New York in the 1860s. By 1870, they were living in Vallejo, home to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

The Irvings remained in Vallejo until 1880, at which time the *paterfamilias*, Andrew Kerr Irving, became a guard at San Quentin State Prison.

Samuel Irving attended the University of California during its first years in Berkeley, graduating in 1879. His classmates included educator Anna Head, women’s suffrage leader Mary McHenry (later Keith), and future California governor George Pardee.

Following graduation, Irving settled in San Francisco, where he began his political activities in the Republican Party.

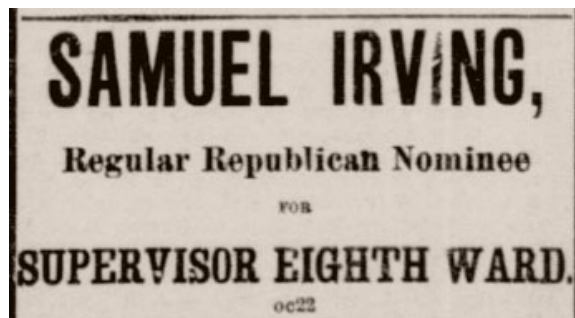


Figure 84. Ad in *Daily Alta California*, 3 November 1882

In the 1880s, Irving became a career-long executive of the Paraffine Paint Company of San Francisco, a manufacturer of specialty paints, waterproofing materials, building papers, and ready roofing compounds under the Pabco, Malthoid, and Ruberoid brand names. He would rise to be head of the Paraffine Companies.

The Paraffine Paint Company’s products were advertised and sold as far away as Australia.²² In 1886, the newlywed Irving traveled to Australia with his wife, Laura. The visit lasted close to a year, and the couple’s first son, Fred Elton Irving, was born in

²² Paul Hogben. “100 Years of Advertising.” *Architecture Australia*, March 2004. <http://architectureau.com/articles/100-years-of-advertising/>

Sydney in October 1886. The Irvings would not return to California until Fred was six months old.

Samuel Irving was a prominent member of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, and in 1899 he went to Washington, D.C. to represent the interests of local industries.²³

Samuel C. Irving, manager of the Paraffine Paint Company of this city and a prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce, Manufacturers' and Producers' Association and a number of other organizations the purpose of which are to look out for home industries, left yesterday for Washington. He will interview the Supervising Architect of the Government and other officials and ask that in the letting of the contracts for Government buildings to be built, San Francisco labor and materials be given a fair opportunity to compete with the Eastern people.

The Government is about to construct a number of buildings in and about San Francisco, and the plans and specifications contemplated by the Government Architect provide for a great deal of Eastern material. In one instance, the contract for the roofing of the barracks of the naval station at Yerba Buena Island has been let to a Philadelphia contractor. Correspondence between the contractor and firms engaged in the same line of work in this city brought to light the fact that the roofing to be used is a patent and all of the material will be sent here from Philadelphia and laborers from the East are to be brought out to do the work. [...]

In February 1900, Irving was elected to the board of directors of the Mechanics' Institute. The following year, he became the institute's president and an *ex-officio* regent of the University of California. In June 1901, Irving was elected as president of the California Republican Association at a reorganization meeting convened to adopt anti-boss principles and promote clean politics.²⁴



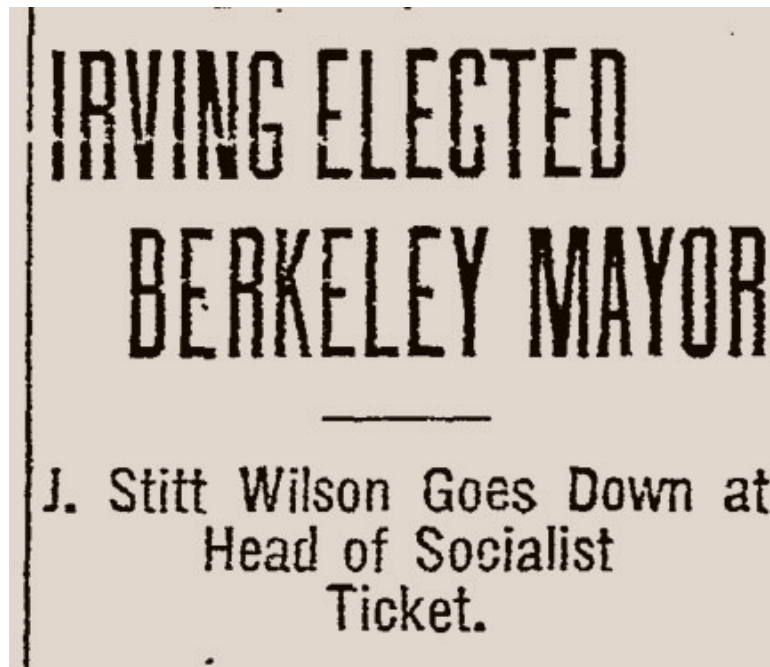
Figure 85. The Seabury-Irving House, 1322 Shattuck Ave. (Beautiful Berkeley, 1889)

²³ "In the Interest of Home Industries." *San Francisco Call*, 27 March 1899.

²⁴ "Reformers Meet to Organize. Samuel C. Irving Elected to Lead in the Campaign." *San Francisco Call*, 5 June 1901.

The Irvings moved to Berkeley in the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire. Samuel's brother, Andrew, the superintendent of the Paraffine Paint Company's East Bay plant, was already living at 1355 Shattuck Avenue as the Slater family's tenant. Samuel Irving acquired the house of Captain William B. Seabury, located across the street from the Slater House, at 1322 Shattuck Avenue.

In July 1907, Irving joined his U.C. classmates Mary McHenry Keith and George Pardee in raising funds for a prize to be awarded "to the university student who writes the best essay favoring the cause of women's suffrage."²⁵



Samuel C. Irving, who is elected mayor, is head of the Paraffine Paint Company, which has its main factory in Emeryville. He is a graduate of the University of California and a former regent of that institution. His residence is in North Berkeley. He resigned the presidency of the Chamber of Commerce at the beginning of his candidacy. At the same time

Figure 86. *Oakland Tribune*, 24 April 1915

Samuel Irving was twice elected mayor of Berkeley, serving from 1915 to 1919. In 1926, he ran unsuccessfully as a Democrat for the U.S. Senate seat occupied by the Republican Samuel M. Shortridge.

²⁵ "Pardee Gives \$100 for Woman's Suffrage Prize." *San Francisco Call*, 9 July 1907.

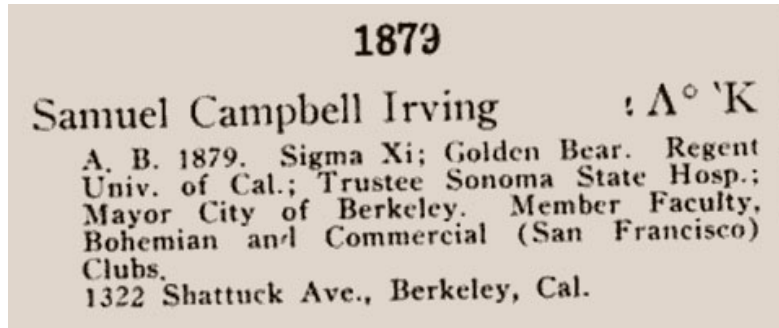


Figure 87. Entry in the Psi Upsilon Fraternity Catalog, 1917

On 24 January 1917, *American Architect and Architecture* reported in its Building News section that “The Paraffine Paint Company, of which Mayor Samuel C. Irving is the head, will erect a million dollar linoleum factory on the Berkeley and Emeryville waterfront.” The company’s industrial site occupied 38 acres north of Powell Street and west of the railroad and by 1938 would evolve into a conglomerate of 11 plants housed in 155 buildings. Renamed Pabco Roofing Products Co., the company ceased operations in 1972. Three of its buildings survived and were eventually converted into the Emeryville Public Market.²⁶



Figure 88. The Paraffine Paint Co. industrial site c. 1915
(Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library)

²⁶ Denise Pinkston, Nicholas Targ & Robert S. Creps. The Evolution of a Brownfield: Public Market Emeryville, a case study. Center for Creative Land Recycling. https://www.cclr.org/sites/default/files/CaseStudy_Emeryville.pdf

Shortly after leaving office in 1920, Samuel Irving acquired the Captain Slater House and lived in it during the last decade of his life. His affiliations included the Bohemian Club, Commercial Club, Commonwealth Club, Faculty Club, and Hillside Club; the Berkeley lodges of Elks and Masons; and the Golden Bear Society.

In 1911, Irving endowed the Samuel C. Irving Prize for American Wit and Humor, which is awarded annually to a U.C. Berkeley student for the best anecdote, story, poem, drawing, or play illustrative of American wit and humor. "I do this to encourage sunshine in our daily life," he informed U.C. President Benjamin Ide Wheeler.²⁷

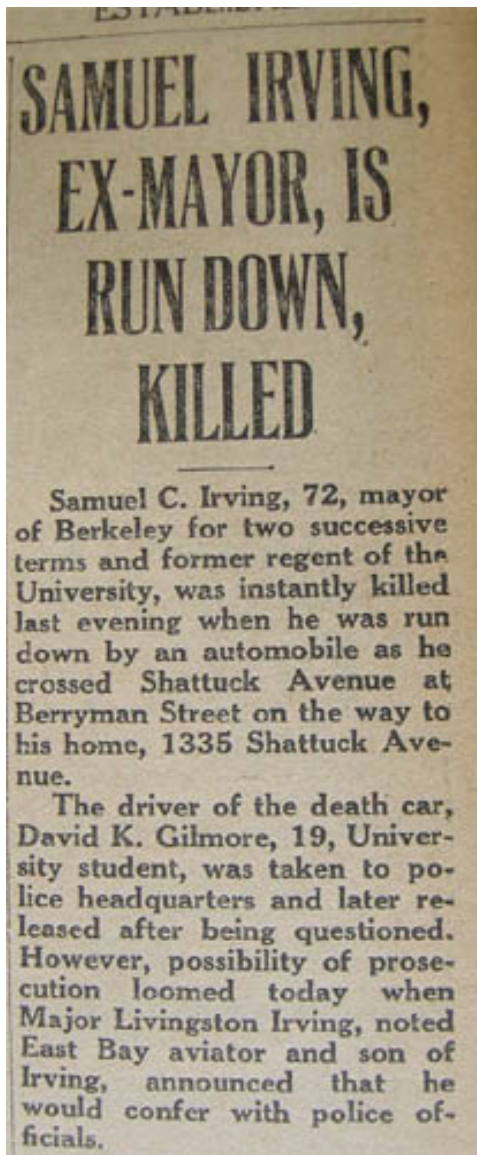


Figure 89. Berkeley Gazette, 3 December 1930

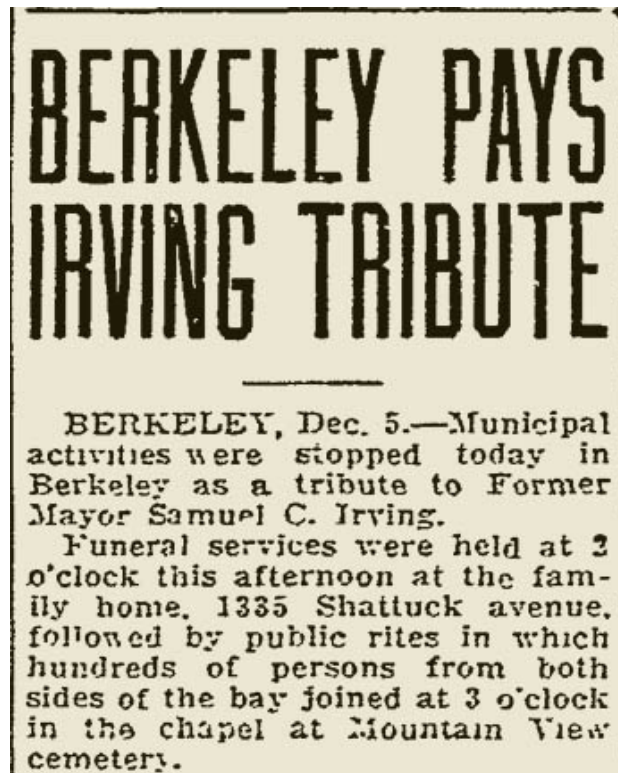


Figure 90. Oakland Tribune, 5 December 1930

On 2 December 1930, Samuel Irving was fatally struck by a car while crossing Shattuck Avenue on his way home. He was instantly killed.

He was buried three days later, with hundreds of mourners participating in the funeral. In tribute to him, City offices were closed for the day.

²⁷ <http://financialaid.berkeley.edu/samuel-c-irving-prize-american-wit-and-humor>

Irving's sons followed him into his businesses. Fred (1886–1973) was a department manager at the Paraffine Companies until his father went into the cider, vinegar, and fruit-juice business. Shortly after the end of World War I, Fred could be found in Sonora, managing the California Cider Company. Living with him was his younger brother Livingston, who looked after the orchards.

Livingston Gilson Irving (1895–1983) made a name for himself as a World War I ace flyer in the Lafayette Escadrille and the 103rd Aero Squadron, and was a recipient of the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action. After his stint as orchard keeper in Sonora, he went to work at the Paraffine Companies as an engineer. During the 1920s, he continued to fly in the Air Corps Reserve out of Crissy Field. When the Dole Race from Oakland to Honolulu was announced in 1927, Livingston was the first contestant to enter. His plane was a Breese monoplane purchased and sponsored by the Paraffine Companies. Christened the *Pabco Pacific Flyer*, the plane was painted bright orange and sported the Indian warrior's head insignia of the Lafayette Flying Corps.

Livingston Irving retired from the Army Air Force as a colonel.

Samuel Irving's widow continued to live in the Slater-Irving House until 1938, although she sold it to Charles C. and Cora A. Charles some time earlier.

Cora A. Charles

Cora A. Charles (1884–1968) was the owner who first subdivided the Captain Slater House. The initial building permit she took out, on 15 December 1937, was for conversion of the house into apartments, to be occupied by three families and eight guests (the latter presumably single-occupancy rooms in the attic). "No basement rooms can be permitted," noted the permit.

In 1940, Mrs. Charles engaged Berkeley architect B. Reede Hardman to "alter the first [basement] floor as per plans." According to the building permit issued on 13 December 1940, the building was to be an apartment house occupied by six families.

While her husband, Charles Clarence Charles, worked in sales for the Cudahy Packing Company, Cora Charles listed her occupation as a builder of homes. Between 1926 and 1929, she took out building permits for the construction of seven houses, all of them located in North Berkeley and displaying the period revival styles then in fashion.²⁸ Several of these houses, including the Charles residence at 543 Santa Barbara Road, were designed by local architect Walter L. Brodrick (1887–1978).

With the onset of the Great Depression, credit dried up, and with it the demand for new single-family homes. A shrewd businesswoman, Cora Charles turned her energies to the rental business, acquiring the Captain Slater House and maximizing its rentable space by conversion into apartments and single-occupancy rooms.

Charles and Cora Charles sold the Captain Slater House in 1947.

²⁸ 1115 Shattuck Ave., 1054 Spruce St. (1926); 548 Santa Barbara Rd., 1065 Spruce St. (1927); 543 Santa Barbara Rd., 565 San Luis Rd. (1928); 1071 Spruce St. (1929).

The Architect

Thomas J. Welsh

Thomas John Welsh was a prominent San Francisco architect who enjoyed a long and fruitful career in the late 19th- and early 20th centuries. In a recent landmark designation report for his Sacred Heart Parish Complex in San Francisco, that city's Planning Department described Welsh as follows:

The church and rectory are also significant for their association with master architect Thomas J. Welsh, who had a prolific and successful architectural career in northern California. Welsh designed 400 buildings in the City of San Francisco. His work demonstrates that he was well-versed in the popular styles of his day; his commissions included Italianate domestic architecture, Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture, and conservative Romanesque religious building designs. He also demonstrated his awareness of then cutting-edge design developments such as Romanesque Revival architecture in his ecclesiastical and civic work. Welsh's surviving works include three designated San Francisco Landmarks: the Irving M. Scott School (1895, City Landmark #138) at 1060 Tennessee Street; the Burr Residence (1878, City Landmark # 31) at Vallejo and Franklin streets; and the McMorry-Lagan House (1884, City Landmark #164).²⁹



Figure 91. Sacred Heart Church, San Francisco (photo: [Andrew Dudley/Hoodline](#))

²⁹ http://commissions.sfplanning.org/hpcpackets/Sacred_Heart_HPC_packet_10.05.2016.pdf

Thomas J. Welsh was born in Australia c 1945. His exact date of birth is hard to pin down, owing to age inconsistencies in census records and in Welsh's obituary. His parents emigrated from Ireland to Australia, and their three oldest children were born there. The family came to California in the early 1850s; their fourth child, Michael, also an architect, was born in San Francisco in 1853.

According to his biographical entry in the *American Catholic Who's Who* (1911), Welsh was educated in the public schools, City College, and St. Ignatius College in San Francisco.

At the age of 15, Welsh was enumerated in the 1860 U.S. Census as a clerk. In 1867, now 21, he was registered to vote, listing his occupation as draftsman. According to a Historic American Building Survey for one of his buildings,³⁰ Welsh underwent a carpentry apprenticeship, later completing an architectural apprenticeship with Kenitzer & Farquharson (David Farquharson was the architect of South Hall, oldest building on the U.C. Berkeley campus). The HABS continues:

The establishment of his own practice was fostered through his gregarious personality and deep connections to San Francisco's Irish Catholic community. He was, for many years, the architect to the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He had a prolific and successful career of considerable importance, and was one of San Francisco's best-known early architects. After 1904, he established a partnership with John W. Carey, which lasted until his death.

Thomas J. Welsh was a charter member of the San Francisco Chapter of the AIA and acted as Supervising Architect for the San Francisco Schools. The 1888 *San Francisco Municipal Reports* documented two new school buildings erected under Welsh's supervision that year, commenting,

These buildings are both fine specimens of the newest and most desirable features in school architecture, being as complete in all respects as it is possible to make any school building. The basement walls are of brick; the rooms are spacious and well lighted; the halls are large and convenient; the ventilation is as near perfect as it can be; in short, everything has been done to make them complete models of beauty and convenience.

The same report also mentioned a third school building that had been remodeled, as well as three new school buildings to be erected in the ensuing year, all under Welsh's supervision.

As mentioned above, Welsh was for many years official architect to the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco, designing numerous churches in that city. A 2009 draft nomination of the Sacred Heart Church to the National Register of Historic Places details Welsh's surviving ecclesiastical work:

Although largely self-trained, his work is distinguished by its rationality and use of innovative planning techniques and advanced construction methods. Active primarily during the late nineteenth century, much of his work was destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. According to available records, Sacred Heart is one of three surviving churches by Welsh. The other two include

³⁰ Patrick McGrew Associates, Architects. St. Catherine's Academy/San Rafael, California. Historic American Building Survey No. CA-2354. National Park Service.

St. Agnes Church at Masonic and Page streets (1905) and Old St. Mary's Cathedral at California Street and Grant Avenue (reconstructed in 1909). St. Agnes, whose congregation hived off from Sacred Heart, is designed in a stripped-down version of the Gothic Revival style. Old St. Mary's Cathedral is a reconstruction of the first Catholic cathedral in San Francisco, which had been heavily damaged in the 1906 Earthquake. It is also designed in the Gothic Revival style. Therefore, Sacred Heart is Welsh's only extant church designed in the Romanesque Revival style, not to mention one of the most fully developed examples of the style in San Francisco by any architect.³¹



Figure 92. Old St. Mary's Cathedral ([Noehill](#))

Welsh's prominent standing in Catholic circles earned him an entry in *The American Catholic Who's Who* (1911).

WELSH, Thomas J.:

Architect; b. in Australia, 1845; m. Etta V. O'Brien, descended on maternal side from the Lindsays of Scotland; has one son, Rev. O. A. Welsh, C. S. P., member of Paulist Order; ed. at public schools, City College and St. Ignatius College, San Francisco, Cal. President of St. Patrick's Mutual Alliance and Knights of St. Patrick, which he assisted in organizing; has been President of three or four Building and Loan Associations of San Francisco; has taken an active interest in matters pertaining to the material advancement of San Francisco. Assisted in organizing Christian Doctrine and Library Associations in several parishes. Is a member of Knights of Columbus, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, and the Eucharistic League, also of the American Institute of Architects and several smaller organizations. Address: Mills Building, San Francisco, Cal.³²

³¹ http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1067/files/sacred_heart_nr_draft.pdf

³² Georgina Pell Curtis, ed. *The American Catholic Who's Who*, Vol. 1. St. Louis: B. Herder. 1911.

Welsh is also known for his surviving residential work in San Francisco, from the opulent 1870s Italianate Burr Mansion on Vallejo Street, through a fine group of Italianate row houses built in the 1880s on Hill Street in the West Mission, to a block of 27 Stick-Eastlake houses built from 1889 to 1894 along South Van Ness Avenue and Capp Street, between 22nd and 23rd streets.

The Captain Slater House, designed in 1894, represents a departure in Welsh's domestic architecture. Gone are the Victorian elements that prevailed until then in his design vocabulary, replaced by the new Colonial Revival style that had just been introduced on the West Coast. In commissioning the most prominent Catholic architect in San Francisco to design his new Berkeley home, and in choosing a new building style, Captain Slater was making a clear status statement.

Thomas J. Welsh passed away on 18 October 1918. *The Architect and Engineer* published the following obituary the same month:

WELSH, Thomas J.—The death of Mr. Thomas J. Welsh, senior member of the firm of Welsh and Carey, architects, with offices in the Merchants National Bank building, San Francisco, occurred October 18, after a protracted illness of some years, following a paralytic stroke. Mr. Welsh was one of the best-known old-time architects in San Francisco and been identified with the planning of many notable buildings, including St. Mary's Cathedral, Girls' High School, Supreme Court building [destroyed by fire in 1906], Commercial building on California Street, Paulist Church [Old St. Mary's] at California & Dupont streets; the Buckley building, Spear and Market streets and the Italian American bank. Mr. Welsh was for a number of years, prior to the earthquake and fire, architect for the San Francisco Board of Education. In 1904 he became associated with Mr. John Carey, who, since Mr. Welsh's illness, has been in entire charge of the business. Mr. Welsh was 77 [72] years old. He came to San Francisco in the early fifties. In his youth he was an athlete of considerable local repute, being one of the charter member of the old California Athletic Club and a member of the Olympic Club for 39 years. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus, San Francisco Chapter, A. I. A., and the Knights of St. Patrick.

The Builder

Charles Murcell

Charles Murcell (1863–1925) deserves a mention in this report on account of his unusual career, which encompassed not only house building but also police work and a legal practice. He was born at Round Harbor, Notre Dame Bay, Newfoundland. In 1879 he graduated from St. Peter's Academy in Twillingate. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, he immigrated to the U.S. in 1879. He lived in Oakland until his death by suicide.

Little is known about Murcell's career as a contractor and builder apart from the one promotional article in the *Berkeley Herald* issue of 1 January 1896, in which two of his buildings, completed the previous year (one being the Captain Slater House), were featured.

For some reason, Murcell abandoned the building trade and joined the Oakland police force in early 1898. His appointment took effect at the behest of Police Chief Charles E. Lloyd, but he received no training in the use of firearms or in handling

offenders. A mere two weeks after joining the force, Murcell fired his revolver at a young boy who jumped on a moving train. Only his poor marksmanship saved the boy from injury. The incident caused an uproar and was covered extensively in the press. One commentator in the *San Francisco Call* wrote, "a new use should be found for Murcell, although to suggest one is difficult. Perhaps he could herd geese."³³

Despite the scandal, Murcell was not suspended. Lloyd, whose term as police chief had begun in 1895, came under criticism for this and other failures. "The whole aim of the past two years has been to render the force ornamental," complained another writer in the *Call*, "and its usefulness has decreased in proportion. Chevrons and fancy drills have received more attention than police instruction, and the fact that Chief Lloyd has not punished his friend is regarded as indication that the officer actually did not know what to do."³⁴

Chief Lloyd soon lost his job, but Murcell remained on the Oakland police force, where he "saw unusually active service in the Chinatown district, being the hero of scores of raids on gambling houses and opium dens," according to his obituary.³⁵

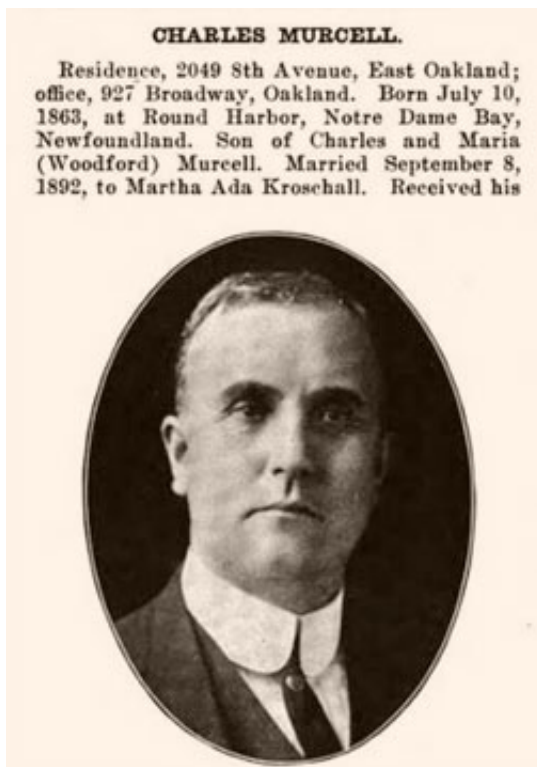


Figure 93. Murcell's portrait in *History of the Bench and Bar of California* (1912)

In September 1906, Murcell resigned from the Oakland Police to practice law.³⁶ In the *History of the Bench and Bar of California* (1912), we learn that Murcell studied law under T.O. Crawford and T.S. Gray of Oakland and was admitted to the bar of California in 1901.³⁷

Murcell's law career was not free of controversy, either. On 13 June 1907, he was severely rebuked by Judge George Samuels of the Police Court of Oakland for falsely claiming to have been engaged to represent a defendant. "Mr. Murcell," admonished the judge, "this is the second time that you have appeared before this court claiming to represent certain defendants only to have it proved later that you were not so employed. There is no excuse for such conduct on the part of an attorney, and I sincerely trust that it will not be necessary to criticize you again in this regard."³⁸

³³ "Policeman Murcell of Oakland should not be permitted to carry arms." *San Francisco Call*, 25 January 1898, page 6.

³⁴ "Chief Lloyd is Blamed." *San Francisco Call*, 25 January 1898, page 13.

³⁵ "Ex-Oakland Policeman Kills Self." *Oakland Tribune*, 30 March 1925.

³⁶ "Detective Kyte Resigns." *San Francisco Call*, 27 September 1906, page 4.

³⁷ Joseph Clement Bates, ed. *History of the Bench and Bar of California*. San Francisco: Bench and Bar Publishing Co. 1912.

³⁸ "Attorney's Deception Stirs Ire of Court." *San Francisco Call*, 14 June 1907, page 7.

Murcell continued practicing as an attorney, specializing in civil and real estate law. According to his obituary, he “was an active worker on behalf of the realty growth of Alameda county.”

Murcell’s health deteriorated in the 1920s, and this was apparently the reason for his suicide by gunshot on the morning of 29 March 1925. He was 63 years old.

16. Context



*Figure 94. The Southern Pacific Railroad near Shattuck & Vine, c. 1885
(Berkeley Historical Society)*

From its beginnings in 1875, the Berkeley Villa Association tract was envisioned as a commuter suburb, connected to San Francisco via the Berkeley Branch line of the Central Pacific (later Southern Pacific) Railroad and the bay ferries. Yet despite its proximity to the train stop at Shattuck and Vine, the 1300 block of Shattuck Avenue and its environs did not develop rapidly, even when thousands of refugees of the 1906 Earthquake and Fire streamed across the bay to make a new life here.



*Figure 95. Glendalough, Dr. Michael O’Toole’s estate
(California Historical Society)*

Sanborn fire insurance maps show that as late as 1911, and possibly much later, a significant portion of the street frontage along the 1300 block of Shattuck Avenue remained vacant. Parcels varied in size, some encompassing two and even three lots.

Suburban development stopped just north of this block, where Berryman Street marked the southern border of a six-acre estate established c. 1879–80 by Dr. Michael C. O’Toole (1832–1897), a famed eye and ear specialist.

When the Slaters came to live on Shattuck Avenue in 1895, their home-owning neighbors included not only Dr. O’Toole, Louisa Berryman, Captain Seabury, and Adelaide Maury (Captain Maury died on New Year’s Day, 1895), but also John Finn, a well-known metal manufacturer living at 1301 Shattuck Avenue; John Squires, the Town Treasurer, whose house stood at 2117 Rose Street; and Clayton P. Smith, president of the Great Western Lumber Company, who lived on the northwest corner of Rose and Walnut streets. A number of the houses on the block were owned by absentee landlords and occupied by renters.

In 1898, Captain William Seabury and his family moved to 2401 Channing Way, exchanging houses with Daniel Webster Parkhurst (1839–1899), a landowner and banker. Parkhurst died within a year, and the house reverted to Seabury, who let it to tenants while continuing to live on Channing Way. Samuel C. Irving, head of the Paraffine Paint Company and future mayor of Berkeley, acquired Seabury’s Shattuck Avenue house just months before the captain’s death in December 1906.

The 1900 U.S. Census found former Berkeley mayor Samuel Heywood (1833–1903) and his large family renting a house at 1307 Shattuck Avenue, next to the Finns.

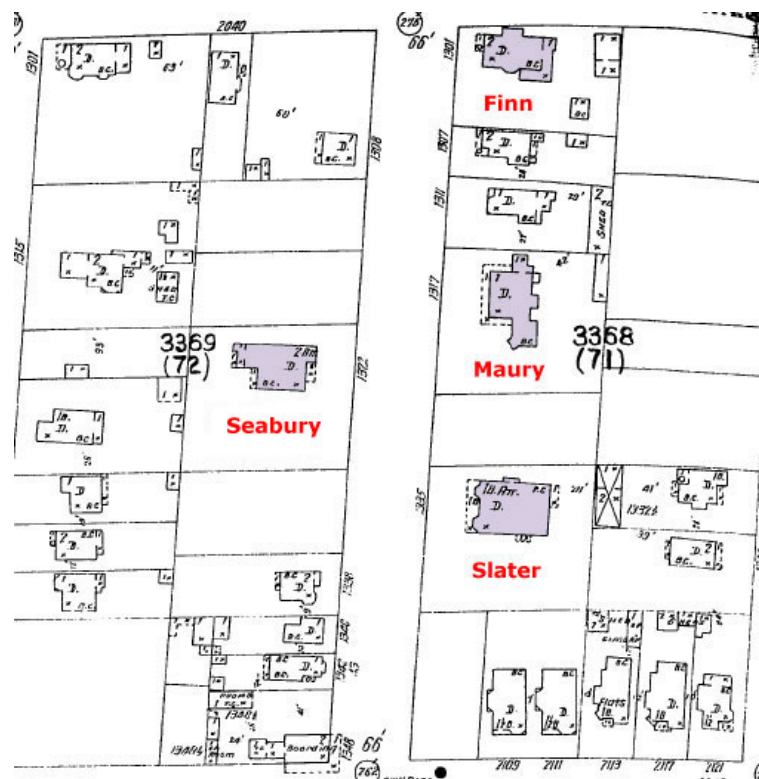


Figure 96. The block in 1903 (Sanborn map)

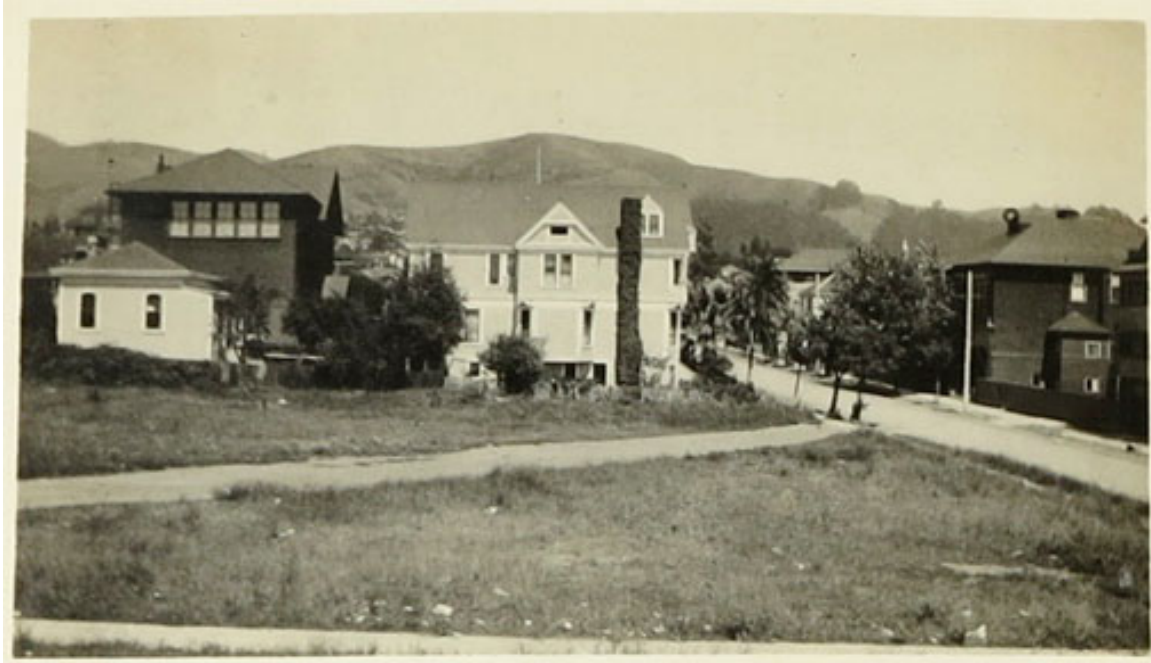


Figure 97. 2400 block of Haste Street, early 20th century (Slater family collection)



*Figure 98. Looking west from 1335 Shattuck Avenue, 12 June 1902
(Slater family collection)*



Figure 99. Looking east from 1335 Shattuck Avenue, 12 June 1902
(Slater family collection)

In 1903, the Berryman Station commercial district was still in its infancy. The shops were concentrated on three corners of the Shattuck-Vine intersection, and a volunteer fire station stood half a block to the north, on the west side of Shattuck Avenue.

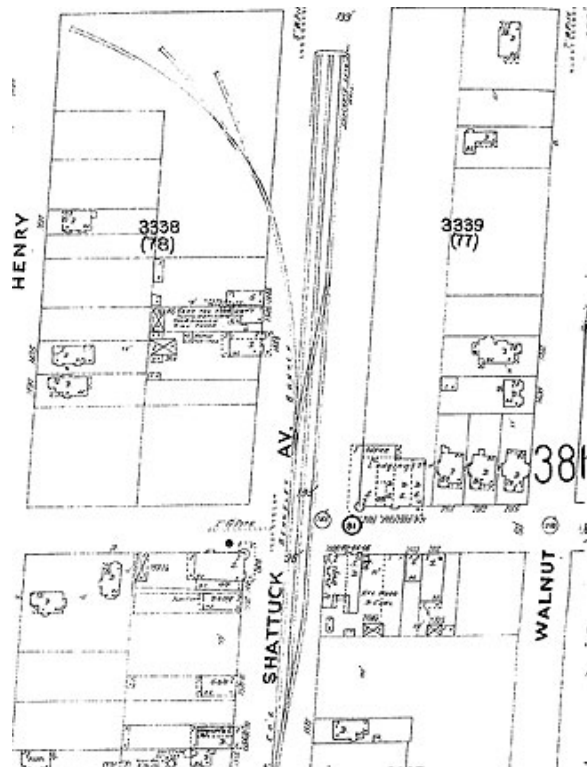


Figure 100. Shattuck & Vine, 1903 (Sanborn map)



Figure 101. The Grand View Hotel, Shattuck & Vine (Berkeley Fire Fighters Assn.)

In 1904, after 22 years at 1301 Shattuck Avenue, the Finn family moved to Mill Valley. Their house, a one-story Italianate that had been converted into a two-story brown-shingle, was acquired by Russell Sylvanus Penniman (1853–1914), an explosives manufacturer and future president of the West Coast Kalsomine Company.

Penniman soon began enlarging his holdings. He purchased the surrounding parcels adjacent to his house on Shattuck Avenue and Berryman Street, as well as part of the O’Toole estate on the north side of Berryman Street.

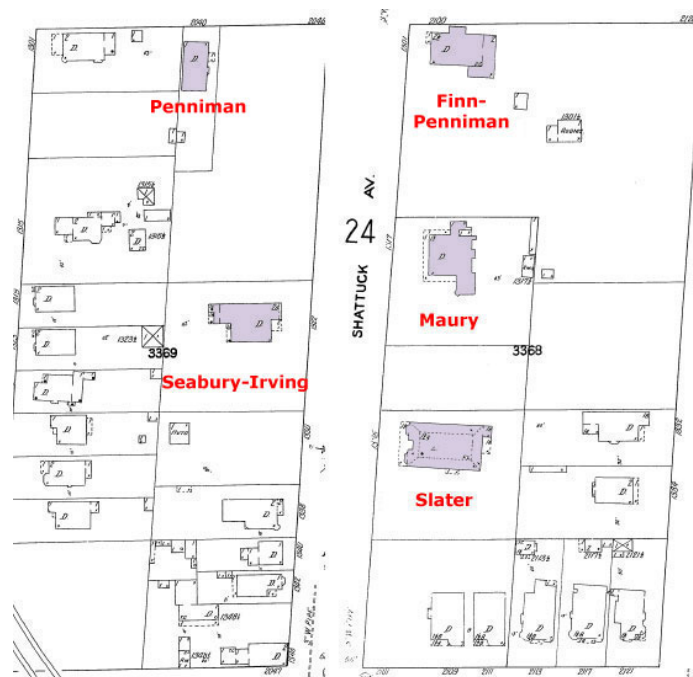


Figure 102. The block in 1911 (Sanborn map)

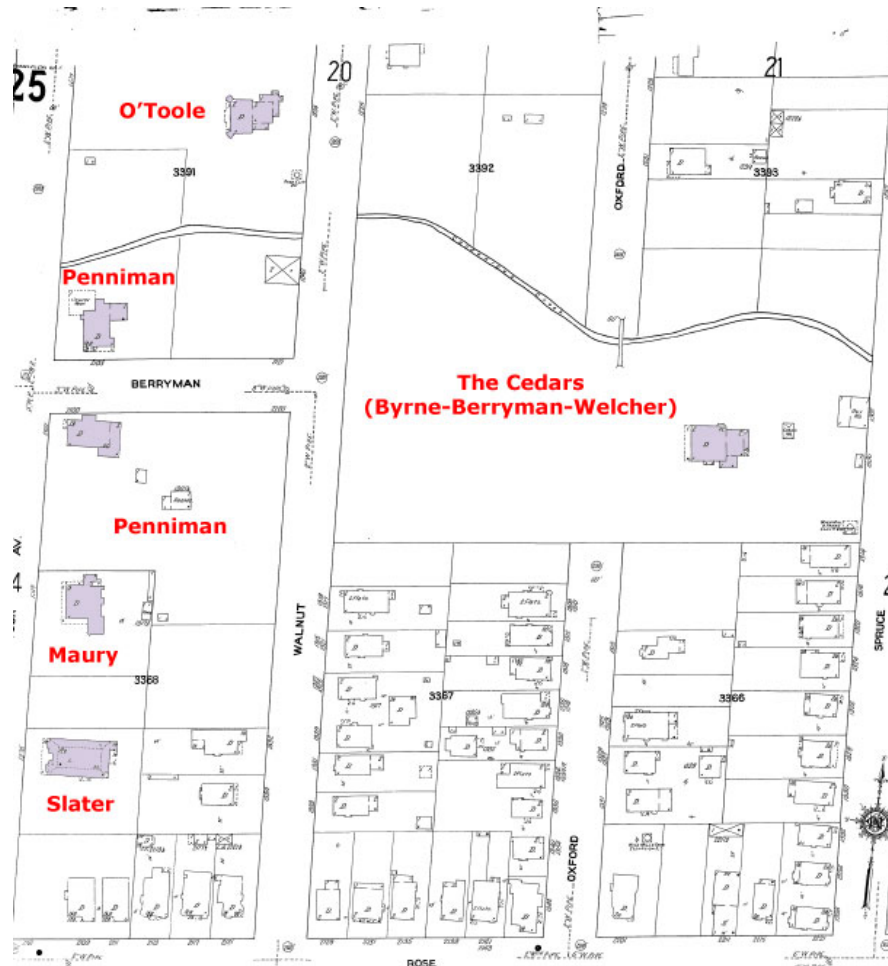


Figure 103. Neighborhood estates in 1911 (Sanborn map)



Figure 104. The Penniman (foreground) & O'Toole estates; Shattuck Avenue is on the left. Berkeley Courier, 28 March 1914 (Berkeley Historical Society)

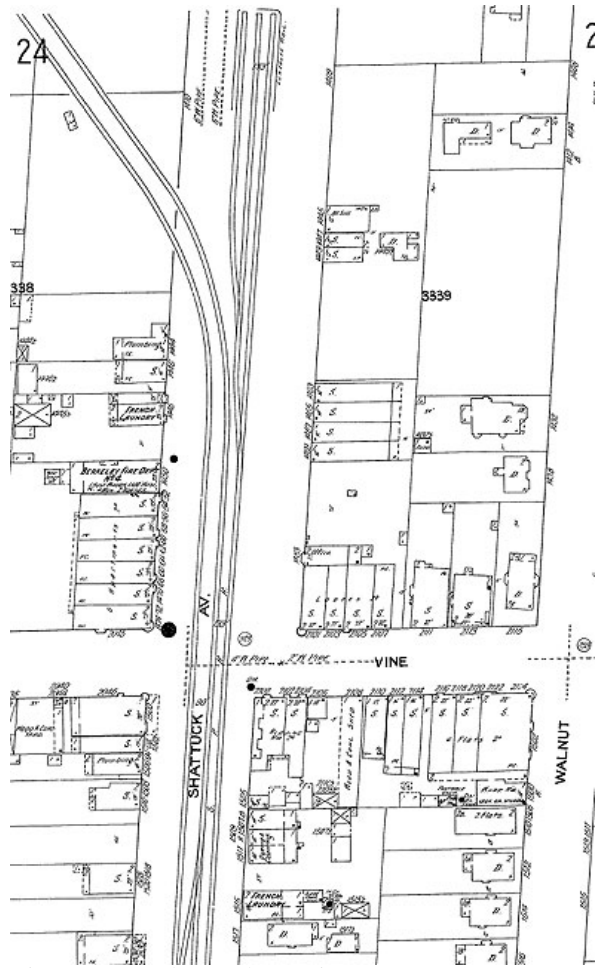


Figure 105. Shattuck & Vine, 1911 (Sanborn map)



Figure 106. Berryman Station, Shattuck & Vine, 1908 (Berkeley Historical Society)

In the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake, more public transport options became available, as both Southern Pacific and the Key System began serving North Berkeley. The Berryman Station commercial district grew, but there were still vacant lots along Shattuck Avenue. Even then, Russell Penniman was worrying about the effect that future development would have on the beautiful park-like acreage that he and Dr. O’Toole had created.

Shortly before his death in June 1914, Penniman sold his land to the City of Berkeley for the creation of a municipal park.

In 1914, Berkeley, like many other American cities, was swept up in the City Beautiful movement and had recently commissioned [...] a report on city planning. Planner Werner Hegemann revealed [...] a surprising lack of public parks. [...]

Mr. Penniman purchased [O’Toole’s] fabled gardens to add to his own “in order that their beauty might be kept intact and not soon sacrificed through subdivision methods.” Through his efforts, this large piece of property was, when he died, still intact, a “practically made-to-order garden for the City.” On March 10, 1914, the City Council approved an ordinance appropriating \$72,500 to purchase the property to establish a city park. [...]

The City’s ambitious plan was gradually to acquire other properties along Codornices Creek and link the new Live Oak Park with Codornices Park, several blocks to the east [...]. Several years later, the park was extended one block to Oxford Street, with an entrance opposite the old Byrne House.³⁹

The Penniman house was turned into Live Oak Park’s first clubhouse, also serving as the North Branch Public Library until 1936. It was destroyed by fire in 1951 and replaced with the current recreation center, designed by Robert Ratcliff.

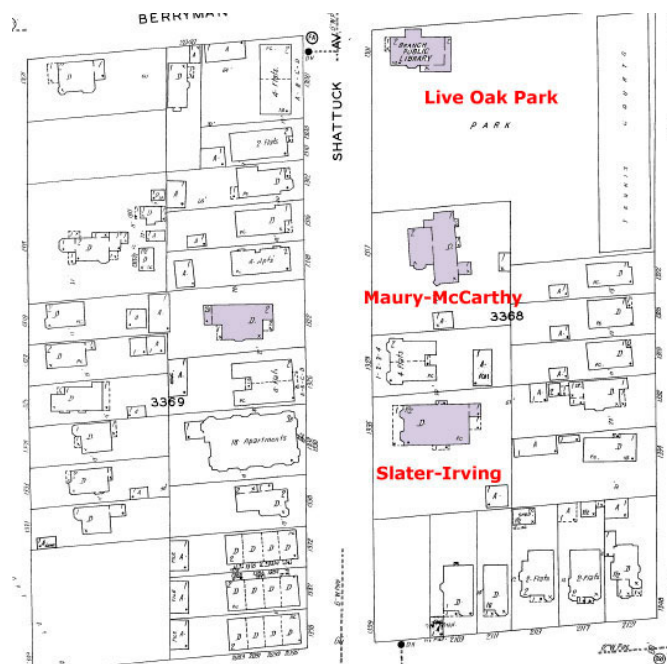


Figure 107. The block in 1929 (Sanborn map)

³⁹ “Live Oak Park” in *Around Live Oak Park*, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Spring House Tour guidebook, May 2001.

At the end of the 1920s, the east side of Shattuck Avenue 's 1300 block was little altered. The only new structure was a two-story, stucco-clad apartment building between the Maury and Slater houses. The street's west side, however, was now fully built, including a 4-story, 18-unit apartment building opposite the Slater House.



Figure 108. The C.H.G. Runde insurance office was located at 1469 Shattuck Ave. from the late 1910s through the 1920s. (Berkeley Historical Society)



The business district surrounding Shattuck Ave. and Vine St. had grown, but vacant lots were still in evidence.

In 1915, the neighborhood had gained the Garfield Junior High School, a handsome edifice designed by Ernest Coxhead on the corner of Rose and Walnut streets. The school specialized in Languages, especially Latin; Higher English and Literary work in general; and Mathematics. Drama was encouraged, and the students regularly performed scenes from Shakespeare's plays and read dramatizations from the classics.

The Willard School building still stands. After closing as a public school, it served the Berkeley Unified School District Administration and is now the seat of the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay. It was designated a City of Berkeley Landmark in 1980.

Figure 109. Shattuck & Vine, 1929 (Sanborn map)



Figure 110. Shattuck & Vine, 1940s (Louis Stein Collection, BHS)

Only in the 1940s did the commercial stretch known today as the Gourmet Ghetto become fully occupied. As car ownership became widespread in the 1930s, two gas stations appeared on the 1400 block of Shattuck Avenue: a Standard Oil facility on the Vine Street corner, and an Associated Oil service station on the corner of Rose Street.

Coal and wood were still in use for heating, as evidenced by the fuel yard at 1444 Shattuck Ave. in the 1950 map to the right.

In 1948, a Lucky supermarket with a large parking lot opened on the Shattuck-Rose corner. A large Safeway store would join it across the street in 1965.

Gasoline-powered cars would soon render the Key System trains obsolete.

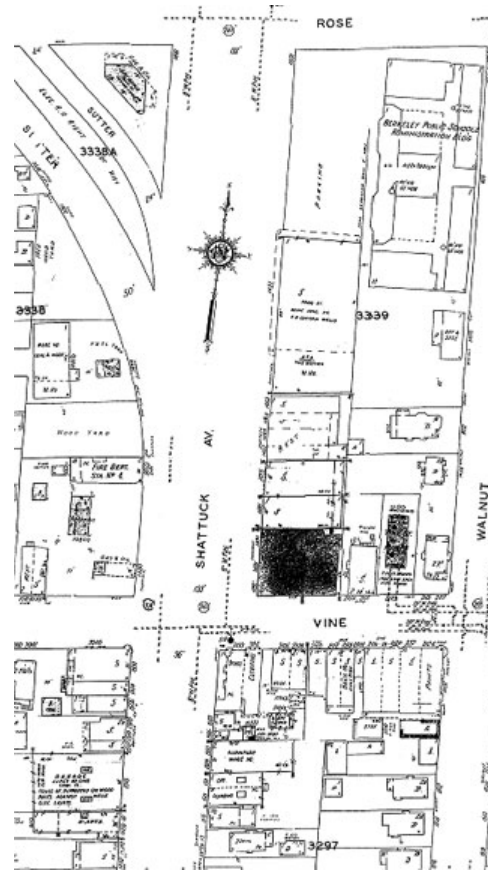


Figure 111. Shattuck Ave. between Rose & Vine, 1950 (Sanborn map)

Change came more slowly to the east side of Shattuck Avenue's 1300 block. The Captain Slater House changed hands several more times. The southern half of its double lot was sold off, and two mid-century apartment buildings were constructed on it.

In April 1946, the *Berkeley Gazette* reported that a public hearing for the establishment of a six-suite medical building in the Slater House was set by the City Council.

The petition of Blake H. Wharton for permission to remodel a building at 1335 Shattuck Ave. into a medical building will be given a public hearing following a recommendation for approval made by the Planning Commission. The six suites will occupy 6000 square feet, the Planning Commission stated. Some protests against the petition already have been made, the recommendation stated, regarding parking space and the housing shortage. The Planning Commission, however, agreed that off-street parking was available and pointed to returning veterans in need of office space as offsetting the housing problem.

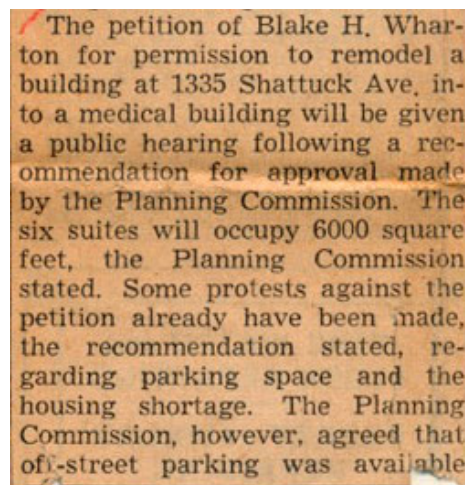


Figure 112. *Berkeley Gazette*, April 1946



Figure 113. Sanborn map, 1950

Today, the 1300 block of Shattuck Avenue consists mostly of 20th-century apartment buildings, the larger and newer of which are concentrated at the southern end of the block. Toward the northern end, the street frontage also includes three single-family homes, two of which were built in the 1920s, and the third is the much-altered Captain Maury House, a City of Berkeley Landmark at 1317 Shattuck Avenue, which underwent a complete transformation in 1922 at the hands of architect John Hudson Thomas.

The Captain Slater House is now the only surviving 19th-century house on this block that retains its original appearance. In 2007, Kenneth Cardwell included the house in a Berkeley Historical Society exhibit titled "Vanishing Victorians."

17. Significance

Consistent with Section 3.24.110A.1.a., the Captain John Slater House possesses architectural merit. Constructed in 1894, the Captain Slater House appears to be the earliest Colonial Revival-style building in Berkeley. The house retains its symmetrical façade with practically all its original features intact, including a pediment-gabled dormer; wide entablatures decorated with dentils; Tuscan-order columns, fluted pilasters, and classic double-urn balustrades; bay windows with diamond panes; a wood-paneled entrance niche; beveled glass in the front doors and the transom; and the original street retaining-wall and twin curved stairways.

Consistent with Section 3.24.110A.1.b., the Captain John Slater House is one of the finest 19th-century residential buildings surviving in Berkeley. It is the only Berkeley building known to have been designed by the distinguished architect Thomas J. Welsh (1845–1918), who designed many Catholic churches and public school buildings in San Francisco.

Consistent with Section 3.24.110A.1.c., the Captain John Slater House is an architectural example worth preserving for the exceptional value it adds to the neighborhood fabric. When it was built, the Captain Slater House joined the earlier Captain Seabury House (1322 Shattuck Avenue, demolished) and the Captain Maury House (1317 Shattuck Avenue, altered) to form a close-knit enclave of famous sea captains' residences. The Captain Slater House is now the only historic sea captain's house surviving on this block with its intact original façade, as well as the only recognizable 19th-century house on the block.

Consistent with Section 3.24.110A.4., the Captain John Slater House possesses historic value. Its first owner, Captain John Slater (1849–1908), was a well-known master mariner in the employ of shipping tycoons William E. Mighell and Charles C. Boudrow, who made their homes a few blocks away on Oxford Street. In the mid-1890s, Captain Slater set several speed records in the broad-beam bark *Wilna*. Later he commanded the clipper ship *Charmer* on the San Francisco-Honolulu route and also made longer trips to Australia and South Africa.

Captain Slater's youngest son, Colby E. "Babe" Slater (1896–1965), who was born in this house, was the first University of California, Davis alumnus to win an Olympic gold medal. He earned two gold medals as a member of the 1920 and 1924 U.S. Olympic Rugby teams and was captain of the 1924 team. "Babe" was the earliest athlete to be inducted into the Cal Aggie Hall of Fame. In 2012, he was inducted into the U.S. Rugby Hall of Fame and the World Rugby Hall of Fame. The annual Colby E. "Babe" Slater

Memorial Athletic Award and the “Babe” Slater Perpetual Athletic Trophy are given each spring to the U.C. Davis student selected as Athlete of the Year. On 30 July 2016, the U.C. Davis Library held a special celebration of “Babe” Slater’s legacy, marking the first time since 1924 that rugby was played in the Olympic Games.

Through the 1920s, the Captain Slater House was the home of the prominent industrialist, civic leader, and former Berkeley mayor Samuel C. Irving (1858–1930), who lived here until his death.

The Captain Slater House retains integrity of location, design, materials, feeling, and association.

Historic Value: City Yes Neighborhood Yes

Architectural Value: City Yes Neighborhood Yes

17. Is the property endangered? No.

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19. Recorder: Daniella Thompson

Date: 2 November 2016 (revised 28 December 2016 & 26 January 2017)