

A brief history of JAMMI¹

Early Indians

Early settlers in the area were the Ohlone Indians, who undoubtedly traversed the area frequently on their way back and forth from the shellmounds of Emeryville, at the mouth of Temescal Creek, to their sweat lodge near what is now 51st and Claremont. Once the whites arrived, the Indians were made to live near missions and were quickly decimated by smallpox and other diseases. Don Luis Peralta was granted the land by Spain and his son, Vicente Peralta, built an adobe house near Temescal Creek to the east of JAMMI.²

The gold rush brought many new settlers whose common bond was the desire to get rich quick, by exploiting natural resources. The hills of Oakland were stripped of redwoods, great flocks of wildfowl were slaughtered, the bay was over-fished, Oakland's oaks were chopped down and her stones were quarried. Temescal Creek became a convenient sewer for the houses and businesses that soon sprawled along her banks.

Lusk cannery

In the early part of the 1860's, an unassuming farmer named Josiah Lusk acquired, piece by piece, a 350 acre farm³ in what is now JAMMI and Temescal. Instead of wheat, which other farmers in the area were growing, he decided to try fruits and vegetables. Harvesting more raspberries than he could quickly sell, he canned them.⁴ This approach was successful enough that he built a small cannery in 1868⁵ on the north side of Evoy Avenue (40th Street) between San Pablo and Telegraph, near where Lusk Street now joins⁶. He made a large profit

¹ JAMMI, or "Just Above the MacArthur Maze Interchange", denotes the area of Oakland, California, framed by Emeryville on the west, Interstate 580 on the south, Highway 24 on the east, and Temescal Creek on the north. It also is a play on words, as Josiah Lusk made raspberry jam on his farm here in 1867, starting the cannery described herein.

² Bagwell, Beth. Oakland The Story of a City. Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982.

³ In 1858 Lusk had 15 acres, devoted to strawberries, employing 20 men. In 1859 he expanded to 45 acres. California State Agricultural Society, Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society During the Year 1858, State of California, 1859.

⁴ Hinkel, Edgar J. and McCann, William E. Oakland 1852 – 1938. Some phases of the Social, Political and Economic History of Oakland, California., Oakland, CA: Oakland Public Library, 1939, p. 842.

⁵ In 1875, the cannery was still located on Evoy Avenue, according to Langley, Henry G., A Directory of the City of Oakland, 1875, p. 253. On p. 24, Langley elaborates "Lusk's Manufactory of Preserved Fruit. These works are located on Evoy Avenue, between San Pablo and Telegraph Avenues. The principal building is 180 feet in length, by seventy feet in width; and, in addition, there are several small structures for the different departments of the enterprise. Ten thousand cans of preserved fruits and vegetables are packed daily, and over one hundred and fifty persons are constantly employed. Three hundred and fifty acres of land are in cultivation, on which are raised nearly all the vegetables required in this establishment." By 1887 the relocated Lusk cannery produced 100,000 tins a day. (Hinkel, op. cit., p. 842)

⁶ Dowling, Jennifer and Raineri, Ray. A Walk Through Temescal. Oakland, CA: Oakland Heritage Alliance, 1997.

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in 1868 on jams, wine, vinegar and fresh produce⁷. This success allowed him to attract more capital, and by 1875, he employed 150 seasonal laborers. By 1877 he was able to build a large cannery on Clarendon Avenue south of Clifton Street, where the DMV now stands. The fruit was packed in cans on the premises, using pure water from a square 60 foot well next to Temescal Creek, and was shipped down Telegraph Avenue by rail⁸. In 1881 the volume of business became too large for Lusk to handle⁹, and a large company, William T. Coleman and Company, bought Lusk out and turned the enterprise into “the largest fruit packing establishment in the world¹⁰”, employing over 800 workers, despite problems finding sufficient labor.

The fate of the Lusk Cannery was dramatic. An Oakland Tribune article in January 1888 described prosperity and expansion, but Wm. Coleman’s empire collapsed within weeks. The cannery closed and its assets were sold at auction¹¹. Josiah Lusk died November 5th, 1892.

Telegraph Avenue streetcar

Perhaps due to the success of the Lusk Cannery in its early location, Oakland’s first horse-drawn streetcar, which ran up Telegraph, was extended to 40th Street in 1869. The Oakland Railroad Company had built the line to 36th Street (which was then the Oakland city limit) the year before. Six cars (one of which was kept in reserve) provided service every 15 minutes from 6 am to 10 pm.¹² In 1886, the track was re-laid to accommodate steam trains. The Temescal Creek trestle was double-tracked and a spur was built to service freight from the Lusk Cannery.¹³

The streetcar dramatically changed living and work patterns in Oakland and other communities as would the freeway a hundred years later. Prior to the advent of the streetcar, urban workers by necessity had to live within walking distance, or at best a short carriage ride, from their jobs. The streetcar allowed workers to easily and comfortably commute from other neighborhoods. Employers could now expand capacity and draw workers from a larger area. Merchants could attract shoppers from a wider area, which allowed stores to become larger and to offer a greater variety of merchandise.

⁷ Hinkel, op. cit., p. 843. Lusk made a profit of \$16,250 on a \$20,000 investment—a return of over 80%.

⁸ Oakland Tribune, The Knave Section, May 3, 1970, p. 22-CM.

⁹ Oakland Daily Evening Tribune, Special Edition, January 20, 1887, p. 30.

¹⁰ Oakland Tribune, January 1888, p. 49.

¹¹ The Oakland Enquirer of 11/07/1892 elaborates, “Early in the year 1888 the great Coleman failure occurred, and the cannery went under of necessity, after twenty years of generally successful operation. At the sheriff’s sale the cannery was bought by San Francisco canneries, not to operate it, but to wreck it and to get a competition out of the way, which they did by breaking up and dispersing the plant.”

¹² Sappers, Vernon J., Key System Streetcars, Transit, Real Estate and the Growth of the East Bay, Signature Press, 2007.

¹³ Sappers, op. cit., p. 21.

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Temescal

The village of Temescal sprang up along Temescal Creek, which served as a water source and natural barrier. The cannery was a chief industry there, dumping its effluent into the creek, and the streetcar provided Temescal with convenient service to Oakland and to the new University in Berkeley. In 1870, the Oakland Paving Company was created and opened a quarry in Temescal (where the Safeway shopping plaza now stands), whose blue rock provided paving stones for Oakland's new streets and streetcar rail beds. While the quarry's early workers were prisoners from Oakland's jail, it soon became a major employer for the newly arrived Italians who were congregating in the area¹⁴, and who settled in JAMMI. Pietro Mautino was the pioneer Italian settler in the neighborhood, and built a boarding house near the quarry. All the area in JAMMI from Temescal Creek south to 44th Street was subdivided by 1878¹⁵. The area including Temescal and JAMMI was annexed by Oakland in 1897. The quarry became known as the Bilger Quarry, after Frank Bilger became its chief collector in 1889. The quarry closed in the 1930's.

Influence of Emeryville

A horse-drawn streetcar line was opened on San Pablo Avenue, ending at the Oakland Trotting Park in Emeryville, on January 6, 1873. Joseph S. Emery was president of the San Pablo Avenue Horse Car Railroad¹⁶. The Trotting Park itself was built in 1871¹⁷. On February 9th, 1886 a cable car railroad opened down San Pablo from 7th Street to 42nd to service the racetrack. The cable cars ceased operation on May 21, 1899, when they were replaced by electric cars¹⁸. Over the years, the Park was the scene not only of horse races, but marksmanship contests¹⁹, auto races²⁰ and dog races. It was demolished and rebuilt in 1896, and the City of Emeryville was created, depending upon whom you listen to, in frustration over land taxes and Oakland's inability to provide municipal services²¹, to allow gambling there when the park was threatened by an anti-gambling movement and complaints about nearby slaughterhouses²², or to fend off an annexation attempt by Temescal²³. When the state legislature outlawed track betting in 1909²⁴, the racetrack was forced to stop racing horses²⁵. The Oakland

¹⁴ Temescal Album: History of a Neighborhood, Temescal Neighborhood History Project, 1998, p. 20.

¹⁵ Thompson & West, New Historical Atlas of Alameda Co. California Illustrated, 1878.

¹⁶ Sappers, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁷ Hoover, Mildred Brooke et al, Historic Spots In California, Stanford University Press, 2002.

¹⁸ Sappers, op. cit., pp. 25, 30.

¹⁹ New York Times, 3/03/1878.

²⁰ Auto racing started at the former Trotting Park on the 4th of July in 1909, and continued after the track closed to horse racing. http://www.oakscardclub.com/our_history.htm

²¹ Hausler, David, City Hall Moves Back Home, emeryville.news, May 2001.

²² Emeryville Historical Society, Emeryville, Arcadia Publishing, 2005.

²³ Greenwich, Howard and Hinckle, Elizabeth, Behind the Boomtown, California Partnership For Working Families, May 2003.

²⁴ The Trotting Park was called "the largest and most widely demoralizing gambling establishment west of the Rocky Mountains" by a San Francisco mayoral committee in 1909.

²⁵ Dionne, Roger, Sports Illustrated, 6/03/1985.

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Oaks baseball team built a stadium near the site after the 1912 season²⁶. In 1876, Shellmound Park²⁷ became a popular destination for picnics and gatherings, but closed in 1924 due to the effect of Prohibition.

The mansion of Joseph S. Emery, who made a fortune in quarrying²⁸, was built on San Pablo (at Park) shortly after Emery purchased the area now known as Emeryville, in 1859²⁹. The building still stands but has been subdivided into units.

Judson Steel was a major employer in Emeryville from 1882 until it was bought by Birmingham Steel in the late 1980's, then closed in the recession of 1991³⁰.

Sacred Heart

In 1876 there was only one Catholic Church in Oakland, St. Mary's. A second parish was created, including North Oakland, Berkeley, Orinda and was called Sacred Heart. Reverend Lawrence Serda was chosen to be the pastor.

Rev. Serda was born in Tona, Spain, on August 10, 1842, of humble origin. He studied at the Seminary of Vich and later at All Hallows Church in Dublin, Ireland, where he was ordained on June 24, 1870. After working at St. Mary's and in San Jose, he was appointed pastor of the new Sacred Heart parish in 1876. He served there as pastor for 42 years. Since the Peralta homestead was in nearby Temescal, arguably Rev. Serda was the first Latino settler in JAMMI.

Land for a church and school was donated by Mrs. Margaret P. McCourtney. The McCourtneys had followed the gold rush to Yuba county, then built a large house on the northwest corner of Telegraph and 41st, which burned in 1888.

The first Sacred Heart church, wood frame, was completed in three months and dedicated December 17, 1876³¹. A rectory was then built and Father Serda, who had been renting nearby, moved in on December 29, 1878. The church was enlarged in 1889. At various times the grounds included a convent and a school for the deaf.

²⁶ From [Wikipedia](#).

²⁷ Scher, Sandra, [Shellmound Park](#), URS, 1996.

²⁸ Emery quarried rock on Angel and Goat islands for use in construction in San Francisco.
<http://www.newsmakingnews.com/kd.chiron.pt1.4.11.05.htm>

²⁹ Emeryville Historical Society, op. cit., p. 9.

³⁰ Per the Birmingham Steel Corporation official history.
<http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Birmingham-Steel-Corporation-Company-History.html>

³¹ The [City Directory of Oakland Berkeley Alameda](#), 1887-88, lists the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Rev. Lawrence Serda, rector, Fortieth Street, North Temescal.

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On November 24, 1897, “a fire started in the boys’ sacristy, and in three hours destroyed the church, parochial residence, and a school for girls.³²” A provisional church was built in three days at a cost of \$774.25. The rectory was rebuilt in 1898 on the north side of 40th. The girls’ school was rebuilt in 1899 as noted above, and the new church of stone was completed on December 4, 1902³³.

On October 17, 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake heavily damaged the church. The stone facing went crashing to the ground. The congregation decided to demolish and rebuild, and the current structure was completed in 1999.

St. Martin De Porres School

Before Sacred Heart church was built, a small Catholic school was constructed in 1876 on the west side of Grove Street, between 41st and 42nd. The teacher, Mrs. E. M. Johnson, was brought in from Kentucky. She lasted two years and was replaced by Miss Tobin, but the school closed in 1878³⁴.

A two-story girls’ school was subsequently constructed in June of 1880, on the north side of 40th Street. Property for a boys’ school was donated by Father Serda, on the north side of 41st Street near Grove. It opened in June of 1886. The girls’ school burned in 1897 and was rebuilt on the south side of 41st Street in 1899. The boys’ school closed June 1901 due to a shortage of teachers, and the girls’ school was turned into a mixed-gender school³⁵. Due to increasing enrollments, a larger school was built in 1911. Four classrooms and a cafeteria were added in 1919. Additional lots to the west were purchased in 1924 and a gym was built. The current school was constructed in 1954.

Meanwhile, the Italian Catholics, who predominated in the area, had grown prosperous and the younger generation migrated to Orinda and other towns in the 1950’s and ‘60s. Changes in the ethnic composition of the neighborhood led to a decline in the Sacred Heart School’s enrollment, and the school merged with Saint Martin De Porres School of West Oakland at the end of the 20th century.

Longfellow School

On August 4, 1904, the Oakland School Board purchased a few lots and houses at 39th Street and Market for \$10,000. Plans were drawn for a multi-story school to be named Longfellow³⁶, the site was cleared and construction was nearing

³² Mantz, E. Phillips and Roach, Rev. Michael J., The Story of Sacred Heart Church, 1976, CustomBook, Inc., Hackensack, NJ.

³³ The website of the architect who designed the new church after the Loma Prieta earthquake states their building replaced the existing structure built in 1902.

<http://www.alanjudson.com/churches.html>

³⁴ Mantz and Roach, op. cit.

³⁵ The 1903 Sanborn map shows both the girls school and the boys school on the Sacred Heart campus, while Haselbacher’s Nursery and Greenhouses occupied most of the block on the south side of 41st Street between Market and Linden.

³⁶ Apparently after Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The dedication program for the replacement building in 1959 quoted Longfellow: “If you would hit the mark, you must aim a little above it.”

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completion when the earthquake of April 18, 1906 forced redesign to make the structure more earthquake-resistant. An exodus of San Francisco families to the East Bay following the earthquake caused the school to become overcrowded, with 70-80 students in some classes. Therefore, the rest of the block was purchased in 1909 for \$30,000 and two wings were added to the school, giving it an "H" floor plan when completed in 1912. Total classrooms increased from 13 to 22. The front of the school faced Market Street³⁷.

In the 1930's, the student body numbered between 300 and 400. Instruction included classes in reading, spelling, penmanship, arithmetic, phonic music, music appreciation, rhythmic (including folk dancing), social studies, art and art appreciation, drama, physical education, and science³⁸. The school had an orchestra and a chorus. Standard Oil broadcast classical music over the radio to schools starting in 1928³⁹, and the student body listened in the multi-purpose room. A Monday afternoon class in public speaking was initiated. A rest hour for frail students occurred at one pm under the supervision of the school nurse, with 20 cots available, and quilts handmade by the PTA⁴⁰.

In 1935 the playground was renovated⁴¹. The Longfellow pupils' baseball teams played against other schools on the school diamond.

By June of 1956 the aging school was deemed a hazard and a successful bond issue allowed construction of a new school on what had been the playground, at a cost of \$594,916.46. The new building opened in September 1959, facing Lusk Street, with 611 students⁴². Architects Cantin and Cantin of Oakland provided 18 classrooms, including one for special education and one for kindergarten, in the one-story building. A library and a multi-purpose room were also provided. After completion, the old school building was razed and the land it had occupied became the school playground.

In its first 60 years the school had 15 principals, whose tenure was typically 3 to 4 years. The student body reflected the neighborhood; a class picture of 43 students in 1920 shows that seven were African-American and 19 were girls. In

The Oakland Museum of California asserts "The neighborhood surrounding the school presumably became known for the school, or more likely, the school was named after the neighborhood", but there is no evidence to support that the neighborhood was previously known as Longfellow. More likely, some school bureaucrat chose to name the school after the famous poet and Harvard professor, who had spent his life in New England and traveled abroad, but never visited California.

³⁷ From the dedication program for the opening of the newly built school on November 23, 1959.

³⁸ From a letter to the public from the faculty, 11/02/1934.

³⁹ Standard Oil Bulletin, November 1930, showed a picture of students at the school listening to the broadcast.

⁴⁰ From the PTA journal of 1935.

⁴¹ Renovation included sifting glass and debris out of the top layer of soil, then grooming the soil.

⁴² Per the program from the dedication ceremony, although the Oakland Tribune of 11/22/59 claimed 620 students.

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1956, a troop of 22 boy scouts at the school had four or five African-American members⁴³.

By 2003, enrollment at the school had fallen to 244 and test scores were dismal. The school district, under state administration, decided to close Longfellow and four other schools due to budget constraints and declining enrollment. Longfellow's last day was June 10, 2004⁴⁴. The building was subsequently used to house an alternative middle school and an independent study program, until the Oakland Military Institute charter school moved there from the Oakland Army Base in 2007.

Toscana Bakery

Toscana Bakery served the residents of heavily Italian JAMMI for many decades by providing fresh sourdough bread from the bakery at 899 40th Street, on the corner of Market St. Depending upon which account you believe, the bakery was founded shortly after the gold rush, in 1895, in 1911 or in 1921. The most likely scenario⁴⁵ is that it evolved from a business known as M. Lagorio & Co., whose manager was Marchelle Lagorio (alternatively spelled Michi), at 939 Third St. That business was baking at that location as early as 1917; in 1921 it took on the name Toscano Bakery. By 1926 it changed ownership to John Baglietto and Co, under the name Toscana. In 1928 the bakery moved to a new building at 899 40th Street, and Mr. Baglietto and his wife Madeline took up residence across the street at 920 40th Street by 1930.

The bakery prospered and grew, achieving \$20,000,000 in sales in 1976. In 1977 a deal was struck by CEO Robert Sciacqua to sell the bakery to Norin Corp. of North Miami, Florida, a specialty food company. Norin had recently purchased Parks Sausage Company⁴⁶, the first black-owned company in the U.S. to go public. The Toscana deal apparently did not get consummated, however, because in 1984 Toscana united with three other sourdough bread companies – Boudin, Parisian, and Colombo – as the San Francisco French Bread Company⁴⁷. The old hearth ovens, used for hand-making sourdough, were replaced by high-capacity ovens allowing somewhere between 300,000 and 2 million loaves a week to be baked, and the character of the bread changed, acquiring a thinner, less flavorful crust⁴⁸. The bakery on 40th Street was closed soon after the merger. In 1997 the merged company was acquired by Interstate

⁴³ *Shades of California*, Heydey Books, 2001, plate 171.

⁴⁴ *Oakland Tribune*, June 11, 2004.

⁴⁵ The dated references for the 1920's are based upon entries in *Polk's Directory of Oakland*.

⁴⁶ <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/4405/Parks-H-G-1916-1989>.

⁴⁷ Clemens, Scott, *The Rise of San Francisco Sourdough*, *Epicurian* magazine, date unknown. <http://www.epicurean.com/articles/san-francisco-sourdough.html>

⁴⁸ Rich, Robert, *A Sourdough Quest*, February 2003, *MV Voice*. While Rich talks of 2 million loaves, Wikipedia mentions 217,460, but that is from the Parisian factory alone.

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Brands, the makers of Wonder Bread⁴⁹. Interstate Brands went bankrupt in 2005⁵⁰.

The brick bakery building on 40th Street was acquired by Atthowe Fine Art Services, a company exclusively dedicated to the handling of fine art, owned by third generation Oaklander Scott Atthowe since 1975⁵¹.

Grove Streetcar/power station

JAMMI is and was a public transit nexus for the East Bay. In addition to the streetcar lines on Telegraph and San Pablo avenues, the Oakland Consolidated Street Railway ran a streetcar line ran out Grove Street (now Martin Luther King Jr. Way) to 47th Street (Temescal Creek), opening May 12, 1891 (Service on that line ended November 28, 1948)⁵². A steam-driven brick powerhouse was built on the north side of 47th Street; the car barn on the south side still stands. The Pullman company had a laundry in the same area. An extension to the streetcar line was built on 40th Street, running east⁵³. Then, on June 1, 1904, the #32 streetcar line started service from Piedmont Avenue along 40th Street to the Oakland mole ferry terminal⁵⁴ via Yerba Buena Street⁵⁵. Key System barns were built in Emeryville in 1905, employing many white Oaklanders⁵⁶.

Victorians and the California bungalow

The Industrial Revolution brought the country mass-production techniques, and the railroad allowed products to be widely distributed. These two factors influenced a change from the early adobe and plain wood frame housing in Oakland to more whimsical and ornately decorated structures. Intricate wooden scrollwork could be created relatively cheaply by machine and imported from afar, and the machines that produced novelty trim could themselves be shipped to Oakland. While JAMMI's farmland, lying outside the city limits of Oakland and on the outskirts of Emeryville and Temescal, was not fully subdivided and built until housing pressures were created by the dislocation of the 1906 earthquake, JAMMI does have a share of Victorian structures sprinkled here and there⁵⁷.

Many of the residences in JAMMI represent the "California bungalow" style popular in the first part of the 20th century, with their lack of adornment, offset front porches supported by thick, square columns, low-pitched roofs, and efficient

⁴⁹ Clemons, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Wikipedia, under Acme Bread Company

⁵¹ www.atthowe.com

⁵² Sappers, op. cit., pp. 61-62, 124.

⁵³ Sappers, op. cit., p. 64.

⁵⁴ Demoro, Harre W., *The Key Route*, Glendale, CA: Interurban Press, 1985, p. 25.

⁵⁵ Yerba Buena Street got its name from Yerba Buena Island. Before the freeways blocked the view, one could stand in the middle of the street and see Yerba Buena Island dead ahead.

⁵⁶ In 1945 the NAACP sued the Key System for discrimination in employment. See Self, Robert O., *American Babylon*, Princeton University Press, 2003, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁷ Some noteworthy Victorian examples are at 1012 36th St, 830 37th St, 4419 Linden, 3639 Martin Luther King and 682 46th St.

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floor plans without hallways⁵⁸. The houses occasionally⁵⁹ boast backyard gardens and patios, characteristic of the “industrial garden” vision trumpeted nationwide by the Metropolitan Oakland Area Program in the late 1940’s⁶⁰. The vision was one of a content working class living in modest bungalows with backyard gardens, convenient to plentiful jobs provided by small and medium-sized industry.

A famous JAMMIan

Harry Arthur “Cookie” Lavagetto was born in Oakland of Italian heritage and grew up on 46th Street⁶¹ in JAMMI. He attended Oakland Tech. A professional third baseman and, later, manager, he started out with the Oakland Oaks, in their stadium nearby in Emeryville⁶². After that he played ten seasons with the Pittsburg Pirates and Brooklyn Dodgers.

His most famous moment came in Game 4 of the 1947 World Series, when he played for the Dodgers. The score was 2-1 Yankees, two outs in the bottom of the ninth. Yankee Bill Bevens was one out away from pitching a no-hitter, with runners on first and second. Both runners had walked. No pitcher had ever pitched nine innings of a no-hit game in a World Series. It appeared that the Yankees were about to make history. The Dodgers called Lavagetto to pinch hit. The count was 1 and 0, a fastball. Cookie lined to right field, a single. Both runners scored, winning the game for the Dodgers. It was Cookie’s last hit in the major leagues.

Released by the Dodgers, Cookie played again with the Oakland Oaks, and went on to manage the Washington Senators when they became the Minnesota Twins. He also coached the Dodgers, Mets and Giants.⁶³

Racial change

In 1918, the Oakland City Council introduced a resolution barring blacks from purchasing real estate in the newly opened Santa Fe tract at JAMMI’s northern border, 47th Street⁶⁴. The publicity this action created invigorated the fledgling NAACP’s Northern California branch⁶⁵. African-Americans had long had a presence in JAMMI, particularly in the area south of West MacArthur Blvd (then called Mosswood Avenue) and west of Martin Luther King Jr. Way (Grove

⁵⁸ <http://architecture.about.com/od/periodsstyles/ig/House-Styles/Bungalow-Styles.htm>

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, many backyards have been built out with rental units, or made way for parking when garages and basements have been converted (typically without permits) to in-law units. As a result, private open space in the neighborhood has slowly dwindled.

⁶⁰ Self, op. cit., p. 29.

⁶¹ According to long-term resident Raymond Mellana, quoted in Norman, Jeff. Temescal Legacies: Narratives of Change from a North Oakland Neighborhood. Shared Ground, 2006.

Per the Oakland City Directory of 1924, his address was 672 46th St.

⁶² The Oakland Oaks stadium was built in 1913. http://www.oakscardclub.com/our_history.htm

⁶³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cookie_Lavagetto

⁶⁴ Pinder, Kymberly N., Race-ing Art History, Routledge, 2002, p. 309.

⁶⁵ Beasley, Delilah L., The Negro Trail Blazers of California, Los Angeles, 1919, p. 190.

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Street). Charles Tilghman's "Colored American Directory" of 1915 lists 30 families in JAMMI. The WPA Real Property Survey from 1936, counting the "Number of Negro and Other Non-White Occupants", reveals a concentration of African-Americans between 34rd St and 38th Street, from Grove to San Pablo. There were others scattered on 39th, 44th and 45th Streets.

World War II brought thousands of job-seekers to the Bay Area, including many African-Americans⁶⁶. Housing became scarce due to the wartime influx, exacerbated after the war by returning veterans⁶⁷. Young Italian-Americans took advantage of post-war Federal housing subsidies⁶⁸ and moved to Orinda and other suburbs. As the Italians moved out in the 1950's and '60s, blacks moved in. The diverse but predominantly Italian neighborhood became a diverse but predominantly African-American community⁶⁹. By the time of the 1990 census, JAMMI was 83% black and 9% white. Then, the "dot-com" era brought young, single urban professionals to the Bay Area, who were attracted to an edgy, inner-city environment. Longer-term African-American homeowners cashed in their equity and moved in relative wealth to Antioch, Vallejo, Houston, Las Vegas or Atlanta⁷⁰. By 2000, the mix in JAMMI was 70% black and 15% white, with more Asian-Americans and Yemenis also choosing to live in the area.⁷¹

Trains go, freeways come

The completion of the Bay Bridge on November 12, 1936, brought with it a distribution feeder that connected to 38th Street (previously called Mosswood Avenue, now called MacArthur Boulevard). The bridge spelled the end for the network of streetcars, trains and ferries that had previously connected Oakland to San Francisco. After the Bay Bridge opened on November 12, 1936⁷², train service to San Francisco started on the lower deck⁷³. The Sacramento Northern ran passenger trains along 40th Street across the lower deck of the Bay Bridge until 1941⁷⁴. New freeways and America's love affair with the automobile put the

⁶⁶ Rhomberg, Chris, No There There, University of California Press, 2004, p. 97.

⁶⁷ "Between 1940 and 1947, the city's population increased by 100,000 people, but available housing increased by just under 14,000 new units." Self, op. cit., p. 68.

⁶⁸ Federal housing programs, however, specifically excluded African-Americans. "Whites only" real estate listings were published in the Oakland Tribune until 1963. Blacks had to pay higher interest rates than whites. See Self, op. cit., pp. 159-170.

⁶⁹ The West Oakland Project Area Committee's Hoover/West MacArthur Vision Statement, 2007, comments on the racial and economic isolation of the area caused by governmental policies such as construction and placement of the freeways, and concentration of scattered-site low income housing.

⁷⁰ While the exact dynamics of the housing price appreciation of the early 21st century on the area have not yet been studied, anecdotal evidence suggests the fever to purchase homes did not result in an increase in home ownership, as one might expect. Rather, speculators purchased previously owner-occupied houses and turned them into Section 8 rentals, hoping to flip them in a short period and make a windfall profit.

⁷¹ According to U.S. census figures for the year 2000 for Census Tract 4010.

⁷² Bagwell, op. cit., p. 225.

⁷³ Bagwell, op. cit., p. 226. Train service started the day that ferry service ended.

⁷⁴ From Wikipedia.

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trains out of business⁷⁵. The Key System assets were sold to AC Transit in 1960.

By the late 1950's the MacArthur Maze and elevated highway I-580 had torn through Oakland and created a massive southern boundary to JAMMI, on the old Oakland city line (before JAMMI was annexed by Oakland in 1897). Planning for the Grove-Shafter freeway then carved a massive no-man's land of empty lots through Temescal, eventually achieving completion in the late 1960's. This hastened the exodus of Italians from the area and created an eastern boundary for JAMMI.

In 1972, BART opened the MacArthur BART station on 40th between Martin Luther King and Telegraph. A transfer station, it became a major hub for bus connections and shuttle services to local hospitals and to Emeryville. Freeway on-off ramps at 49th Street and MLK, as well as on 35th and 36th Streets at West and Market, and also on West MacArthur at Market, ensured JAMMI's identity remained that of a neighborhood with easy transit access.

East Bay Negro Historical Society

On a summer day in 1965, a group interested in African-American history met at the home of Jesse W. Ford at 925 39th Street⁷⁶, and founded the East Bay Negro Historical Society, "to collect, preserve, record, and disseminate information related to Black History, with an emphasis on California and the West."⁷⁷ It was Marcella Ford's idea to start the Society⁷⁸. Based on an extensive collection of clippings and archives gathered by Ruth and Eugene Lasartemay, the Society opened a small office at 3651 Grove Street in 1970⁷⁹. Historical materials were

⁷⁵ With an assist from self-interested corporations. The Key System replaced the trains with buses. In 1949, the company that had purchased the Key System was convicted in Federal court of anti-trust charges and conspiring to monopolize trade; defendants included General Motors, Standard Oil and Firestone. Bagwell, op. cit., p. 246.

⁷⁶ While Norman (op. cit., p. 114) quotes Gladys Jordan as saying that Marcella and Jesse Ford lived on Apgar, and quotes Madison Harvey (p. 105) stating the Historical Society was founded in Mrs. Ford's house in 1965, note that Polk's Oakland California City Directory (1943, p. 343) shows the Fords living at 877 Apgar, as do the Pacific Telephone directories of Jan. 1946, Apr. 1948 and Jan. 1949. But in July 1950, the Pacific Telephone directory lists the Fords at 925 39th Street, as does the directory of August 1965. The minutes of the Society's meetings, preserved at the African-American Museum and Library at Oakland, determine that the formational meeting in fact occurred at 925 39th Street on Friday, July 2, 1965. A postcard to Marcella Ford, in the archives of AAMLO, postmarked 11/19/1969 is addressed to 923 Apgar St. So the Fords moved around, but within the same neighborhood.

⁷⁷ Groth, op. cit., p. 14.

⁷⁸ Profile of the East Bay Negro Historical Society, Incorporated, May 25, 1980.

⁷⁹ Norman, op. cit., p. 106, quoting Madison Harvey, with collaboration from Gladys Jordan. Harvey went on to state that the storefront moved to 4619 Grove in 1976, then to the Golden Gate Branch of the Public Library in 1982. However, note that the Oakland Public Library, <http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/AAMLO/>, states that the collection started privately in 1946 and then moved to a storefront at an unspecified date, but outgrew the storefront in 1960, then moving to the Golden Gate Branch of the Public Library. The Public Library's account is incorrect. The Society rented the 3651 MLK site starting on 3/15/1970, met there for the first time

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displayed on a rotating basis in that storefront. Later the office was moved to another location on Grove. Under the leadership of Dr. Lawrence Crouchett, the Society changed its name to The Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, moved to the Golden Gate Branch of the Public Library, then formed the African American Museum and Library at Oakland⁸⁰, in its current location at 659 14th Street.

Marcus Books

In 1960, Dr. Julian Richardson and his wife Faye opened a bookstore on Fulton Street in San Francisco, near City Hall, that specialized in books by and about African-Americans. Dr. Richardson, at that time, was the publisher of Success Books. The bookstore was one of the country's first African-American bookstores; it is now the oldest operating black retailer in the nation⁸¹. In 1976, the Richardsons opened a branch at 3900 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Oakland.

More than a bookstore, Marcus Books (named after Marcus Garvey) has acted as an African-American cultural center, featuring appearances and talks by many of the most renowned black authors, celebrities and dignitaries of recent times, including Rosa Parks, James Earl Jones, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, LeRoi Jones and Claude Brown⁸².

In 1999 BART sold the land the bookstore is on to the Richardsons⁸³. Dr. Julian Richardson, a former student of George Washington Carver at Tuskegee University, died August 21, 2000⁸⁴. The bookstore continues to operate under the management of his daughter Blanche and granddaughter Cherysse.

Black Panther Party

The Black Panther Party was founded by former Merritt College students Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in October, 1966. In the late 1960's, the Black Panther Party's Central Headquarters⁸⁵ was located at 4421 Grove Street, next door to Tea's Café⁸⁶, during the time that the Party was planning its community survival programs such as the Free Breakfast for School Children program. A barbeque was organized at the Headquarters on April 6, 1968, two days after Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, using food prepared at Tea's Café⁸⁷. At that

on 4/17/1970, and opened the museum there on 5/24/1970, according to the Society's minutes of their meetings.

⁸⁰ Norman, op. cit., p. 119.

⁸¹ http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-21255818_ITM

⁸² Ross, Lawrence C., *The Ways of Black Folks: A Year in the Life of a People*, Kensington Books, 2003.

⁸³ *Business Wire*, November 18, 1999.

⁸⁴ *Black Issues Book Review*, November 2000.

⁸⁵ Cotton, Terry M., <http://www.thuglifearmy.com/news/?id=586>

⁸⁶ According to *Polk's Oakland City Directory*, 1969.

⁸⁷ Hilliard, David, *Huey: Spirit of the Panther*, Thunder Mouth Press, New York, 2006, p. 130.

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time, the Panthers hosted barbeques in the park as a fundraising mechanism, charging two or three dollars a plate⁸⁸.

That same evening, while transporting food for the barbeque, eight Panthers were caught in a shoot-out at 28th and Union Streets with Oakland police, resulting in the death of 17-year-old treasurer Bobby Hutton, who died from 12 bullet wounds inflicted when he attempted to surrender⁸⁹.

The Mile High Club

Elijah and Alberta Thornton opened Eli's Mile High Club at 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in 1974 to showcase the West Coast blues in a building that had once been a creamery⁹⁰. Tragically, Eli was shot to death while tending bar in the club in 1979 by his jealous mistress Frankie, a blues singer and former waitress at the club⁹¹.

The club was purchased by Troyce Key, a musician who had played at the club. Born in Newellton, Louisiana the son of sharecroppers, Mr. Key was no stranger to hard times: he lived part of his childhood in a boxcar when his father worked on the railroad⁹², and had a lung removed at age 16 due to tuberculosis. Mr. Key grew up in Fresno. The new owner brought the venue national renown as "The Home of the West Coast Blues" by booking acts like Jimmy McCracklin, Sonny Rhodes, B.B. King, Etta James and Lowell Fulson⁹³. Mr. Key was one of the first blues/rock artists to sign with Warner Brothers in the 1950's⁹⁴ as a member of the Rhythm Rockers, with J.J. Malone, and performed on American Bandstand and the Alan Freed Show⁹⁵. He toured Europe in the 1980's and was a board member of the Oakland Festival of the Arts. Troyce was known as a flashy dresser, frequently donning a white suit and a wide-brimmed, white hat with a black band. His signature line was "I sho' do love the blues." With the draw of nationally known acts, the club became a big success, and was visited by

⁸⁸ Seale, Bobby, quoted in an interview by Kelly, Geoff, Pittsburg Pulp, February 5, 2004.

⁸⁹ Cotton, Terry M. *ibid*.

⁹⁰ http://www.sonomatunes.com/weblog/archives/2002/12/mos_musings_121.html

⁹¹ The *Oakland Tribune* of May 19, 1979 elaborates "An Oakland nightclub singer was arrested on suspicion of murder early today after the club owner was shot to death and a woman customer wounded during an argument. Police said Frankie S. Williams, who has been singing at Eli's Mile High Club on Grove Street for five years, began arguing with customer Juanita Allen at the club shortly after 1 a.m. Williams suddenly produced a gun and began firing, police said, causing customers to dive for cover. Allen was grazed on the chin and shot through the left hand. Club owner Elijah Thornton, 40, who was standing nearby, was shot at least once in the chest and died at the hospital three hours later. Williams fled the club, but was arrested a short time later after police searched the neighborhood."

⁹² <http://bluestown.blogspot.com/2008/06/various-artists-west-coast-guitar.html>

⁹³ <http://blues.about.com/b/2008/05/12/historic-elis-blues-club-closed-in-oakland.htm>.

⁹⁴ Watterworth, Susan, *Bluesletter*, July 2003, Washington Blues Society (quoting Paul Green). Mr. Green says RCA but it Mr. Key's discography reveals it was Warner Brothers.

⁹⁵ *Oakland Tribune*, November 10, 1992.

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celebrities like James Brown, Whoopi Goldberg, Ted Danson, Chuck Berry and Will Smith⁹⁶. The house band was the Troyce Key Blues Band.

Troyce Key died of leukemia in 1992 at age 55, and the club lost its luster under the management of his wife Margaret⁹⁷. The nightclub reportedly changed hands seven times between 2000 and 2005⁹⁸. Mike McDonald and Ron Kriss purchased the club from Linda Lawrence in 2002⁹⁹, intending to tear it down and build live/work lofts¹⁰⁰. Once Mr. McDonald learned about the club's history, he leased it to Frank Klein, former manager of San Francisco's Biscuits & Blues club. The club reopened on June 6, 2003 with a performance by Joe Louis Walker, and Mayor Jerry Brown in attendance¹⁰¹. Mr. Klein's effort, however, could not overcome the declining interest in blues music and the club's out-of-the-way location. Plus, the Alameda County Health Department shut the club down temporarily nine days after it reopened¹⁰².

In June of 2004, Mr. McDonald teamed with former schoolteacher Lisa Nola, abandoning the blues and introducing indie rock to the neighborhood. Four-course meals were offered, a burlesque show occurred weekly, and bands like the Lovemakers, Dealership, the Peeks and Comets on Fire played. The partners invested personal savings into refurbishing the club, preserving its original appearance inside. In six months there were 30 sold-out shows, but the pressure was too much and the partners sold the business for a quarter of what they had invested¹⁰³, keeping the land.

The buyer was Sam Marshall, a musician himself with the Marshall Law Band. Mr. McDonald and Mr. Kriss halved the rent to give him time to make the club profitable. Mr. Marshall worked a full-time day job while running the business in the evenings. In 2008, the two owners suggested Mr. Marshall either run the club full-time and make it work, or find someone who could and pay full rent. Mr. Marshall, tired of sinking time and funds into the venture, closed the club on May 1, 2008¹⁰⁴.

The club was reopened in August, 2008 by Geoffrey Melville, but the new owner was unable to obtain a cabaret permit allowing live performances.

⁹⁶ Oakland Tribune, 11/10/92, op. cit.

⁹⁷ Troyce met Margaret at the Mile High Club and proposed to her there. Oakland Tribune, 11/10/92, op. cit.

⁹⁸ According to <http://blues.about.com/b/2008/05/12/historic-elis-blues-club-closed-in-oakland.htm>. However, this seems unlikely, because from 2002 to 2005 it was owned by Mike McDonald.

⁹⁹ Gowan, Michael, East Bay Express, June 18, 2003.

¹⁰⁰ Carnig, Jennifer, Oakland Tribune, June 13, 2003.

¹⁰¹ Carnig, op. cit.

¹⁰² Harvilla, Rob, East Bay Express, July 16, 2003.

¹⁰³ Sarkar, Pia, San Francisco Chronicle, March 11, 2005, p. C-1.

¹⁰⁴ Woodall, Angela, Oakland Tribune, May 9, 2008.

Speaking of blues, another famous JAMMIan

Blues guitarist Walter Brown “Brownie” McGhee lived at 688 43rd Street at the time of his death in 1996. Born in 1915 in Tennessee, Mr. McGhee was immersed in music at an early age, singing with the Golden Voices Gospel Quartet¹⁰⁵; both his father and brother were talented guitarists.¹⁰⁶ He overcame a childhood bout with polio to become a traveling musician¹⁰⁷ at age 22, playing the Piedmont style blues with Blind Boy Fuller¹⁰⁸. Following Fuller’s death in 1941, Mr. McGhee recorded on his own (his biggest hit was “My Fault” in 1948) and teamed with harmonica player Sonny Terry, a collaboration that lasted for several decades. The pair found success in the New York folk music scene in the 1940s and recorded numerous albums. Among his later achievements, Mr. McGhee ran his own music school in Harlem from 1942 - 1950, appeared in Tennessee Williams’ *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* from 1955 to 1957, toured Europe and Canada repeatedly, appeared on television (“Family Ties”) and had a small part in the movie *Angel Heart*.¹⁰⁹

Although one source asserts that Mr. McGhee “built his own home in 1974 in Oakland,¹¹⁰ the house that he retired to in 1986, at 688 43rd St.¹¹¹ was built in 1910. Mr. McGhee died of stomach cancer at Summit Hospital on February 16, 1996 at the age of 80.¹¹²

Emeryville boom

By the late 1980’s, Emeryville’s character as a gritty industrial city had changed to post-industrial. Judson Steel closed¹¹³. The Key System barns were gone, leaving only an AC Transit bus yard. The racetrack was long gone, and the card rooms that had surrounded it were in decline¹¹⁴. Realizing the value of their location at the foot of the Bay Bridge in an increasingly congested East Bay, Emeryville’s leadership actively pursued development and the city was born again as a retail hub and convenient residential location. High and low-rise

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Brownie-McGhee>

¹⁰⁶ http://www.sc.edu/csam/csamaudioarchive_brownie_mcghee.htm

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.mudcat.org/brownie.cfm>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.livinblues.com/bluesrooms/brownieandsonny.asp>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:gvfqxq95ldje~T1>

¹¹⁰ http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/fellows/fellow.php?id=1982_06

¹¹¹ <http://oaklandmarks.blogspot.com/> According to zwillow.com, 688 43rd St. is a duplex built in 1910.

¹¹² <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B07E5D91339F93AA25751C0A960958260&sec=&spon=>

¹¹³ Judson Steel was located on the Indian shellmound site now occupied by IKEA.

<http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov> In 1990, only a few years after purchasing Judson, Birmingham Steel decided to close the plant, sell the land, and replace it with a plant in Phoenix.

<http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/Birmingham-Steel-Corporation-Company-History.html>

¹¹⁴ Only the Oaks Club is left of the card rooms that lined San Pablo Avenue in the later part of the 20th Century and catered to, among others, the truckers who wound up cross-country hauls at the truck yards in Emeryville, and slept in their trucks on the local streets, or stayed in cheap motels nearby. In its fervor to develop, the city discouraged the card rooms, closing the King Midas Club in 1997 on tax evasion-related licensing issues.

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housing was built, shopping malls and hotels appeared¹¹⁵, Pixar built its headquarters in 2000¹¹⁶ where the racetrack had been, and 40th Street was extended¹¹⁷ to provide a transit link to MacArthur BART and North Oakland.

Undergrounding of Temescal Creek

Temescal Creek was a major seasonal drainage system for the East Bay hills. The Ohlone Indians dipped in it to cool off after time spent in their sweat lodge, on its banks¹¹⁸. Vicente Peralta built his adobe house by the creek. In 1863, renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead urged Oakland to preserve a belt of parkland along the creek¹¹⁹. Unfortunately, the city elders were not farsighted enough to adopt his proposal. When the burgeoning city needed a stable water supply in 1868, Anthony Chabot and W.F. Boardman designed the dam that created Lake Temescal¹²⁰. While the Lusk Cannery used the creek water, and a well, to wash fruits and vegetables, it also dumped wastewater into the creek. The creek became the sewer and dumping ground for Temescal. Sewers belong underground, and the people living near its banks came to view the creek as a detriment. A flood in 1962 spurred the movement to underground the creek¹²¹. Construction of Highway 24 along the route of the natural creek bed had reduced the area of soil available for absorption of runoff, turning the creek into a raging torrent during the rainy season. The creek is now buried from Lake Temescal to its mouth in Emeryville. The stretch through JAMMI was the last stretch to be buried¹²², in the 1980's. You can still glimpse the creek through a metal grating in Lake Temescal Park near 47th and Adeline.

¹¹⁵ This author used to pick blackberries near the old Key System smokestack, where a Home Depot now stands. I recall on one day in 1987 counting 12 rats feeding on garbage dumped on the sidewalk at Peralta and West MacArthur, west of where the Doggie Diner used to be. Now, a Pak'n Save and upscale condos line that area.

¹¹⁶ See the "History" tab of the Pixar company website. A ballot measure in 2004 allowed Pixar to commence an 18 year expansion project at their Emeryville site.

¹¹⁷ 40th Street used to end at Adeline. Key System trains branched off onto Yerba Buena, went through a subway where the sewage treatment plant stands, and took passengers to and from the ferries at the Long Wharf. Key System trains stopped running across the Bay Bridge on April 20, 1958. The train tracks were torn up after the Key System assets were sold to AC Transit. Local activists, including Lorraine Smith, got trees and shrubbery planted in the median where trains used to run. With the noisy trains and streetcars gone, and traffic to San Francisco diverted to Highway 580 and BART, 40th Street became a quiet, if wide, residential street. It did remain a heavy bus route due to the presence of the MacArthur BART transfer station. The City of Emeryville extended 40th Street in the early 1990's, without any input from affected Oakland residents. Traffic congestion on the street soared as it became a major traffic thoroughfare.

¹¹⁸ ". . . only during winter could the creek waters be high enough to float rafts of hides to the Bay." Groth, Paul, Oakland as a Cross-Section of America's Urban Cultural Landscapes, U.C. Berkeley, 1980, p. 40.

¹¹⁹ Bagwell, op. cit., p. 139.

¹²⁰ Bagwell, op. cit., p. 130. Lake Temescal was originally called Lake Chabot.

¹²¹ Norman, op. cit.

¹²² In 1980, Paul Groth (op. cit. p. 39) was still able to write "from Grove Street down to San Pablo Avenue in Emeryville, the creek meanders as a frequently pleasant wooded strip through back yards, behind workshops, and beside small factories."

Redevelopment

In July of 2000 a redevelopment plan was adopted for the Broadway corridor and MacArthur Blvd, including the area around the MacArthur BART station at 40th Street and Martin Luther King¹²³. Another redevelopment plan¹²⁴ for West Oakland included the area from 40th Street south to the 580 freeway, because that section happened to be part of Council District 3 from 1990 until reapportionment following the census of 2000. That redevelopment plan was approved in December of 2003. Therefore, the southern and southeastern fringes of JAMMI are part of two different redevelopment districts.

The remainder of JAMMI was given the opportunity to join either of the redevelopment districts on two occasions, once during the planning of the West Oakland redevelopment area, and again in 2007, when it was proposed to extend the Broadway/MacArthur/San Pablo redevelopment area. Both proposals met with strong opposition from JAMMI residents, who viewed the idea as a tax grab that would serve projects outside JAMMI while forcing more low-income housing into an area already saturated with scattered-site projects.

MacArthur BART transit village

In 1992, a Citizens Planning Committee formed to promote the idea of a transit village on the site of the parking lot at the MacArthur BART station. While various proposals and development teams have come and gone over the years, sod has yet to be broken. The most recent proposal calls for five buildings with 675 units of high-density multi-family housing, up to 44,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving commercial, and 5,000 feet of community or childcare facility space. One thousand parking spaces will be included¹²⁵.

The future of JAMMI

The astonishing build-up of condos along the San Pablo corridor in Emeryville, and the possibility that the MacArthur BART Transit Village will materialize, could mean that JAMMI's racial and economic composition will change. Or, we could continue our historical trend of being an island surrounded by change and development in bordering neighborhoods. Only time will tell.

¹²³ <http://www.business2oakland.com/main/documents/B-M-SPredevelopmentplanamended3-6-07.pdf>

¹²⁴ http://www.business2oakland.com/main/documents/WOFINALREDEVPLAN11-18-03_001.pdf

¹²⁵ City of Oakland, MacArthur Transit Village Project Volume 1. Draft Environmental Impact Report, 2008, p. 1.