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Tracing Culture through a Historic Building: Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts, Oakland

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Tracing Culture through a Historic Building: Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts, Oakland

Selena Chau, UC Santa Barbara

SWPACA 02/21/2024



This presentation was supported by a Presentation Grant from the Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC).

- Seven story, women-financed club building
- Moose Lodge
- Oakland Metropolitan Ballet
- Oakland Ensemble Theatre
- City-owned, Oakland landmark building housing the Malonga Arts Collective





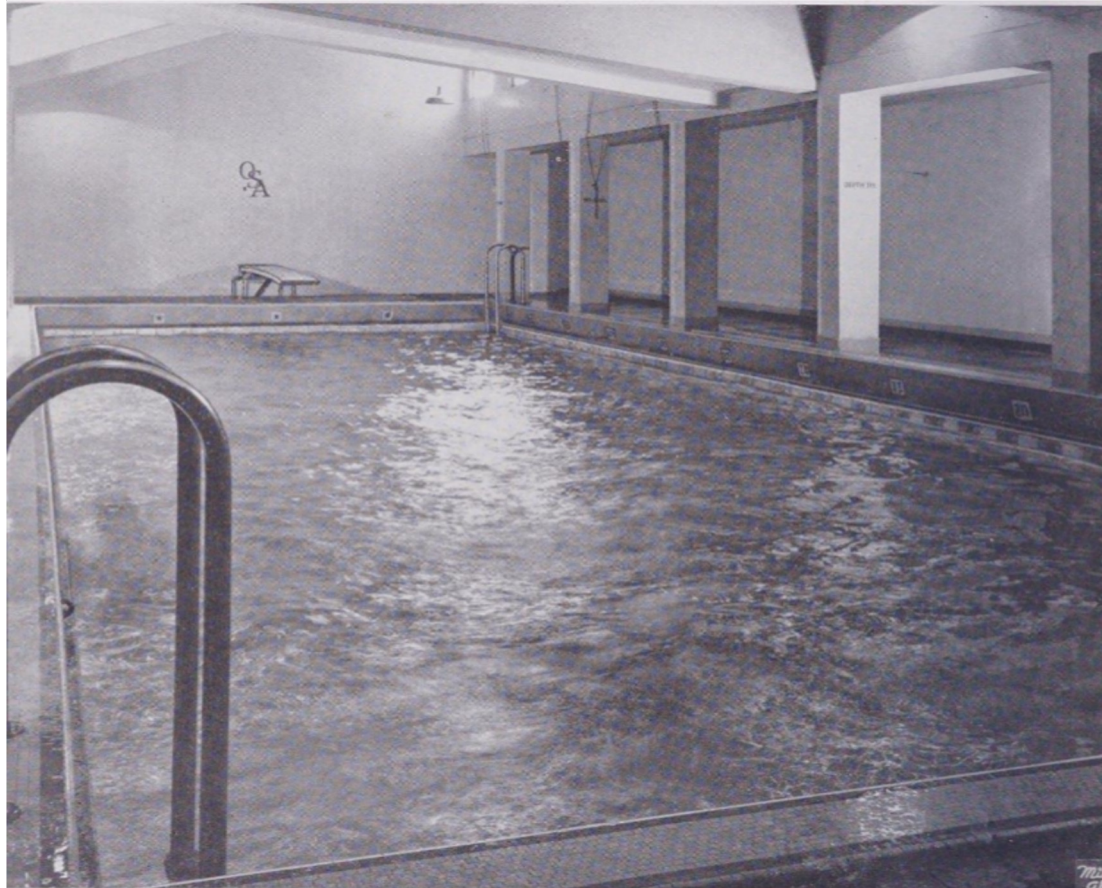
Excerpt from the award-winning feature documentary film, **Alice Street (2020)**
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/1IJPZLuY9c?start=29&end=48&loop=0>

Women of Oakland Rear Splendid Edifice

Oakland Tribune
Sunday, September 1928

Women as shareholders,
civil servants, and
sophisticated, social
organizers





L: From *The Portal* by Bebe H. Patten, 1946. R: Foyer. From *The Magazine of the Women's City Club*, 1928.



Postcard circa
1936, no
copyright
notice

1928 Building Directory

Ground Floor

- Bowling Alley, Gymnasium, Swimming Pool, practice golf net

First Floor

- Auditorium & ticket office, Men's waiting room, stores

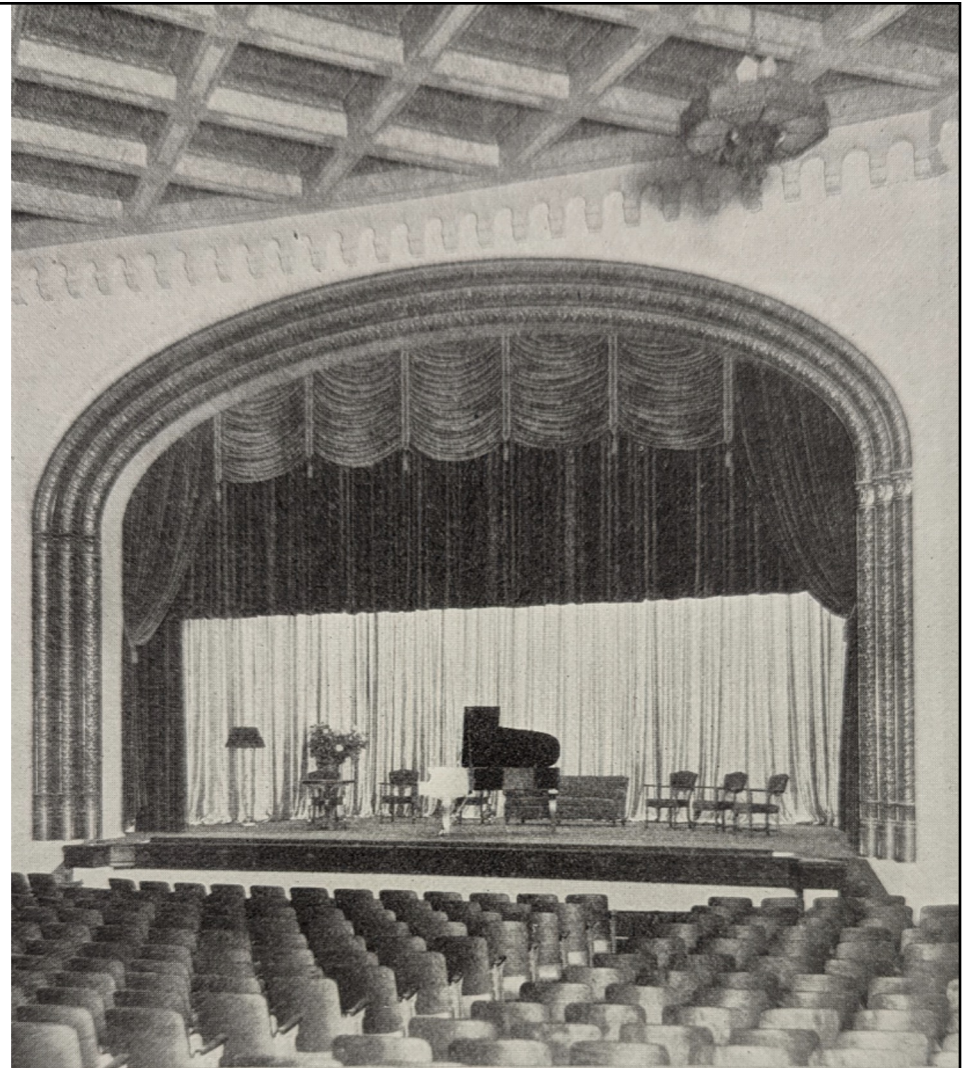
Second Floor & 2nd floor mezzanine

- Dining & ballroom, candy counter, Gold room, Italian room, Kitchen, art gallery, assembly room

Third Floor - exclusive club use

- Card room, club lounge, library, sun parlor, tennis court, telephone booths

Floors 4-6: Bedrooms

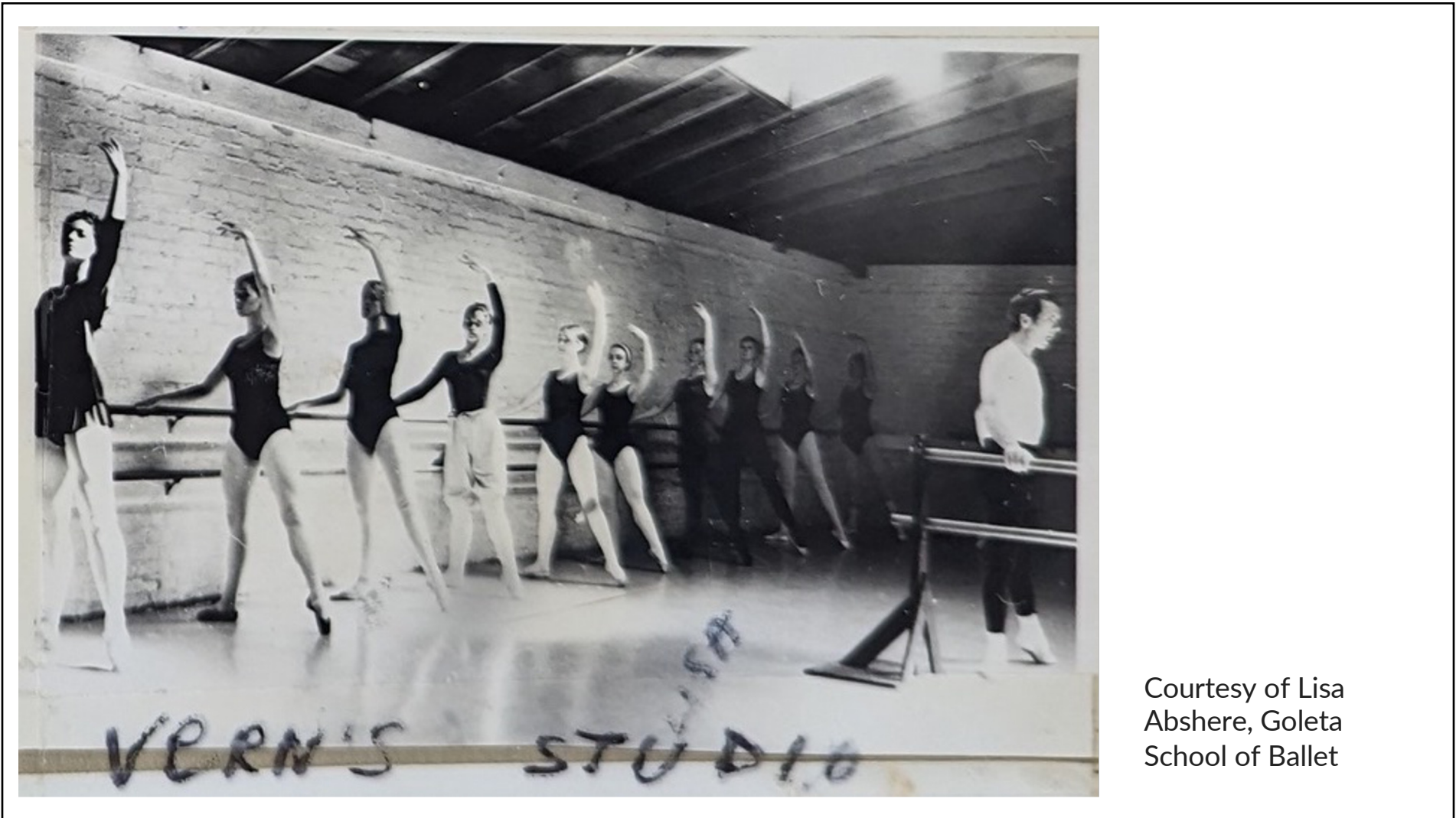


The children are happy



Moose Gathering for Convention 1923. He's There Pick him out

"Moose Gathering for Convention
1923. He's There Pick him Out."
California State Library
https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01CSL_INST/hbrh2d/alma990013816330205115



Courtesy of Lisa
Abshere, Goleta
School of Ballet

Arensky Piano Suite

ORPHAN NO MORE — YOUR
Oakland
Metropolitan Ballet
IN CONCERT

At Their Own Resident Theatre
1426 Alice Street, Downtown Oakland

Oct. 18th & 19th at 8:00 p.m. — 20th at 2:30 p.m.
Oct. 25th & 26th at 8:00 p.m. — 27th at 2:30 p.m.

SEATS \$3.00

Les Patineur

Faena

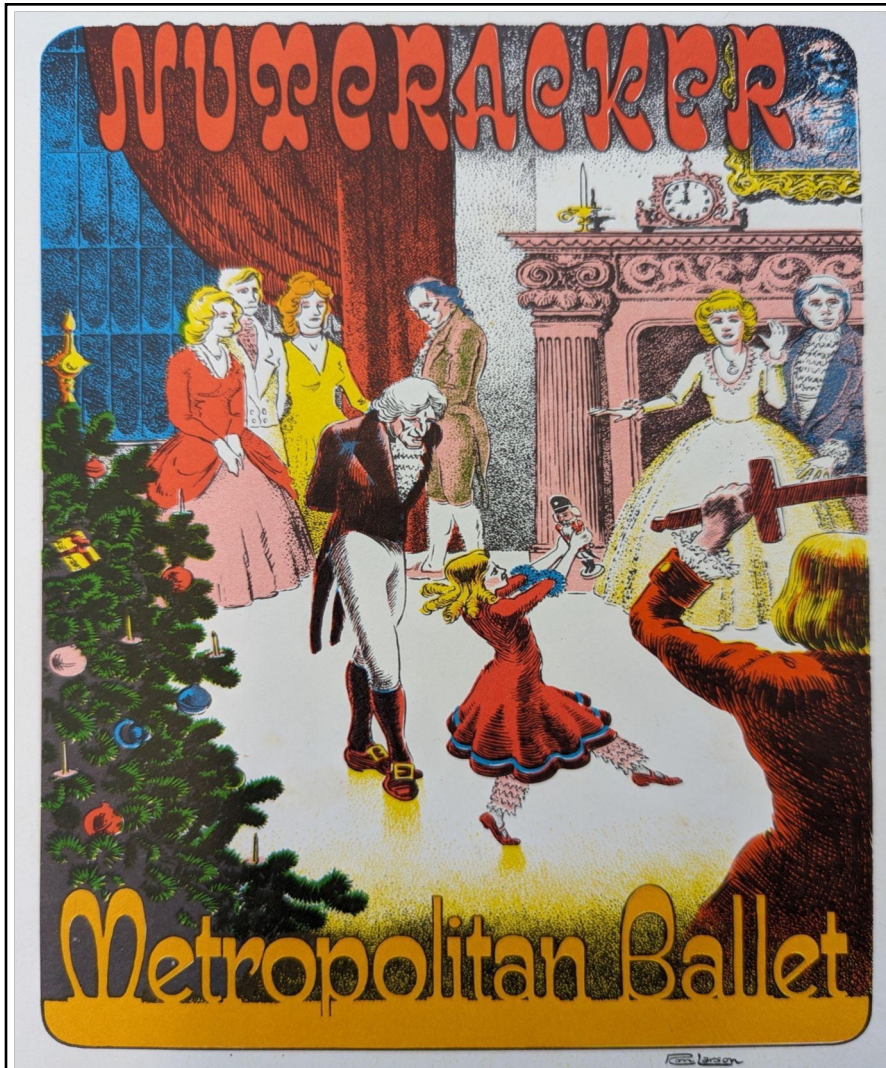
The Firebird

Courtesy of Lisa Abshere, Goleta School of Ballet

Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company

Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company
collection, [ca. 1966-ongoing], Museum
of Performance + Design





METROPOLITAN BALLET COMPANY

The Spring Concert

PARTITA ● CAMERATA

PENTIMENTO ● TARANTELLE

Artistic Direction By
VERN NERDEN

Metropolitan Theatre
1426 ALICE STREET, OAKLAND



L: Courtesy of Lisa Abshere, Goleta School of Ballet
R: Oakland History Room



OAKLAND METROPOLITAN BALLET COMPANY
at 1426 Alice Street, Oakland

PHASE I

The opening of this theatre has been made possible through the efforts of the Board of Directors and the Technical Staff of the Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company on behalf of the General Membership of this non-profit corporation.

This theatre is an innovation in the dance world of the western states by its being the permanent home of the Oakland Metropolitan Ballet while the company succeeds during the ten year lease agreement. As a non-profit corporation dedicated to bringing more dance representation to the Oakland area, the Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company plans broad performance schedules in the new theatre and looks to the public for enthusiastic attendance.

Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company collection, [ca. 1966- ongoing], Museum of Performance + Design

GRAND OPENING BALLET

HOSTED BY
Oakland Metropolitan Ballet Company

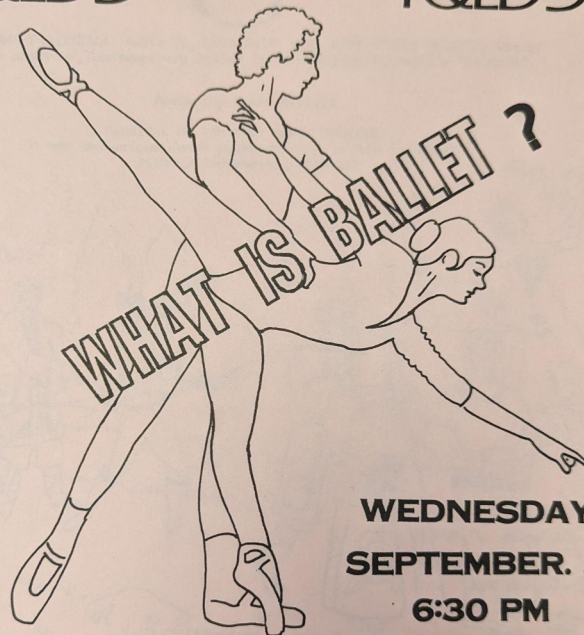


OPEN STUDIO TELEVISION ⁹⁻³⁻⁷⁵

PRESENTS

KQED9

KQED9



WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER. 3
6:30 PM

Presented by staff and members of
the Metropolitan Ballet Company of
Oakland

VERN NERDEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

OPEN STUDIO TELEVISION is community access television,
seen weekdays at 6:30 p.m. on KQED Channel 9.

Oakland Metropolitan
Ballet Company
collection, [ca. 1966-
ongoing], Museum of
Performance + Design



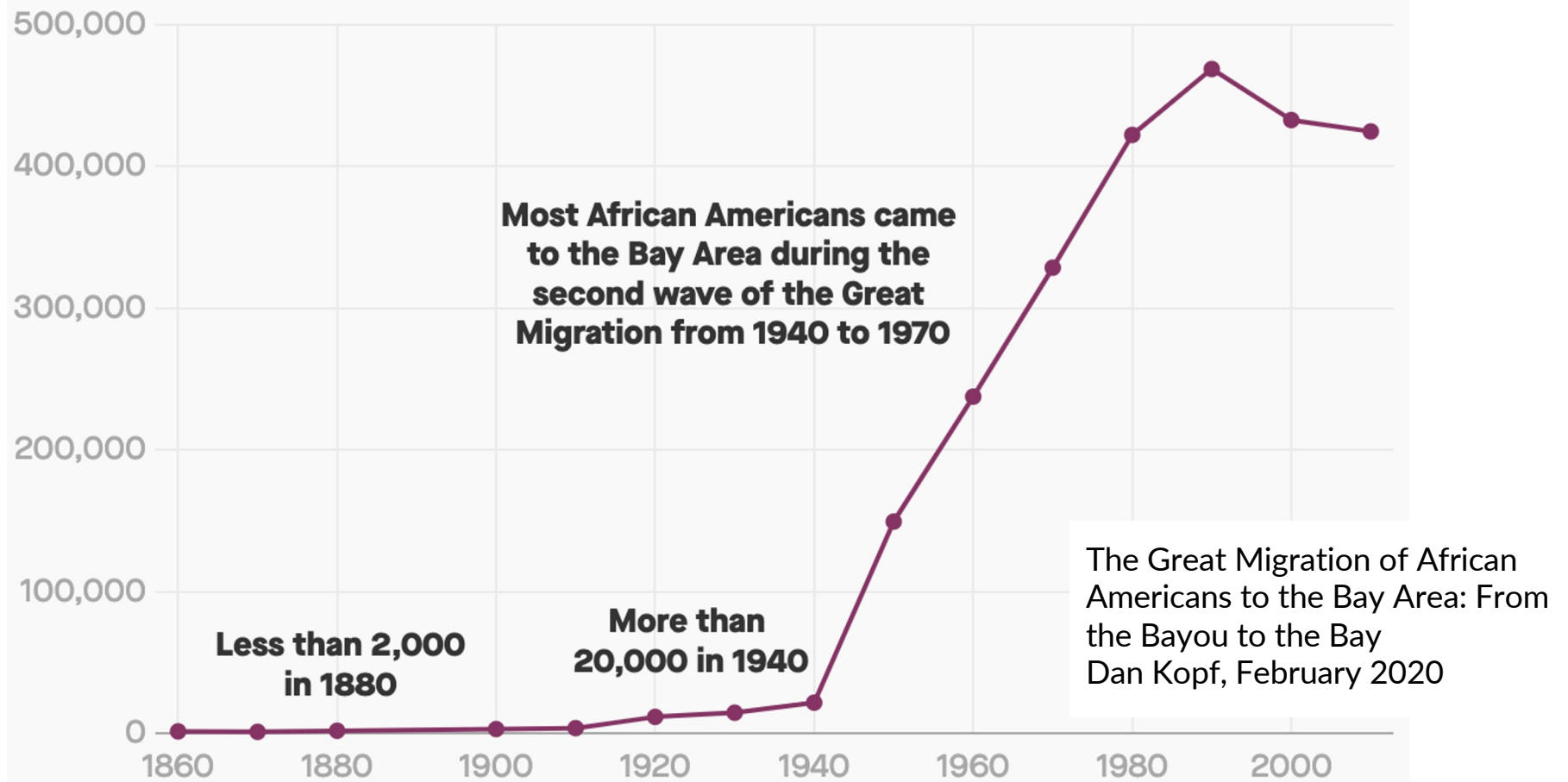
Oakland
Metropolitan
Ballet rehearses
The Nutcracker
(1970).

<https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/239582>

Pictured: Jeffrey
Hughes and Leslie
Cook.

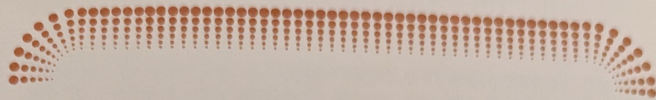
The Bay Area TV
Archive.

Black population of San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan area





Oakland
Ensemble
Theatre company
photo circa
1974. Courtesy
of Binga



Oakland Ensemble Theater

presents

To Be Young, Gifted and Black

by

LORRAINE HANSBERRY

directed by

RON STACKER THOMPSON



The Cast



Ruth Beckford

The foremost authority in African-Haitian dance in the Bay Area, this is "Miss B's" second production at OET. Her previous performance was in Happy Ending in which she played the highly acclaimed "Ellie." Currently she is writing an authoritative biography of Katherine Dunham of whom she was a protege.

Artie Climmons

When not painting, "Cordell" is acting. He has trained at ACT and performed in their journeyman program. He was last seen at OET as the indomitable Gabe Gabriel in No Place To Be Somebody.



Paul Crissey

Type-cast as a white male again! Paul last appeared at OET as a corrupt judge in No Place To Be Somebody. He is currently writing and performing in a new TV series, Hot Fudge Sunday for KRON-TV.

Precious DeWitt

A student at U.C. Berkeley and an elementary school teacher, "Prec" is appearing in her second OET production. After an absence from theatre for many years, she's "glad to be back."



The Cast



John Harris

Upon leaving the Merchant Marines and discovering he was fat and "couldn't touch his toes," John became a devoted student of yoga. He is making his acting debut in To Be Young, Gifted and Black.

Norman Harris

Always having his goals set toward becoming a professional actor, Norman has appeared in several productions in the Bay Area including The Golden Stool and No One Man Show performed at the On Broadway in San Francisco.

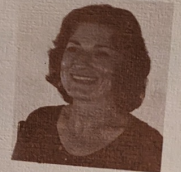


Beverly Johnson

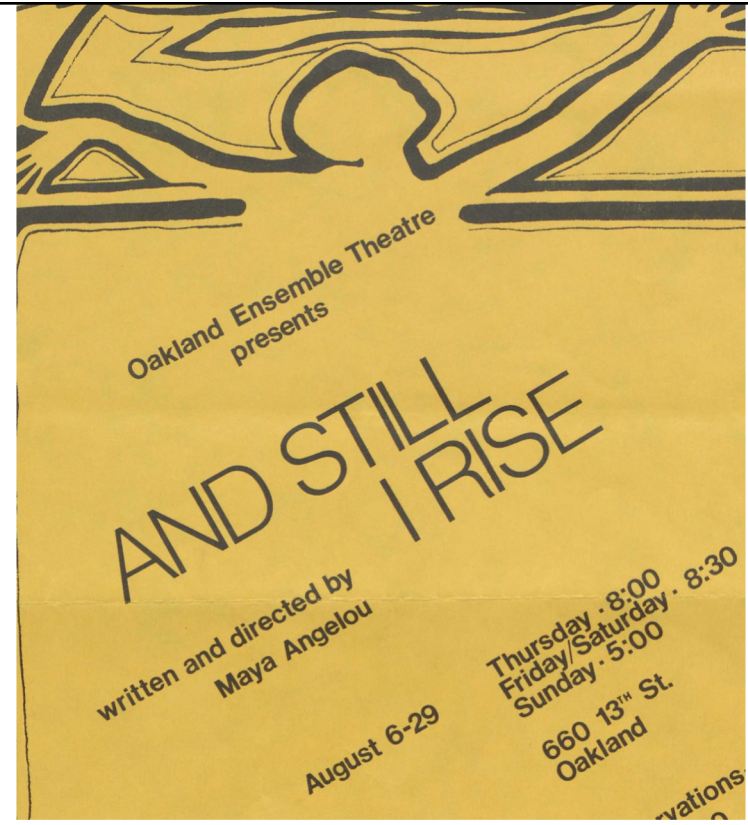
Although her first love is working with children, theatre has always been important to her ever since she first "hulued" in South Pacific.

Gen Martin

An OET Advisory Board member for the past year, "Gen" has decided to "trip the light fantastic" with acting as well. The role of "Mavis" is her first with OET.



OET Program. Rhonda White-Warner papers, African American Museum & Library at Oakland.

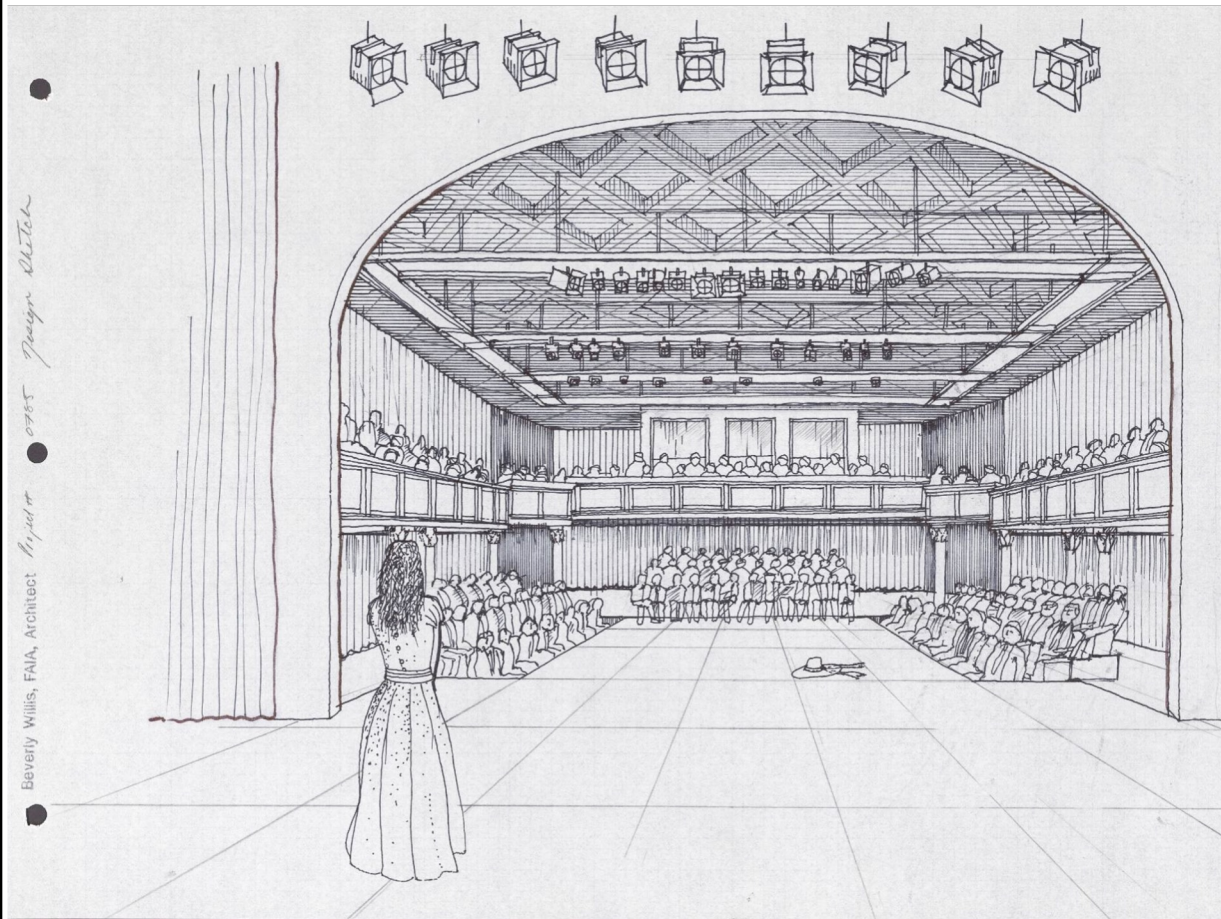


L: Jan Blythe in "And Still I Rise." *People's World* 39, no. 32 (1976)

R: OET program. Maya Angelou Film and Theater Collection (MS597), Z. Smith Reynolds Library Special Collections and Archives, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, USA.



Design sketch for the Alice Arts Center facade
Beverly Willis Architectural Collection, 1954-
1999, (MS 92-019 WILLIS), Special Collections
and University Archives, University Libraries,
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State
University.



Design sketch for the Alice Arts Center theater
Beverly Willis Architectural Collection, 1954-1999, (MS 92-019 WILLIS), Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Oakland Ensemble Theatre

Photo by Victoria Kirby, PR manager for OET. Rhonda White-Warner papers, African American Museum & Library at Oakland.



OAKLAND
**ENSEMBLE
THEATRE**



SOLOS

Oakland Ensemble Theatre
1991-92 SEASON



That Serious He-Man Ball

FREDERICK DOUGLASS NOW

The Magical Adventures of Pretty Pearl

Alive & Kickin'!

1985 - After staging productions in temporary locations, Oakland Ensemble Theatre moved into the Alice Arts Center

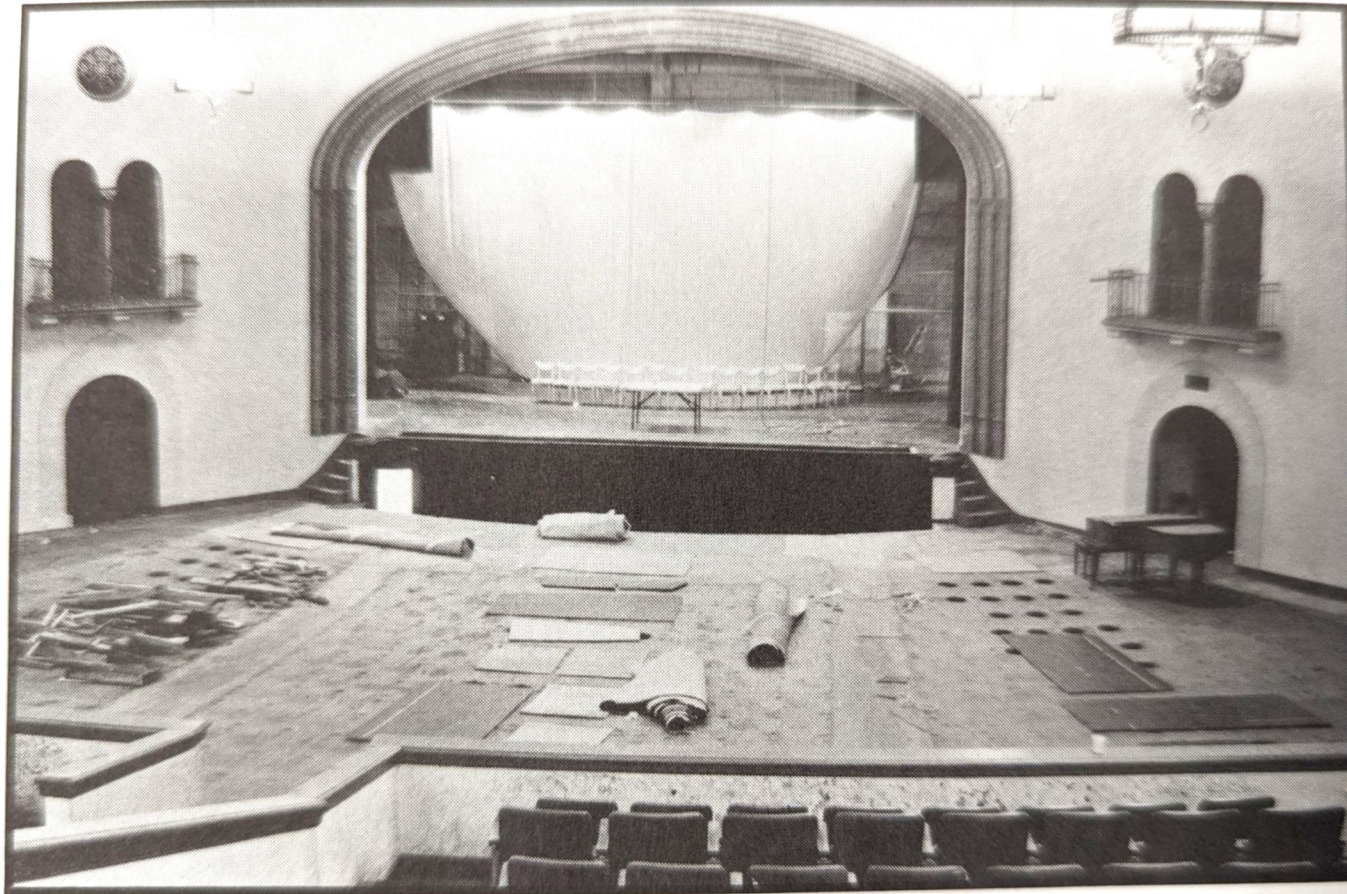


Photo: Fred Speiser

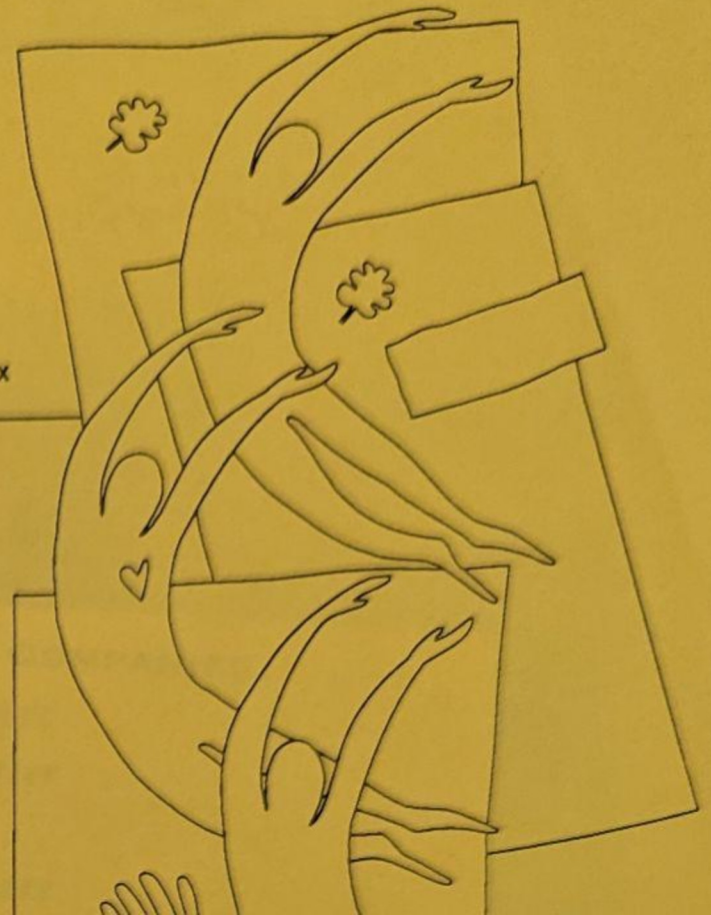
Renovations in progress at the Alice Arts Center,
1428 Alice Street, Downtown Oakland.

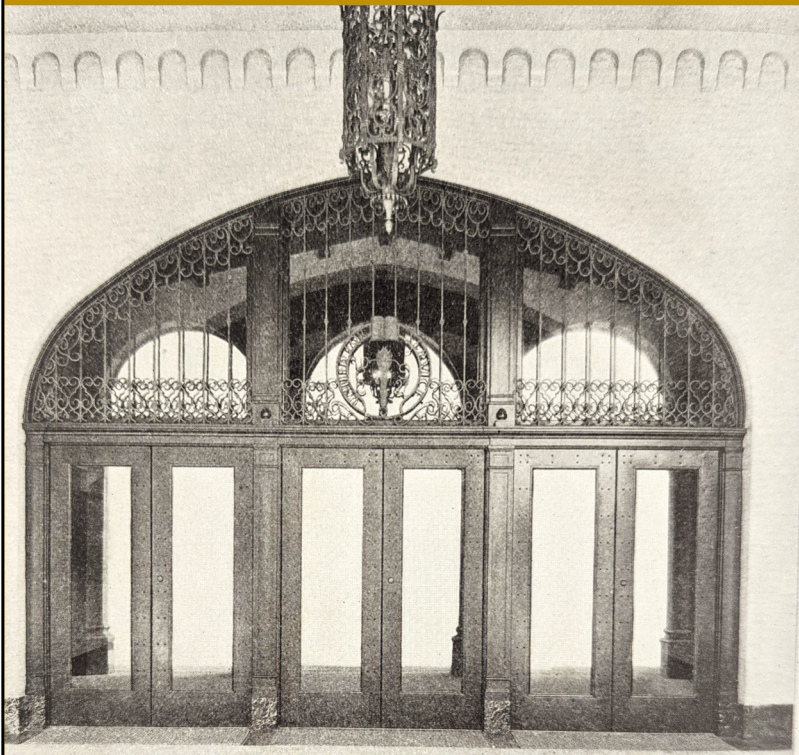
Photo: Fred Speiser.
1992 OET Newsletter,
Oakland History
Center

Alice Arts Center

1428 ALICE STREET, OAKLAND, CA 94612 • (510) 238-7221 (510) 238-7225 FAX

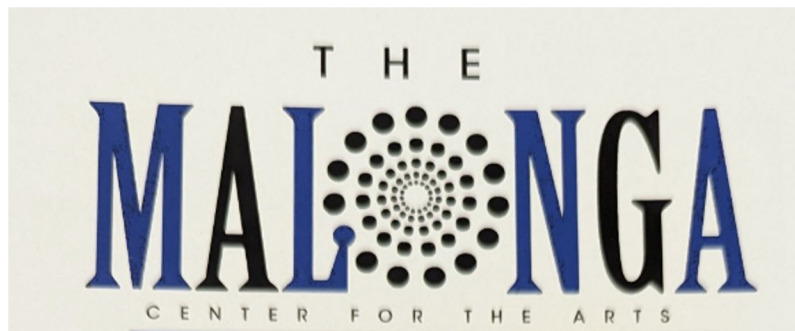
THE ALICE ARTS CENTER is Oakland's first multicultural and multidisciplinary performing arts complex. Our goal is to provide a focal point to celebrate and nurture the arts, promote arts activities that foster intercultural cooperation and community participation, and host local, regional and national (touring) performing arts productions.





L: Photo of the original Women's City Club building entrance. *The Magazine of the Women's City Club* 2, no. 1 (1928), p. 32.

R: Dancers practice the Haitian Yanvalou. Photo courtesy of Jun Stinson.



Still images from the award-winning feature documentary film, **Alice Street (2020)**





From Women's City Club (1928) to Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts (current)

Historic Building Research Resources



Public Records Used

Alameda County Assessor's Office

- Search address variations and parcel number in government records

Ownership traced through the Alameda County Clerk-Recorder's Office

- Lease and Deed records

California Secretary of State

- Creation or dissolution of businesses

5 The action affects the title and right of possession of
6 real property situated in Oakland, Alameda County, California,
7 located at 1416-1436 Alice Street, and described as follows:

8 Beginning at a point on the eastern line
9 of Alice Street, distant thereon northerly
10 100 feet from the point of intersection
11 thereof with the northern line of 14th
12 Street, as said line of 14th Street is
13 established by that certain decree of
14 condemnation in favor of the City of
15 Oakland, a municipal corporation, against
Charles J. Heeseman, et al., dated June 22,
1922 and recorded in Book 220 of Official
Records, page 222; running thence northerly
along said line of Alice Street, 119.99 feet;
thence at right angles easterly 152.97 feet;
thence at right angles southerly 119.99
feet; thence at right angles westerly 152.97
feet to the point of beginning.



University of California Resources Used

- The California Digital Newspaper Collection, a project of the Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research (CBSR) at the University of California, Riverside.
- Ancestry Library Edition (licensed)
- ProQuest Historical Newspapers Database (licensed)
- 1972 UC Berkeley dissertation on Black theatres in the San Francisco Bay Area and in the Los Angeles Area



Special Thanks

Betty Marvin, Historic Preservation
Planner at the City of Oakland

Librarians Association of the University
of California for financial support of this
research



Cynthia McCarthy, Kristen LaBonte,
Marisol Ramos, Natalee Bell, and Angela
Chikowero for feedback

- African American Museum and Library at Oakland
- Bay Area TV Archive (San Francisco State Univ)
- Bingwa (Cecil Thomas)
- Lisa Abshere, Goleta School of Ballet
- Museum of Performance and Design
- Oakland History Center
- Stanford Libraries Special Collections
- UC Berkeley Bancroft Library
- UCSB Special Research Collections
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Special Collections and University Archives
- Wake Forest University Z. Smith Reynolds Library
Special Collections and Archives



Thank you!

selenachau@ucsb.edu