



Office of the City Manager

## INFORMATION CALENDAR

October 29, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: Timothy Burroughs, Director, Planning and Development  
Subject: LPO NOD: 1440 Hawthorne Terrace/#LMIN2018-0003

### INTRODUCTION

The attached Notice of Decision for a City Landmark is submitted to the Mayor and City Council pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 3.24.160, which states that “a copy of the Notice of Decision shall be filed with the City Clerk and the City Clerk shall present said copy to the City Council at its next regular meeting.”

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC/Commission) has granted City Landmarks status to the property at 1440 Hawthorne Terrace, The Marsh House. This action is subject to an appeal period which began on October 15, 2019.

### BACKGROUND

BMC/LPO Section 3.24.190 allows City Council to review any action of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in granting or denying Landmark, Structure of Merit or Historic District status. In order for Council to review the decision on its merits, Council must appeal the Notice of Decision. To do so, a Council member must move this Information Item to Action and then move to set the matter for hearing on its own. Such action must be taken within 15 days of the mailing of the Notice of Decision, or by October 30, 2019. Such certification to Council shall stay all proceedings in the same manner as the filing of an appeal.

If the Council chooses to appeal the action of the Commission, then a public hearing will be set. The Council must rule on the application within 30 days of closing the hearing, otherwise the decision of the Commission is automatically deemed affirmed.

Unless the Council wishes to review the determination of the Commission and make its own decision, the attached NOD is deemed received and filed.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Landmark designation provides opportunities for the adaptive re-use and rehabilitation of historic resources within the City. The rehabilitation of these resources, rather than their removal, achieves construction and demolition waste diversion, and promotes investment in existing urban centers.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The Council may choose to appeal the decision, in which case it would conduct a public hearing at a future date.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There are no known fiscal impacts associated with this action.

CONTACT PERSON

Fatema Crane, Landmarks Preservation Commission Secretary, Planning and Development, 510-981-7410

Attachments:

1: Notice of Decision – #LMIN2018-0003 at 1440 Hawthorne Terrace

# ATTACHMENT 1, PART 1



# LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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## NOTICE OF DECISION

**DATE OF BOARD DECISION:** September 5, 2019

**DATE NOTICE MAILED:** October 15, 2019

**APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION:** October 30, 2019

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF PERMIT (Barring Appeal or Certification):** October 31, 2019<sup>1</sup>

## 1440 Hawthorne Terrace

### The Marsh House

**Landmark application #LMIN2018-0003 to designate a residential property as a City Landmark**

The Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley, after conducting a public hearing, **APPROVED** the following designation:

**DESIGNATION:** City Landmark

**APPLICATION AUTHOR:** Carolyn McNiven, 1440 Hawthorne Terrace, Berkeley, CA

**ZONING DISTRICT:** R-1(H), Single-Family Residential/Hillside Overlay

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:** Categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15061 (*Review for Exemption*).

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to BMC Section 23B.32.090, the City Council may “certify” any decision of the LPC for review, which has the same effect as an appeal. In most cases, the Council must certify the LPC decision during the 14-day appeal period. However, pursuant to BMC Section 1.04.070, if any portion of the appeal period falls within a Council recess, the deadline for Council certification is suspended until the first Council meeting after the recess, plus the number of days of the appeal period that occurred during the recess, minus one day. If there is no appeal or certification, the Use Permit becomes effective the day after the certification deadline has passed.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF DECISION  
#LMIN2018-0003  
1440 Hawthorne Terrace  
October 15, 2019  
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**The application materials for this project are available online at:**

<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/zoningapplications>

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**FINDINGS FOR APPROVAL AND LANDMARK APPLICATION ARE ATTACHED TO THIS NOTICE**

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**COMMISSION VOTE: 4-2-1-1 (one vacancy)**

**YES:** ADAMS, ALLEN, O'MALLEY, SCHWARTZ

**NO:** ABRANCHES DA SILVA, FINACOM

**ABSTAIN:** CRANDALL

**ABSENT:** MONTGOMERY

**TO APPEAL THIS DECISION (see Section 3.24.300 of the Berkeley Municipal Code):**

To appeal a decision of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to the City Council you must:

1. Submit a letter clearly and concisely setting forth the grounds for the appeal to the City Clerk, located at 2180 Milvia Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Berkeley. The City Clerk's telephone number is (510) 981-6900.
  - a. Pursuant to BMC Section 3.24.300.A, an appeal may be taken to the City Council by the application of the owners of the property or their authorized agents, or by the application of at least fifty residents of the City aggrieved or affected by any determination of the commission made under the provisions of Chapter 3.24.
2. Submit the required fee (checks and money orders must be payable to 'City of Berkeley'):
  - a. The basic fee for persons other than the applicant is \$500. This fee may be reduced to \$100 if the appeal is signed by persons who lease or own at least 50 percent of the parcels or dwelling units within 300 feet of the project site, or at least 25 such persons (not including dependent children), whichever is less. Signatures collected per the filing requirement in BMC Section 3.24.300.A may be counted towards qualifying for the reduced fee, so long as the signers are qualified. The individual filing the appeal must clearly denote which signatures are to be counted towards qualifying for the reduced fee.
  - b. The fee for appeals of affordable housing projects (defined as projects which provide 50 percent or more affordable units for households earning 80% or less of Area Median Income) is \$500, which may not be reduced.
  - c. The fee for all appeals by Applicants is \$2500.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
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3. The appeal must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on the "APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION" date shown above (if the close of the appeal period falls on a weekend or holiday, then the appeal period expires the following business day).

If no appeal is received, the landmark designation will be final on the first business day following expiration of the appeal period.

**NOTICE CONCERNING YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS:**

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If you object to this decision, the following requirements and restrictions apply:

1. If you challenge this decision in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Landmarks Preservation Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.
2. You must appeal to the City Council within fifteen (15) days after the Notice of Decision of the action of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is mailed. It is your obligation to notify the Land Use Planning Division in writing of your desire to receive a Notice of Decision when it is completed.
3. Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(b) and Government Code Section 65009(c)(1), no lawsuit challenging a City Council decision, as defined by Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(e), regarding a use permit, variance or other permit may be filed more than ninety (90) days after the date the decision becomes final, as defined in Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(b). Any lawsuit not filed within that ninety (90) day period will be barred.
4. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(d)(1), notice is hereby given to the applicant that the 90-day protest period for any fees, dedications, reservations, or other exactions included in any permit approval begins upon final action by the City, and that any challenge must be filed within this 90-day period.
5. If you believe that this decision or any condition attached to it denies you any reasonable economic use of the subject property, was not sufficiently related to a legitimate public purpose, was not sufficiently proportional to any impact of the project, or for any other reason constitutes a "taking" of property for public use without just compensation under the California or United States Constitutions, your appeal of this decision must including the following information:
  - A. That this belief is a basis of your appeal.
  - B. Why you believe that the decision or condition constitutes a "taking" of property as set forth above.
  - C. All evidence and argument in support of your belief that the decision or condition constitutes a "taking" as set forth above.

If you do not do so, you will waive any legal right to claim that your property has been taken, both before the City Council and in court.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. **Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record.** If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission or committee for further information.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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Questions about this action should be directed to the LPC Secretary, Fatema Crane, at (510) 981-7410 or [lpc@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:lpc@cityofberkeley.info). All project application materials, including full-size plans, may be viewed at the Permit Service Center (Zoning counter), 1947 Center Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl., between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Tuesday when the Center closes at 3PM.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

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1. Findings and Conditions
2. Landmark Application



**ATTEST:**  
Fatema Crane, Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

cc: City Clerk  
Application Author & Property Owners: Carolyn & Marion McNiven, 1440 Hawthorne Terrace, Berkeley, CA

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DRAFT FINDINGS

SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

## 1440 Hawthorne Terrace

### City of Berkeley Landmark Application #LMIN2018-0003

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#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Landmark Designation of the property at 1440 Hawthorne Terrace – The Marsh House & Garden

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#### CEQA FINDINGS

1. The project is found to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000, et seq.) pursuant to Section 15061.b.3 of the CEQA Guidelines (activities that can be seen with certainty to have no significant effect on the environment).

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#### LANDMARK PRESERVATION ORDINANCE FINDINGS

2. Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 3.24.110.A Paragraph 1.a of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, and based on the evidence presented in the Landmark application, the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley (Commission) finds that the subject property warrants City Landmark designation for its architectural merit as an example of the work of the notable Bay Area architect Henry Higby Gutterson. This property is a unique example of Gutterson's residential work in Berkeley and, more specifically, the Berkeley Hills at the time of its construction where it featured two primary residences (1440 and 1450 Hawthorne Terrace) and an accessory residence within a family compound setting that was integrated with a designed landscape.
3. Pursuant to BMC Section 3.24.110.A, Paragraph 4, the Commission also finds that the subject property warrants designation as a City Landmark because it embodies and expresses the history of Berkeley, Alameda County and California through its direct associations with James Cameron Sperry (1874-1942), a technological innovator and conservationist who commissioned the development of this property and was its original occupant. During Sperry's residency, when 1440 and 1450 Hawthorne were a single parcel featuring the Sperry family compound, he was active in nature conservation and was a leading member of influential organizations such as the League to Save the Redwoods.

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## FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED

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1. This designation shall apply to the subject property and the following distinguishing features of the Marsh House, a portion of the original 1924 Sperry-Marsh House, including but not limited to:
  - A. Building exterior of Marsh House:
    - All exterior stucco and wood facades of the house;
    - All chimneys;
    - All exterior wood trim including but not limited to:
      - Window frames
      - Front portico
      - Finials
      - Cross beams
      - Bays and bay windows
      - Doors and door frames
    - All copper gutters, drainpipes and downspouts and related copper fixtures;
    - All roof tiles (the tile roof);
    - All doors and windows including but not limited to:
      - The front door
      - All exterior French doors, including those from the dining room to the exterior shared patio and from the front hallway to the rear deck over the arcade
      - The leaded glass diamond pane windows
  - B. Exterior hardscape features including but not limited to:
    - Shared laundry yards and tiered patio areas with their associated retaining walls and stairs, fountain, and wooden trellis joining the abutting residence at 1440 Hawthorne Terrace
    - All exterior stairs
    - Front tile entrance way
    - All metal railings
    - Front stairs and railings
    - Berkeley Rhyolite stone walls including those located on the subject property
    - Existing paths and pathways
    - Carved stone basin





# Marsh-Sperry House and Garden

LANDMARK APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO  
TO THE CITY OF BERKELEY  
LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

LANDMARK APPLICATION PAPERWORK  
FOR MARSH-SPERRY HOUSE AND GARDEN  
LOCATED AT 1440 HAWTHORNE TERRACE  
SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO CITY OF BERKELEY  
ORDINANCE NO. 4694 N.S.

NOTE: APPLICATION PAPERWORK FOR SPERRY-  
MCLAUGHLIN HOUSE (1450 HAWTHORNE  
TERRACE) HAS BEEN SUBMITTED SEPARATELY  
AND IS INCORPORATED HEREIN

## CITY OF BERKELEY LANDMARK APPLICATION

1. **STREET ADDRESS:** 1440 Hawthorne Terrace  
City: Berkeley  
County: Alameda  
Zip Code: 94708
2. **ACCESSORS PARCEL NUMBER:** 059-2249-02700  
Block and Lot: 2249-02700  
Tract: Originally part of Ranchos of Vincent and Domingo Peralta (Plot 84); later part of the Beardslee Tract conveyed to Carlisle in 1887; later part of the Bayview Homestead  
Dimensions: Approx. 105 x 73 x 160 x 85 (see survey & assessor's map)  
Cross Streets: Vine Lane and Hawthorne Terrace
3. **Is The Property On The State Historic Resource Inventory?** No  
**Is The Property On The Berkeley Urban Conservation Survey?** Yes. Form #: 24649
4. **APPLICATION FOR LANDMARKS INCLUDES:**
  - a. **Building:** Yes **Garden:** Yes **Other Features:** Yes **Natural:** Yes  
**Designed:** Yes
  - b. **Landscape or Open Space:** Yes
  - c. **Historic Site:** Yes
  - d. **District:** No
  - e. **Other:** Additional features to be preserved listed at pages 32-34
5. **HISTORIC NAME:** Marsh-Sperry House & Marsh-Sperry Garden  
**Commonly Known Name:** Marsh House
6. **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:** 1924
  - a. **Factual:** Yes      **b: Approximate:** No  
**Source of Information:** Permit # 17854 issued Aug. 21, 1924.
7. **ARCHITECT:** Henry Higby Gutterson (house and hardscape); Mabel Symmes (landscape)
8. **BUILDER:** Axel Cederborg
9. **STYLE:** Period Revival (English Tudor)

10. ORIGINAL OWNER: James Cameron Sperry
11. PRESENT OWNERS: The McNiven Family Trust
12. PRESENT USE: Residential (Single Family)  
Current Zoning: R-1(H)  
Adjacent Property Zoning: R-1(H)
13. PRESENT CONDITION OF PROPERTY:
  - a. Exterior: Excellent
  - b. Interior: Excellent
  - c. Grounds: ExcellentHas the property's exterior been altered? Yes, minimally, as described on pages 14 & 30.
14. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY: See pages 10-32
15. HISTORY: See pages 34-63
16. SIGNIFICANCE: See pages 64-79  
Historic Value: State: Yes. City: Yes. Neighborhood: Yes  
Architectural Value: State: Yes City: Yes. Neighborhood: Yes  
Basis for Landmark Designation: See pages 8-10
17. Is the property endangered? House, no; Garden, uncertain.
18. Photographs: as noted throughout      Date: various as noted
19. Recorder: Carolyn F. McNiven      Date: Oct. 9, 2018
20. Repository: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association has agreed to put a copy of this document in their permanent collection, and it will be made available to the public upon request.

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## INTRODUCTION

The architectural, cultural and historic significance of Marsh-Sperry House and Garden is tied to its fraternal twin, the Sperry-McLaughlin House, at 1450 Hawthorne Terrace. Built at the same time in 1924 by Joseph C. Sperry, a key figure in the Save the Redwoods League, Marsh-Sperry House was the residence of Sperry's widowed sister, Marion Sperry Marsh, the former post-mistress of the Big Trees post office and caretaker of the Mammoth Hotel.

Gutterson authority Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny described the two as particularly fine examples of Gutterson's residential style. The house that Gutterson designed for Marion at 1440 is more compact and rectilinear than its fraternal twin at 1450. Also done in an English Tudor-Period Revival Style, it sits more squarely and higher on its narrower lot. It shares the same high peaked and tiled roof as its neighbor but features more whimsical elements, including a front turret featuring diamond paned leaded glass windows.

James Sperry and his family enjoyed their family compound, hosting parties and numerous weddings. The Garden was later enjoyed by the homes' second-generation occupants, the McLaughlin and McNiven families. Sylvia and Don McLaughlin hosted significant meetings, fundraisers, parties, and family events there, as did the McNivens albeit to a lesser extent. Many Berkeley residents have fond memories of attending events and parties there, and the special place is woven into the fabric of Berkeley. Thanks to Sylvia McLaughlin and Marion McNiven (shown below) the two homes and the Marsh-Sperry Garden have remained essentially as they existed when Gutterson and Symmes designed them







## BASIS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

The Marsh-Sperry House and the Marsh-Sperry Garden are worthy of designation as a City of Berkeley Landmark because they conform to the following:

**BMC 3.24.110.A.a. Architectural Merit (first, last, only, or most significant architectural property of its type in the region).**

The Marsh-Sperry House (together with the Sperry-McLaughlin House also under nomination for consideration for landmark designation) is over 50 years old and the **only known example** of a twin-house compound designed by well-known Bay Area Architect Henry Higby Gutterson. The Marsh-Sperry House and the Marsh-Sperry Gardens are also over 50 years old and **the only known collaboration** between Gutterson and notable landscape architect Mabel Symmes. The Marsh-Sperry Garden is the **only remaining twin garden design** by Mabel Symmes anywhere and **the only known remaining intact Symmes garden in Berkeley**. Further the combined size of the houses and gardens and the nature of their relationship with the Sperry-McLaughlin House make them the most significant twin/family compound property in the North Berkeley Hills.

**BMC 3.24.110.A.b. Architectural Merit (Prototypes or outstanding examples; most notable work; best surviving work)**

The Marsh-Sperry House is **an outstanding example** of a Period Revival style home by the master Berkeley Architect Henry Gutterson. It together with the Sperry-McLaughlin House were built as two side-by-side homes on one parcel with a shared garden planned by the notable Landscape Architect Mabel Symmes, who designed Blake Garden in Kensington, which was also built for two homes but since subdivided. The Sperry-McLaughlin House and its twin the Marsh-Sperry House are **one of Gutterson's most notable works in Berkeley**. The Marsh-Sperry Garden appears to be the **only surviving intact work** of landscape architect Mabel Symmes in Berkeley.

**BMC 3.24.110.A.c. Architectural Merit (worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric).**

The Sperry-McLaughlin House and Marsh-Sperry House were recognized at the time they were constructed as the most significant post-1923 fire homes built in the Berkeley Hills in 1924. Together the houses **add enormous value to the neighborhood**, particularly when considered alongside the other handsome Gutterson homes in Hawthorne Terrace. Together the two houses and the garden that they share are **uniquely Berkeley** and uniquely part of the architectural "story" of this particular North Berkeley Hills neighborhood. As the only known architectural examples of twin homes and gardens by Gutterson and Symmes as collaborators; the only remaining family compound designed by Gutterson and Symmes; and as a particularly significant example of each of their work, the Sperry-

McLaughlin House (and the Marsh House) and gardens are worth preserving for the **exceptional values that they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.**

#### **BMC 3.24.110.3. Cultural Value**

The Marsh-Sperry House together with the Sperry-McLaughlin House has a unique place in the cultural history of Berkeley and the region as a whole, and remains of considerable cultural value to both. First, they express the indomitable spirit and forward thinking of Berkeley residents. Their construction occurred within the context of the **rebuilding of Berkeley after the 1923 Fire** and the emergence of the **Second Bay Area Style of design**, of which Gutterson was a proponent. Mabel Symmes, the garden's landscape designer, was **one of a few pioneering women landscape architects**, including Willa Clair Cloys Carmack (another well-known female Bay Area Landscape Architect), who trained in the fledgling landscape design department at Cal under Katherine Jones, the departments' first woman lecturer.

Second, Marsh-Sperry House was built by **James C. Sperry, a key figure in Save the Redwoods League** for his sister, a pioneering female post-mistress in 1890s Northern California, who eventually married into another prominent California pioneering family, the Marshes. The Marsh-Sperry garden was beloved by (and used by) local environmentalist legend Sylvia McLaughlin, who together with Marion McNiven worked hard to preserve Symmes's garden for generations to come.

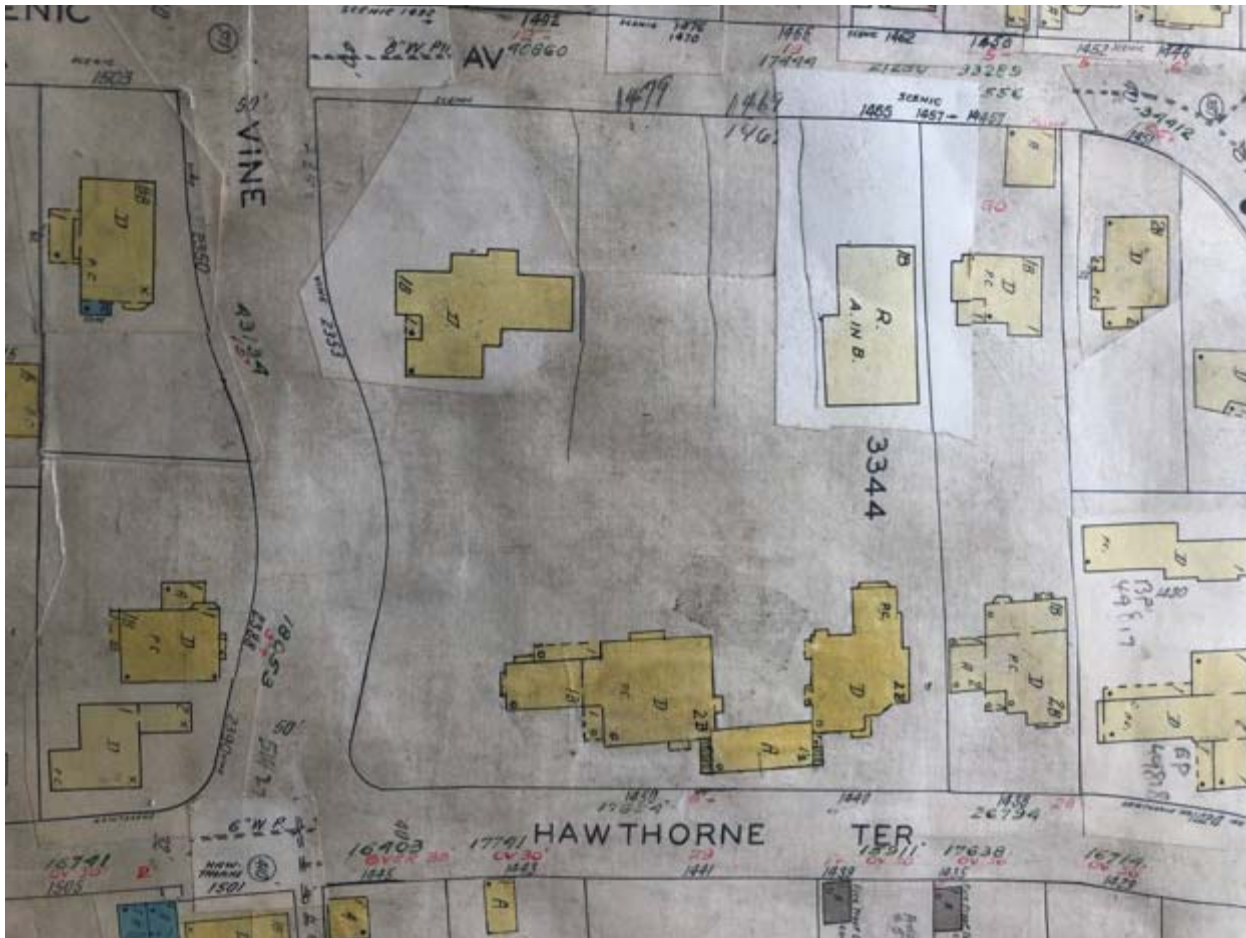
#### **BMC 3.24.110.4. Historic Value**

The Marsh-Sperry House, the Sperry-McLaughlin House, and the Marsh-Sperry Garden uniquely express the history of Berkeley. They were designed over 50 years ago by one prominent Berkeley High School graduate (Henry Gutterson) and a pioneering female landscape architect (Mabel Symmes). Although Marion Marsh may not have been as prominent as her brother James Sperry, she was a pioneer in her own right, having worked as a post-mistress for the Big Trees area in Calaveras County and running her family's hotel there. Marion was clearly an integral member of James Sperry's family, and together their homes are worth of protection insofar as they exemplify the determination of Berkeley residents to rebuilt after the devastating fire of 1923 and – in the case of these two homes --- spare no expense to do so.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

### 1. THE SITE AND SURVEY<sup>1</sup>

The Sperry-McLaughlin House (1450 Hawthorne Terrace) and Marsh House (1440 Hawthorne Terrace) were originally part of the same North Berkeley parcel boarded by Hawthorne Terrace, Vine Lane, and Scenic Avenue. It was part of the Berkeley



View Homestead plot carved out of the Carlisle Tract.<sup>2</sup> Exhibit A shows the houses' orientation on the original plot as reflected in the Sanborn Map. 1450 sits at the Northwest corner of Vine Lane and Hawthorne Terrace; 1440 is immediately to the North. An attached garage structure joins the two houses. (Photo: MTU Consultants). After the property was subdivided, houses were constructed fronting Vine Lane and Scenic (these are not covered by this application).

<sup>1</sup> This section on the site duplicates that in the Sperry McLaughlin Application and therefore may be skipped if the other has been read.

<sup>2</sup> The Alameda County Assessors Map shows the parcel as having been originally part of the Rancho of Vincente & Domingo Peralta. According to the legal description it was part of a tract Beardslee deeded to Carlisle in 1887. Berkeley Maps of a later date are more ambiguous as to the tract name when it was conveyed to James C. Sperry. See Appendix B (maps).

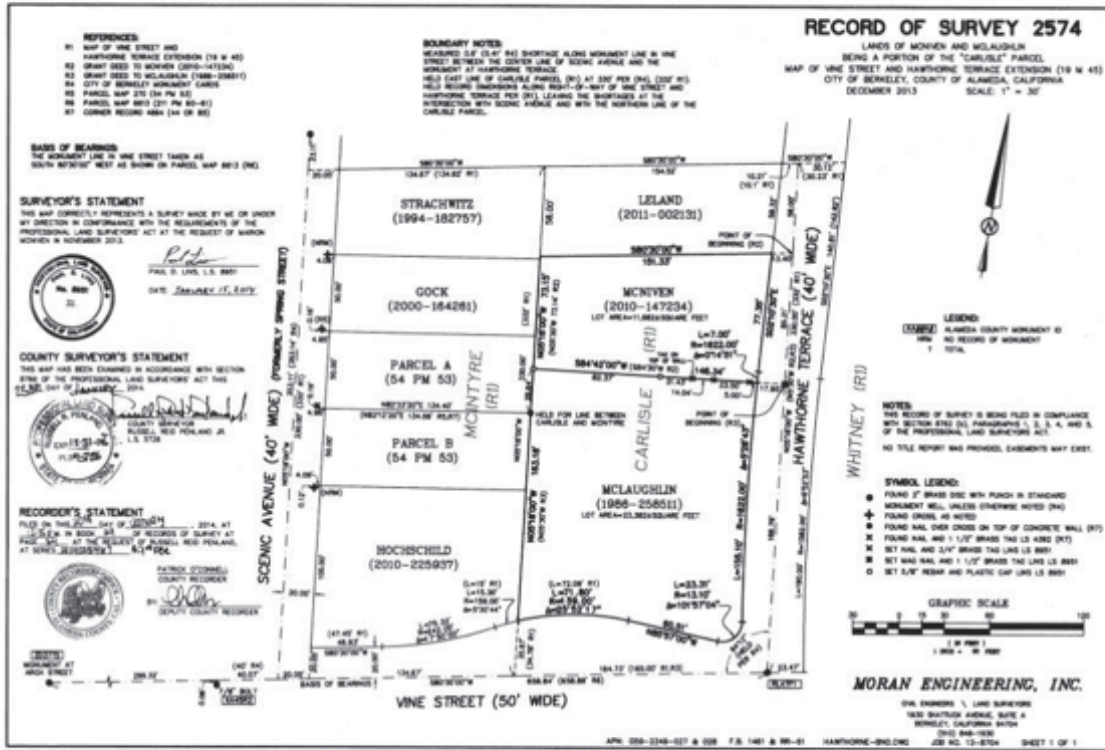


Above is a view from above of the 1450 and 1440 Hawthorne Terrace Properties (photos: Google Earth, January 2018)



- Red Arrow: The Sperry-McLaughlin House (1450 Hawthorne Terr)
- Blue Arrow: The Marsh House (1440 Hawthorne Terr)
- Yellow Arrow: The “shared” formal center yard with arbors (garage structure visible along Hawthorne Terrace frontage)
- White Arrows: the rear gardens flowing out of center area
- Green Arrows: points to natural landscaping and Redwood grove

# 2014 Survey (reflecting subsequent subdivisions).



Record of Survey 2574 Map BK 39 PG 34

Hawthorne Terrace was hard hit in the 1923 Berkeley Fire, and no existing structures remained on the 1450-1440 property after the fire swept down the hill. What was left was the hill terrain, which is a gentle South/Southwestern slope towards Vine Lane. The houses and their landscape conform to the hill's gentle slope. 1440, the Marsh House, sits slightly higher on the hill to the North, and its front entrance features a staircase down to the front door bordered by a retaining wall. The entrance of 1450 (the Sperry-McLaughlin House) is level with the street, and likewise fits in with the gentle rise of the slope. The rear and side gardens of both feature original Berkeley Rhyolite walls throughout including along the Vine Street frontage of 1450.

As discussed further below, Gutterson designed both houses in a so-called Period Revival Style, featuring stucco and wood surfaces, and terracotta tile roofs. They have an English country home feel, with formal rooms that are both handsome and

comfortable with magnificent views. The houses were clearly built for entertaining in the California way, with parties flowing from indoors to outdoor spaces.

The two houses are fraternal twins, meaning they are of comparable designs but individually distinct. They are connected by a two-story garage/apartment structure along Hawthorne Terrace featuring an arbor with original trumpet vine. In the rear, there is a central shared garden between the two homes (behind the garage/apartment structure) with a concrete patio featuring a wisteria-covered arbor that runs from French doors off the Marsh house dining room to French doors off the dining room of the Sperry-McLaughlin House.

The cement patio is original as is the design of the formal center lawn, flower beds and shrubs. At the Western edge of the center lawn sits another smaller arbor covered by rose vines and wisteria. This arbor is not original to the property; it was built to replace a Chinese tea house designed by Gutterson (see Appendix E) that was not extant by the late 1950s/early 1960s when the two properties changed hands.

Unlike most of Gutterson's designs for homes in St Francis Woods in San Francisco, where the façade was of central importance, these two houses keep their majestic aspects hidden, showing them on the West Elevations towards the private garden.

Part of this effect is of course due to the lovely Marsh-Sperry Garden at the rear. The



property was fully landscaped as part of a single design plan by Mabel Symmes (UC 1896) in a closely similar style to the garden that she designed for the Blake Estate in Kensington. As with the Blake Garden, the Marsh-Sperry Garden (so called on the original blue prints) features formal areas including lawns, hedged rose and

iris beds, and water features flowing into a more natural "woodland" featuring native and non-native trees and shrubs. The entire property is crisscrossed with numerous paths and open vistas to the San Francisco Bay.

## 2. THE EXTERIOR OF MARSH-SPERRY HOUSE

As noted previously, Marsh-Sperry House sits higher on the hill than 1450. For that reason, Gutterson designed a cement staircase leading down and to the South to the covered front door at the Northern most edge of the home. The exterior finish is rough stucco with half-timber elements. The windows are largely original. The roof features the original red ceramic tile and chimneys.

Whereas the Sperry-McLaughlin House has a rambling feel thanks to its long-North-South axis, the Marsh-Sperry House is more compact, upright, and (for want of a better term) dense. Its Eastern Elevation is comparatively narrow, showing a high peaked roof, a turret (which encloses the staircase to the second-floor), and a dormer window over a covered entry way. (figure 3) The entry way features a diamond-paned leaded glass window to the right of the door (figure 4). The Marsh-Sperry house also does not have a large side-yard. The Walter Ratcliff house to the North is built along the property line, so there is not much distance between those two homes. The original retaining walls and paths, however, remain.

At the rear, there is a two-story bay window (figure 10) that faces the Bay. The first floor sits over a full finished basement that opens onto the rear garden via an arched doorway. After the current owners purchased the home in 1959, they enclosed an existing first-floor terrace to create a sunroom. That sunroom (which sits at the house's South-West corner) was replaced recently with a more architecturally appropriate façade designed by architect Stephen Sooter. Other than this one alteration, the exterior façade of the Marsh-Sperry House is just as Gutterson designed it.

The house incorporates the Marsh-Sperry Garden in much the same way as the Sperry-McLaughlin House. French doors off the dining room open out to the shared wisteria arbor and patio, featuring a working fountain and magnificent Bay Views. While much of the rear yard of 1440 is as Symmes designed it – including the Brazilian Soap Bark trees that she planted – the hedged rose beds immediately to the rear of the bay window did not survive. When the current owners moved to the property in 1959, the rear yard was overgrown, and the roses had been moved to the rear of the center yard (where there was more sunlight). The shrubs around the perimeter of the rear yard are either original or like replacements, but the roses were not restored due to a large cypress tree, recently removed. A plan is underway to restore the rose beds to that rear area.

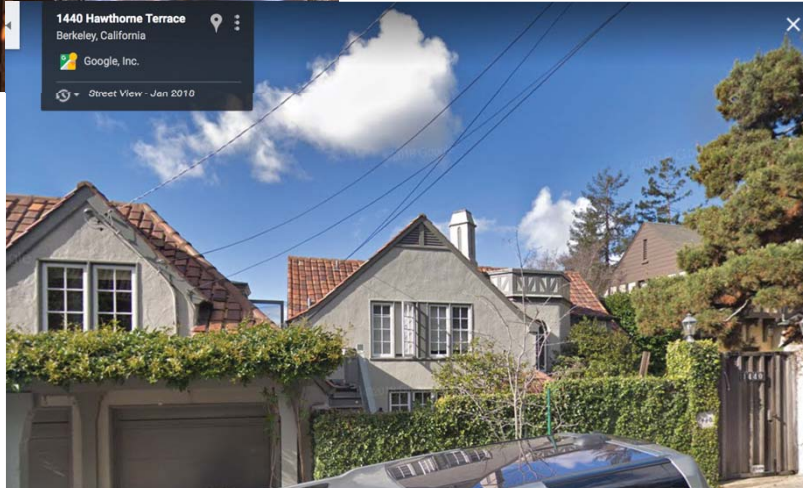
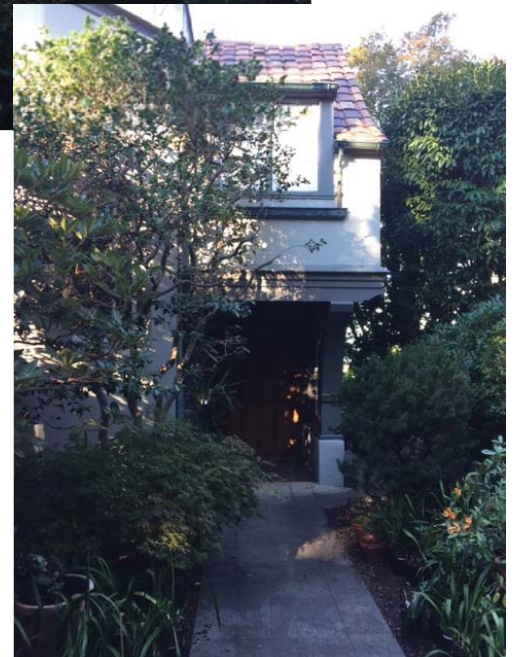
### EASTERN ELEVATION (FRONT FACING HAWTHORNE TERRACE)



Fig. 1 & 2 (left) showing front peaked roof with adjacent turret;



fig 3 (below right) showing entry way; fig. 4 (left) showing diamond paned windows at entry way. (photos: McNiven Family)  
Fig.5, street view (Google Maps Jan 2018)

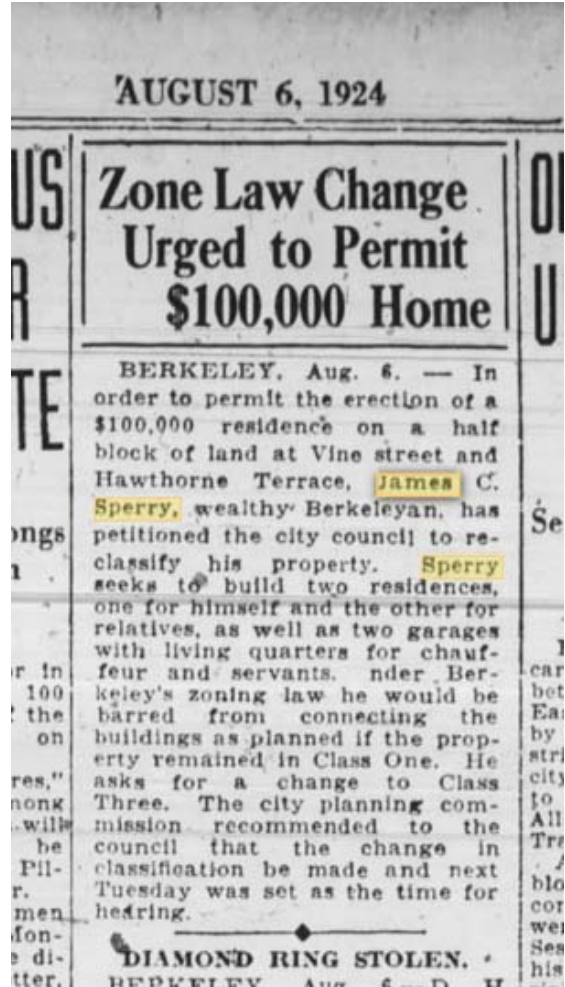
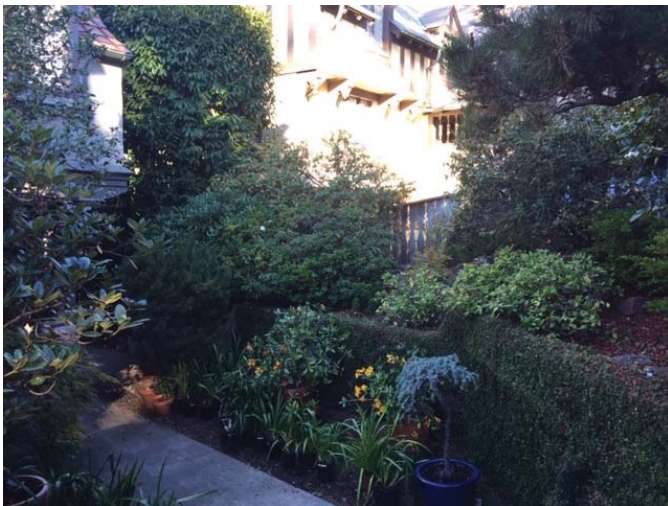






The adjacent garage/apartment structure is visible in the photo to the left (fig 6) and shows the dormer window, peaked roof and trumpet vine arbor. Construction of that structure and attached arbor required a zoning adjustment as described in the news articles of the time.

Because the 1440 House was on the uphill side of the Sperry property, Gutterson designed retaining walls and a staircase to “frame” the front entrance of the house. (fig. 7, below). (photos: McNiven family)



## NORTHERN ELEVATION



As noted previously, the house to the North of 1440 (Walter Ratcliff's 1430 Hawthorne Terrace house) is close to the property line with 1440, so photographs are difficult to take of this elevation. As you can see, the central chimney is on the northern Elevation (fig. 8) are a series of diamond paned windows that run along the interior and exterior entrance way. (fig. 9). Photos: McNiven family.



### WESTERN ELEVATION



Fig. 10 (left) shows the bay windows, terrace (now enclosed sunroom), and lower arched doorway; fig. 11 (lower left) shows the bay from the side showing the wood details of the support under the bay; fig. 12 (below) shows Symmes' original hardscaping with Berkeley Rhyolite; fig. 13 (lower) shows the Brazilian soap bark trees planted by Symmes.



### SOUTHERN ELEVATION



(Photo: above courtesy of BAHA; below, McNiven Family).



## GARAGE STRUCTURE



Photo above shows the Eastern Exposure of the garage structure between the Sperry-McLaughlin and Marsh Houses. The trumpet vine and arbor are original as are the fig vines covering the exterior walls. (photo: Jan. 2018 Google Maps)



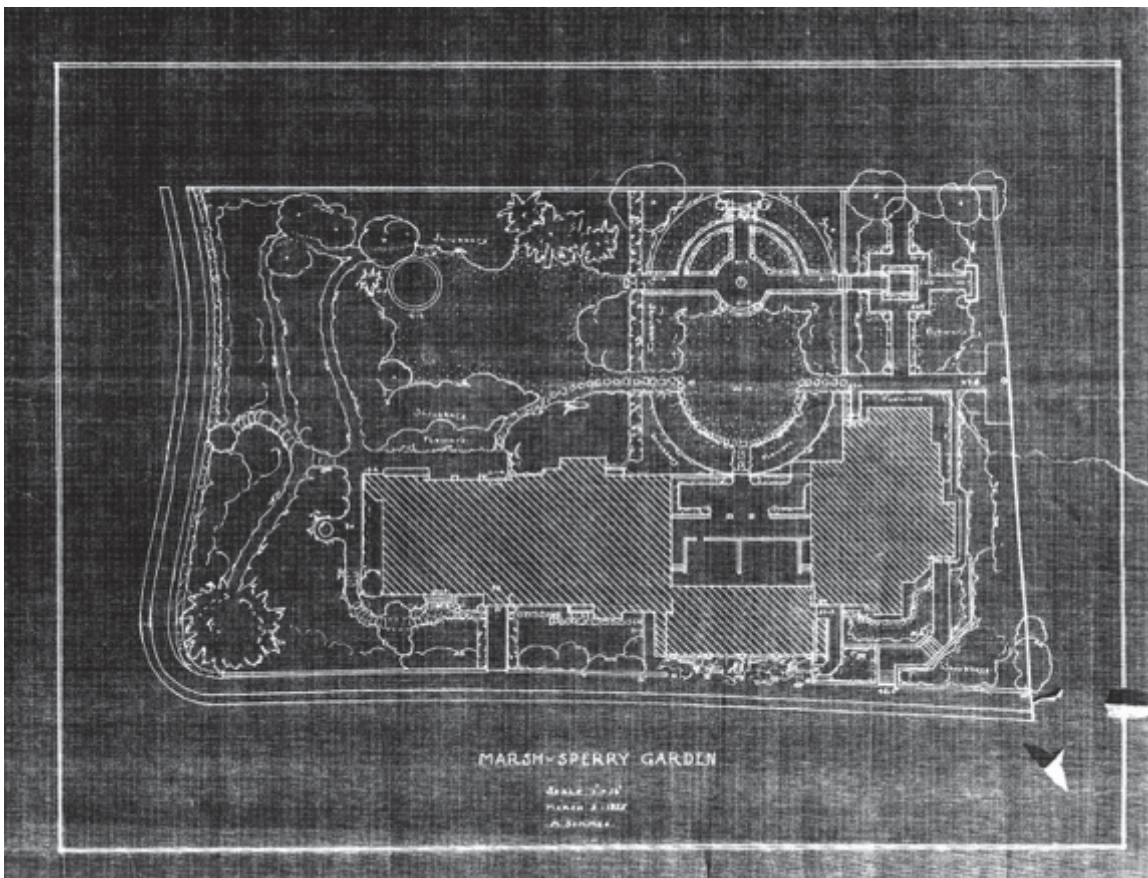
Photo to the right shows the Western Exposure and looks down into the twin laundry yards of the 1440 and 1450 houses. Because the houses stand on a slope, the laundry yard of the 1440 house sits higher than that of the 1450 House and is supported by retaining walls running East to West and North to South. These laundry areas were accessible to the basement laundry rooms of each house. The rooms above the garages were designed as servants' quarters. Notice even the garage has windows!

The common patio and arbor shown on the previous page abuts these laundry yards to the West. (photo courtesy of BAHA)

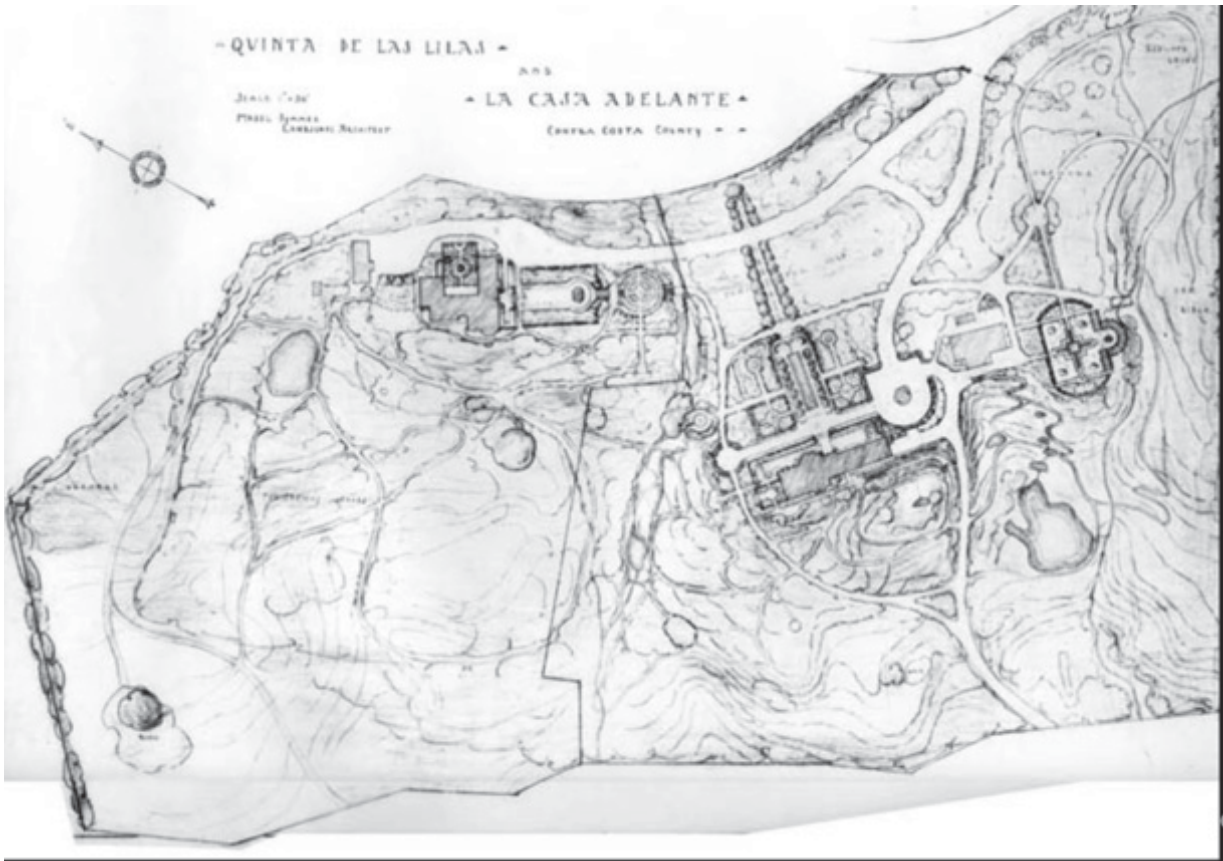
### 3. DESCRIPTION OF MARSH-SPERRY GARDEN



A comparison of this Google Earth view of 1450 and 1440 show that the basic design and key features of Symmes' original design has been preserved. The Rhyolite rock walls, paths, lawns and grove of trees and shrubs remain. Notice the formal center lawn between the two homes and the sloping lawn behind the 1450 house that spills into the mini-wilderness of redwoods and other native trees such as mature live oaks and other species.



## SIMMILARITY BETWEEN MARSH-SPERRY GARDEN (c. 1923) AND THE BLAKE GARDEN (c. 1923-25)



Above is a black and white reproduction of Symmes's original design for the two houses on the Blake property on 77 Rincon Rd. in Kensington. Below is a focused view on the gardens near what is now Blake House. The inclusion of formal rose gardens bordered by hedging (indicated by red arrows) is very similar to features of the Sperry-Marsh Garden as is the inclusion of wilderness elements (indicated here by the blue arrow) including its Redwood canyon which is a larger version of the Redwood grove at the Sperry-Marsh Garden.



SAME DESIGN: Formal Rose Beds surrounded by boxwood hedging

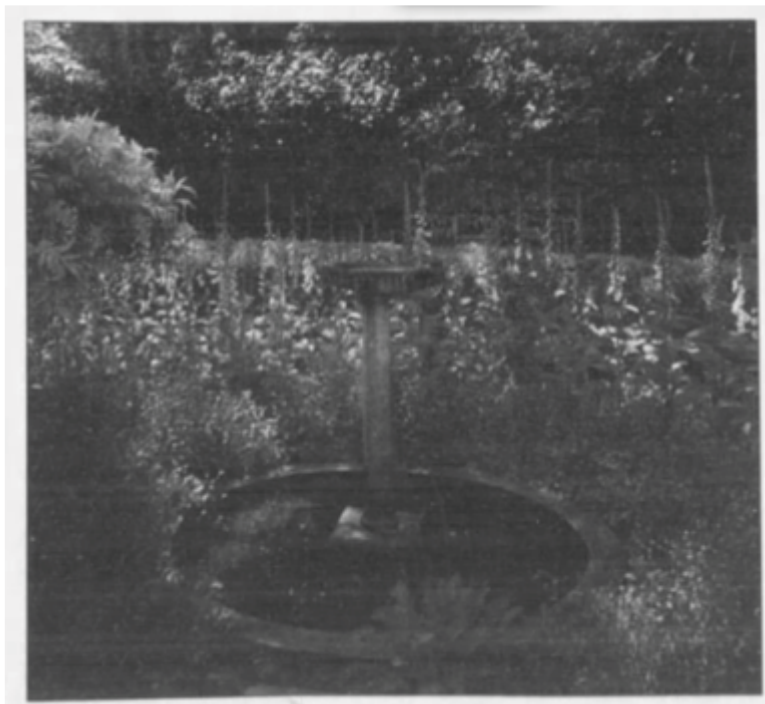


Top & bottom pics: Blake house (undated) courtesy of UCB CEB archives; color photos, Sperry-Marsh garden 2108 (McNiven family)





SIMILAR PLANTING, WATER FEATURES AND HARDSCAPING



Left: undated photo of bird bath in Blake Garden with Fox Gloves (digitalis) surrounding; Below: color photographs of birdbath in Marsh-Sperry Garden (photo courtesy of BAHA) and foxgloves (photo, McNiven family)



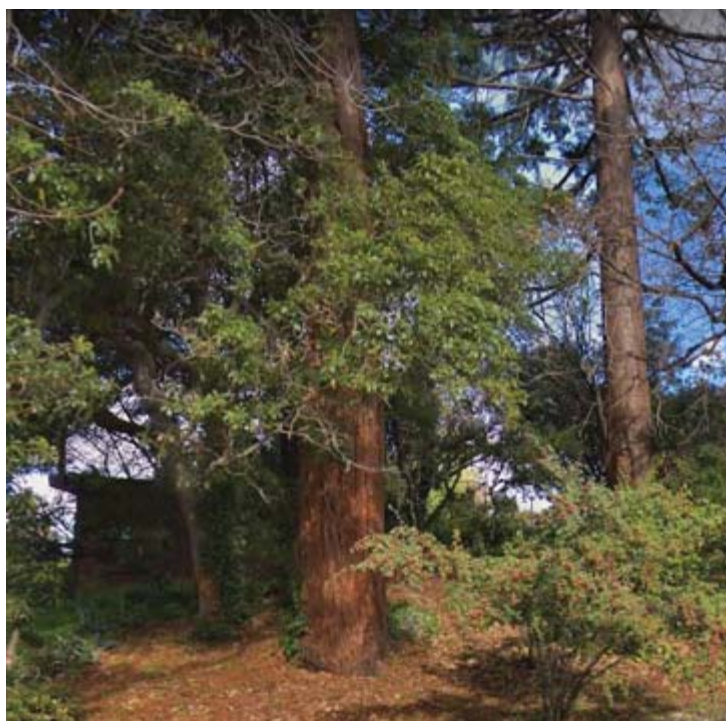


Left: photo of water feature at Blake Gardens; Below: photo of fountain at Marsh-Sperry Garden (photo courtesy of BAHA). Notice Chinese pottery used on both (as tile trim on Blake Gardens fountain; as fountain spout in Marsh-Sperry Garden).



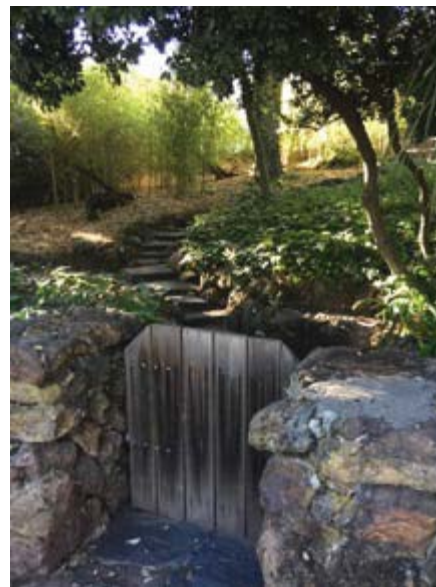


Left: photo of Redwood grove in Blake Gardens; Below, photo of Redwood Grove in Marsh-Sperry Garden (part of Sperry McLaughlin grounds).





Top photo: Path, Blake Gardens, circa 1958 (CED archives); lower photos: Path Marsh-Sperry Garden, circa 2016 (photos courtesy of BAHA)



The comparisons on these past pages illustrate the integrity of the Marsh-Sperry Garden as well as the strength of Symmes' vision for the landscape, namely to use the natural features of the property including the sloping hill and Western exposure, to create an unusual combination of a formal garden with an (almost) untamed wilderness. The integrity, strength of vision, and careful execution are worthy of preservation both on their own architectural merit as well as their cultural and historic significance.

4. IMPORTANCE OF GARDENS & LANDSCAPE TO MARSH-SPERRY HOUSE

The Marsh-Sperry Garden is important to the integrity of Gutterson's overall design for the twin houses. Gutterson's design for each house made the most of the site, which has a wonderful view of the Bay, and the garden. (photos: C. McNiven)





## HISTORIC INTEGRITY AND CONDITION

Historic integrity consists of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The Marsh-Sperry House has not been moved. Its design is unchanged. Materials and workmanship are nearly original and intact. The site of the house, the landscaping and the immediate area are largely unchanged from their construction post 1923 fire and convey the historic setting, feeling, and association. Therefore, the property retains all seven aspects of historic integrity

Marsh House is in excellent shape for its age. The original windows, exterior doors, gutters, and woodwork are intact. Notably the original windows of both houses were constructed of Alaskan cedar which is particularly durable and (of course) no longer obtainable. Some windows at Marsh House were replaced with facsimiles due to age, and the house has been painted (the original stucco was colored but unpainted). Both houses have been reroofed using the original terracotta tiles and, where necessary, identical replacement tiles. The chimney has been braced. The McNiven Family has Gutterson's original blue prints for the home and Symmes's plan for the garden, which they are happy to make available for inspection.

The landscaping for both houses (referred to herein as the Marsh-Sperry Garden based on Symmes's plan) has been little changed from Mabel Symmes' original design. The lawns, shrubs, paths, walls, working fountain, hedging, and redwood grove remain. The rose garden in the center of the property remains -- albeit with replacement plants. The original rose beds directly behind Marsh House were not extant when the current owners moved in as noted previously. However, the scrubs and trees are largely original or like replacements. The current owners replaced the central dirt area with a lawn but have engaged a historic landscape designer to provide advice on restoring the original rose beds. The roses had been moved by Mrs. Marsh to the lower bed in the shared yard area where there were over 65 varieties of roses in that small space when the current owners moved in. The fountain in the central shared patio has been recently restored by the current owners of the Marsh-Sperry House and is working. The central shared patio and arbor features the original cement surface, wooden arbor, and even the original wisteria plant.





## ASPECTS TO BE PRESERVED

- The exterior of Marsh-Sperry House including but not limited to the following:
  - All exterior stucco and wood facades of the house;
  - All chimneys;
  - All exterior wood trim including but not limited to:
    - Window frames
    - Front portico
    - Finials
    - Cross beams
    - Bays and bay windows
    - Doors and door frames
  - All copper gutters, drainpipes and downspouts and related copper fixtures;
  - All roof tiles (the tile roof);
  - All doors and windows including but not limited to:
    - The front door
    - All exterior French doors, including those from the dining room to the exterior shared patio and from the front hallway to the rear deck over the arcade
    - The leaded glass diamond pane windows
- All exterior hardscape features including but not limited to:
  - Rear concrete patio with fountain and retaining walls;
  - Rear wood arbor with wisteria (shared with Sperry-McLaughlin House);
  - Side so-called laundry yard behind shared patio area
  - All exterior stairs
  - Front tile entrance way
  - All metal railings
  - Front stairs and railings
  - All Berkeley Rhyolite stone walls including those located in the shared area with the Sperry-McLaughlin House
  - Arbor at West-End of shared yard including climbing rose and wisteria

- Existing paths and pathways
- The Marsh Sperry Garden, including but not limited to:
  - The center and rear lawns
  - The ponds (which may be restored)
  - All wisteria vines
  - All hedges
  - The redwood grove
  - All rose beds
  - All flower beds
  - The cedar trees in front of the rear trellis
  - Fig vine on front wall

# HISTORY





### 1. BUILDING OF THE HOME<sup>3</sup>

When fire swept down through the North Berkeley hills on September 17, 1923, it took with it many of the primarily brown wood-shingled homes that dotted the area. The devastation is visible in the photos above. One of these homes was the famous “grey gothic” owned by Colonel Edwin Langdon, which together with its equally famed orchard on Hawthorne Terrace was burnt completely.<sup>4</sup> Langdon commissioned Henry H. Gutterson to design a majestic English Tudor half-timbered house at 1441 Hawthorne Terrace as a replacement. Langdon sold the property immediately to the North to a friend, General McNeill, who also had Gutterson design his home, a much smaller English style cottage.

After James C. Sperry purchased the lot opposite the Langdon and McNeill properties, he too commissioned Gutterson to design homes for his

Berkeley in its restored hillside region can now boast one of the most artistic residential regions in the state. The fire has brought a revival of the early California type of architecture and the Spanish motif, carried down from the days of the dons, predominates the hill region.

The distinction of building the most expensive structure in the fire area belongs to J. C. Sperry, who recently took out a permit for a dwelling at Hawthorne Terrace and Vine street to cost \$68,107. The Japanese Students' club of the University of California took out the last permit of the year to replace its building on Euclid avenue near Le Conte at a cost of \$25,000.

<sup>3</sup> This section is identical to that in the Sperry-McLaughlin Application.

<sup>4</sup> “Architect Left Mark on Neighborhood,” *Berkeley Gazette*, Mar. 21, 1979.

family and for his sister Marion Marsh. At the time, the homes were the “most expensive” structures in the fire area as reported in the article that accompanied the headline and photos shown above from the *Oakland Tribune* dated September 17, 1924, lauding the rapid re-development of the fire-scarred hills.

Gutterson also designed three other post-fire homes on Euclid Avenue just above the Langdon and McNeill properties<sup>5</sup>, as well as another “favorite Gutterson”<sup>6</sup> on Bayview. Other architects too were brought in to design new residences along Hawthorne Terrace including Bernard Maybeck (1408), John Hudson Thomas (1427, 1435), Julia Morgan (1411), and Walter Ratcliff (1431). A Julia Morgan house, at 1404 Hawthorne Terrace, survived the fire.

The Sperry-McLaughlin and Marsh homes adopted so-called fire-proof construction, including tile or slate roofs and cement or stucco exteriors. These features represented a shift away from the brown wood-shingled designs of the so-called first phase of Bay Area residential design that Morgan, Maybeck and others had made so famous. He also used locally sourced stone (Berkeley/Northbrae Rhyolite) for the boundary walls.

WRITE IN INK  
**APPLICATION FOR BUILDING PERMIT  
 FRAME BUILDING**

Application is hereby made to the Department of Building and Inspections of the City of Berkeley for permission to erect a building on the lot described below. The building to be erected is a two-story frame garage on the lot described below. 2425 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, Cal.

Building to be erected on lot No. 17854 by (Name) John C. Sperry

Site of proposed building 60 ft. by 120 ft. Diverse height of building 25 ft. ft.  
 Height in clear of eaves 25 ft. ft. Height in clear of first story 9 ft. ft.  
 Height in clear of second story 15 ft. ft. Height in clear of third story 15 ft. ft.  
 Foundation to top of basement 4 ft. ft. (Thickness) 12 ft. ft. (Height, greatest height of foundation) 12 ft. ft.  
 Walls of building 12 ft. ft. thick with 4 ft. ft. corners. X Y Z W V U T S R Q P  
 If gips are used give size 4 ft. ft. in corners  
 Size of masonry 2 ft. ft. thick. 12 inches O. C. Size of studs in first story 2 ft. ft. inches O. C.  
 Size of studs in second story 2 ft. ft. inches O. C. Size of studs in third story 2 ft. ft. inches O. C.  
 Foundation and masonry to be 12 ft. ft. thick. Light stone with concrete to be set.

All outside walls covered with stucco or plaster will be three bonded.

First floor joists 2 ft. ft. inches. 12 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 12 ft. ft. ft.  
 Second floor joists 2 ft. ft. inches. 12 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 12 ft. ft. ft.  
 Third floor joists 2 ft. ft. inches. 12 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 12 ft. ft. ft.  
 Ceiling joists 2 ft. ft. inches. 12 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 12 ft. ft. ft.  
 Rafters 2 ft. ft. inches. 12 inches on centers. Longest span between supports 12 ft. ft. ft.  
 Roof covered with 12 ft. ft. shingles or tiles. 12 ft. ft. Pitch.  
 Built to bearing capacity with 12 ft. ft. stone as outside walls of each story.  
 Chimney of 12 ft. ft. size with 12 ft. ft. top. 12 ft. ft. any special built?  
 Gas pipe lines to be placed chimney or back.  
 Any special water or sewer? 12 ft. ft. water. 12 ft. ft. sewer (straight or staggered)? 12 ft. ft.

Draw building will be made.

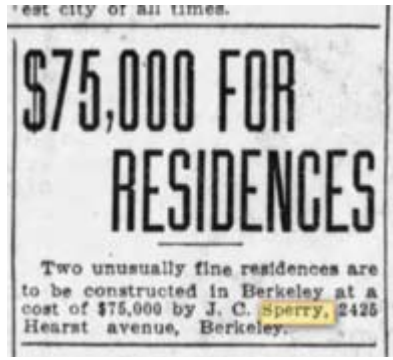
Name of Owner of Ground John C. Sperry Residence Address 2425 Hearst  
 Name of Owner of Building John C. Sperry Residence Address 2425 Hearst  
 Name of Lessee of Building John C. Sperry Residence Address 2425 Hearst  
 Name of Architect or Designer John C. Sperry Residence Address 2425 Hearst  
 Name of Builder John C. Sperry Residence Address 2425 Hearst

I hereby agree to carry, indemnify and keep harmless the City of Berkeley against all liabilities, judgments, costs and expenses which may in any way accrue against said City in consequence of the granting of this permit, or from the non-compliance of any contract, order or sub-contract care by virtue thereof, and will in all things strictly comply with the conditions of the permit and ordinances of the City of Berkeley.

John C. Sperry  
 Signature of Owner, Applicant or Builder  
 Address 2425 Hearst Avenue

City Permit expires one year from date stated above provided by the City Council.  
 Date AUG 21 1924 Permit No. 17854

Sperry hired Oakland-based builder Axel (a/k/a Alex) Cederborg to construct the two homes. Cederborg was a well-known builder who constructed many significant homes in Berkeley, Oakland and Piedmont, including a house for the Ghirardelli family in Piedmont. Cederborg

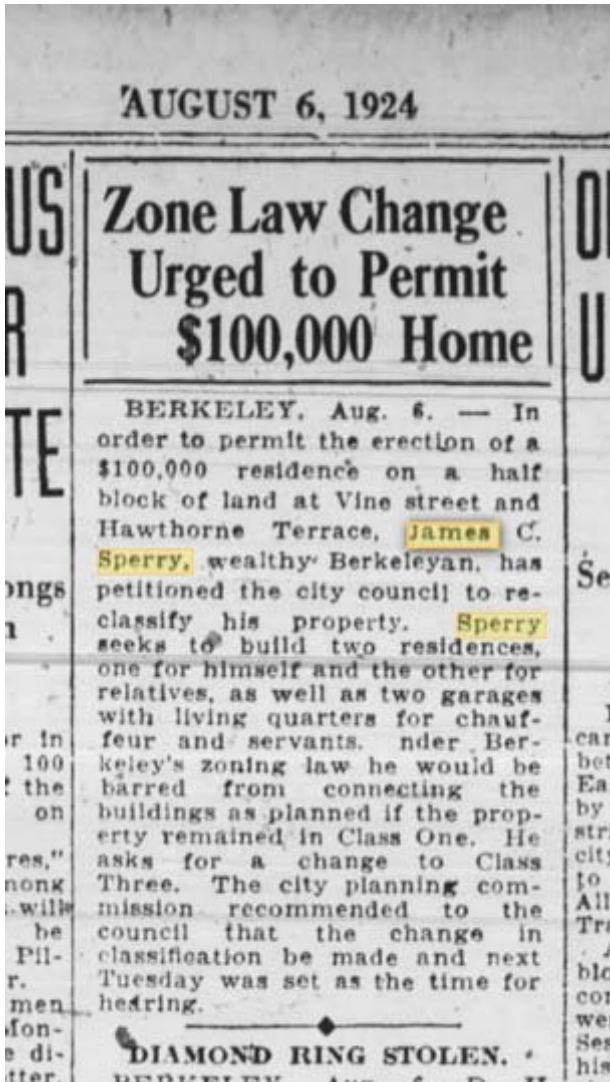


applied for a permit to build the homes and the apartments and garage for the astronomical sum of \$68,107. The application is shown at left (and in full size in the Appendix). The permit application was reported in the *San*

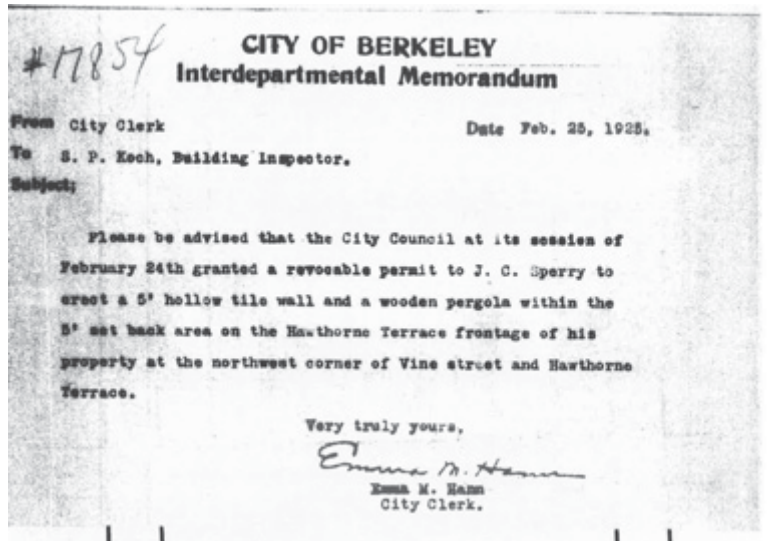
<sup>5</sup> These included the house at 1460 Euclid Ave (1924) that Gutterson designed for Amos Huggins on the foundation of their prior home that burned in the fire. Their yard was reportedly landscaped by Willa Cloyes Carmack, demonstrating (yet again) that Gutterson worked with landscape architects frequently (and female landscape architects at that).  
<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Francisco Examiner (Aug. 2, 1924), probably due to the high price, \$75,000, when the standard price of an average luxury home was closer to \$5000-10,000.

Sperry ran into zoning difficulties and had to apply for special permission to build the twin homes with the connecting garage/apartments. Presumably he received this permission because a permit was issued on August 24, 1924 (Permit No. 17854). Note that the quoted price had risen: according to the article, the cost would be \$100,000, a stunning sum in those days. Likely the increase was due to the inclusion of the garage structure.

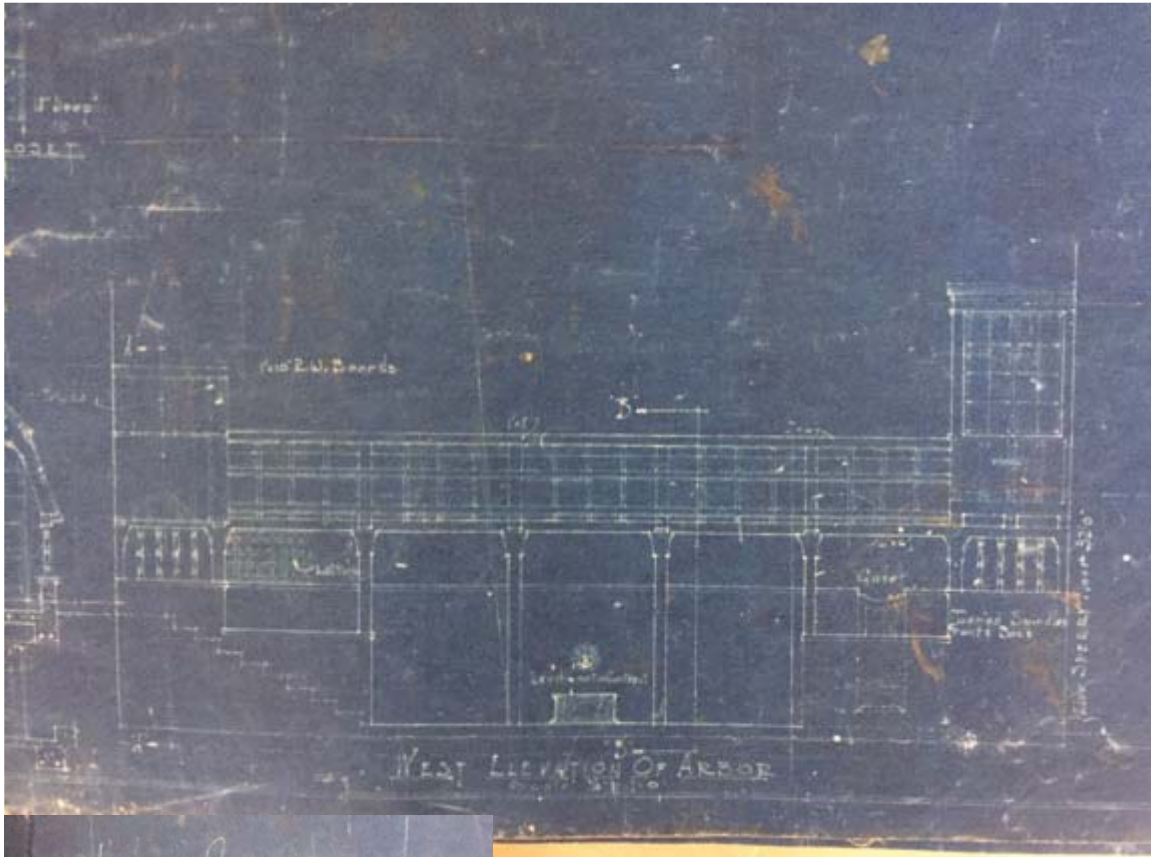


On February 25, 1925, via interdepartmental memo from the Berkeley City Clerk, the City's Building Inspector S.P. Koch, was advised that the City Council at its February 24<sup>th</sup> hearing "granted a revocable permit to J. C. Sperry to erect a 5' hollow tile wall and wooden pergola within the 5' setback area on the Hawthorne Terrace frontage of his property at the northwest corner of Vine Street [sic] and Hawthorne Terrace." That pergola is still standing in front of the garage/apartment structure between the two houses along Hawthorne Terrace and is covered with the original trumpet vine.



(article above from Oakland Tribune, dated Aug. 6, 1924; memo at right courtesy of BAHA)

The McLaughlin family was not able to locate the original plans for the house prior to its sale in late 2016; however, McNivens retain the original plans for Marsh House which includes Gutterson's design for the wisteria arbor. Note the fountain is indicated with a note suggesting that the specific design would be added later.



These plans also include hardscaping features such as an "Tea House," which as noted above, did not survive.

The last contemporaneous record of the construction of the Sperry-McLaughlin and Marsh Houses appears in a 1927 article in the *Oakland Tribune* promoting recent work by Axel Cederborg in Piedmont and Berkeley.<sup>7</sup> That the Sperry-McLaughlin and Marsh Homes were important additions to North Berkeley at the time is evidenced by the

<sup>7</sup> "Fine Piedmont Residences by Cederborg," *Oakland Tribune*, April 24, 1927 (noting the construction cost for both homes was \$70,000).



contemporary press quoted above. Their construction proved that Berkeley was resilient and remained an attractive place to live despite the devastation of the fire. That alone makes them significant to the history and cultural context of this city.

The two houses remain key parts of the historic North Berkeley neighborhood filled with examples of the so-called second phase of Bay Area architecture. They were both recognized in the Berkeley Urban Conservation Study (see Appendix G) and were specifically called out in two tours sponsored by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association: one lead by Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny in 1979 entitled, “Henry Higby Gutterson: Residential Work in Berkeley,” and another in 1986 entitled “a Ramble ‘Round the Rose Garden.” They have additional significance historically, architecturally and culturally based upon the individuals and events with which they are associated, as described below.

## 2. HENRY GUTTERSON (THE ARCHITECT)

Henry Higby Gutterson, a graduate of both Berkeley High School and U.C. Berkeley, had a long and distinguished career as an architect in the Bay Area where he designed residences and public buildings. He was most closely associated in his early years with John Galen Howard and during his mature years with Bernard Maybeck. He was one of the practitioners of the Bay Area Style, with Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck, and John Hudson Thomas. Rather than jettison the old, Gutterson played with popular building styles such as English Tudor, English/Irish cottage, French Beaux Artes, Italian villa, Swiss Chalet and even some Flemish peaked roof styles.

His buildings, however, were far from slavish copies of these styles—far from it. Instead, he utilized a given style in service to the needs of his clients appropriate to the site and landscape. As one commentator put it, the thing that made a Gutterson creation unique was “the peculiar way of using historical forms and details, the complexity of forms and spaces, miniaturization, and fully exploiting the site as a major ingredient in creating romantic aura.”<sup>8</sup> Another critic described the “Gutterson look” as being partially stucco with strong wood accents and classical revival detailing.”<sup>9</sup> Heavily tiled roofs, diamond paned



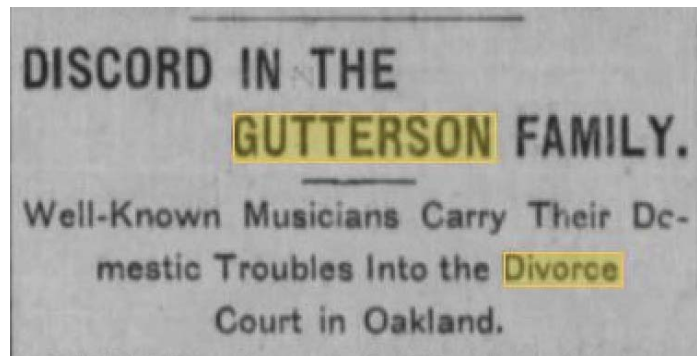
<sup>8</sup> Woodbridge, Sally, 1988, *Bay Area Houses*, Gibbs Smith, Layton, Utah, page 16.

<sup>9</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, “Henry Higby Gutterson,” monograph, BAHA.

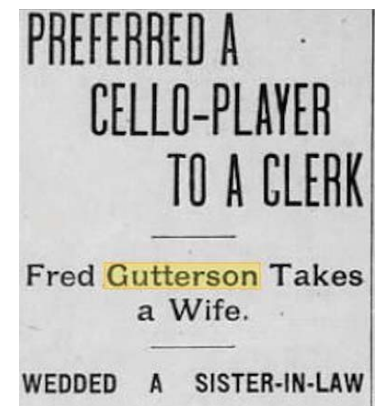
windows, and English style chimneys are also typical Gutterson touches. All these characteristics are present in the Hawthorne Terrace homes.

#### a. BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

Gutterson was born in Minnesota on September 8, 1884. His father, Arthur Lincoln Gutterson, was a bank clerk, and his mother Minnie<sup>10</sup> was a talented singer and music teacher. He had a sister, Geraldine. Arthur's younger brother Fredrick apparently came out to the Bay Area too where he lived with the Guttersons<sup>11</sup> and joined a local opera company as a cellist.



In 1898, when Henry was almost 14, Arthur filed for divorce against Minnie claiming abandonment. Once the divorce was final, Minnie married his brother Fredrick, causing quite a scandal and making headlines.<sup>12</sup> It appears that Gutterson and his father moved to a home on Virginia Street in Berkeley, and Henry attended Berkeley High School from which he graduated.<sup>13</sup> (left: photo *San Francisco Call*, May 30, 1909)



<sup>10</sup> Some biographies of Henry Gutterson state that his mother's name was Mary, however, her marriage record to Arthur L, shows her name as Minnie Higby, and a marriage date of Nov. 6, 1883.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Gutterson and his brother Fredrick were listed in the 1896 voter rolls as living at 2365 Castro in Oakland. Gutterson's profession was listed as accountant; his brother's as musician. Later records show his mother "Mrs. AL Gutterson," as living with the two men with a daughter Grace in the Castro street home. A 1900 directory show all three Guttersons as employed in San Francisco: Mr. and Mrs. Fredrick Gutterson were teaching music on Post Street; AL Gutterson was working at a San Francisco Bank. In the 1900 census, Arthur was living with his sister in Alameda and lists his place of occupation "Book Keeper (Bank)."

<sup>12</sup> "Discord in the Gutterson Family," *San Francisco Examiner*, Aug. 8, 1898; "Preferred a Cello-Player to a Clerk, San Francisco Call, Mar. 11, 1899.

<sup>13</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, "Henry Higby Gutterson," monograph, BAHA.

It appears likely that the family encountered some financial difficulties. After high school, Gutterson studied at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute in San Francisco for approximately two years. When John Galen Howard started an architectural program at U.C. Berkeley in 1903, Gutterson enrolled. It appears that Gutterson may have paid his way through Cal by working as a laborer for the U.S. Customs Service in Oakland.<sup>14</sup>

When the Architecture Department was initially established, Howard was the sole lecturer.<sup>15</sup> Although other faculty were eventually added, Howard was a key figure in Gutterson's early life. Not surprisingly, Gutterson was very influenced by his Beaux Artes Style and later subscription to the City Beautiful movement that Howard espoused.

Gutterson graduated in 1906 –one of the first to graduate from that department.<sup>16</sup> Around the time of his graduation, Gutterson contributed drawings to the Burnham Plan for San Francisco, which was drawn up by landscape architect and city planner Daniel Burnham.<sup>17</sup>

After graduation, Gutterson sailed for France where he followed in Howard's footsteps and studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris.<sup>18</sup> As reported at the time<sup>19</sup>, Gutterson was one of 500 hopefuls who sat for the Beaux Arts entrance examination in 1907. Of the 500 who took the 14-hour examination, only half passed and of those only 65 ultimately were permitted to advance. Of this final group of 65, only 5



<sup>14</sup> While he was enrolled at Cal, it appears that he may have been working too. The civil service list for US Customs in 1903 shows Henry H. Gutterson as employed on their rolls; a directory from 1905 also reflects him as working at a laborer for US Customs in Oakland. Further research is likely warranted to make sense of Gutterson's early life. Voter rolls from the time show his father lived at 2511 Virginia in Berkeley, which may be how he came to graduate from Berkeley High School. A 1904 directory supports this theory because it lists both Arthur L. and his son Henry as living in Berkeley.

<sup>15</sup> "North Gate Hall (the Ark)," BAHA, available at [https://berkeleyheritage.com/berkeley\\_landmarks/northgate\\_hall.html](https://berkeleyheritage.com/berkeley_landmarks/northgate_hall.html)

<sup>16</sup> "Student Honored at French School," *The San Francisco Call*, May 30, 1909. Note that reports about Gutterson's graduation year vary between 1905 and 1906, but the majority reflect 1906. A 1905 directory shows his mother and step-father/uncle as living on Virginia street, and his father as working in San Francisco with a residence in Alameda. Directories for 1914 onwards show his mother and step-father/uncle as living in the Los Angeles area. They are both buried there.

<sup>17</sup> Burnham, Daniel, *Report on a Plan for San Francisco*, 1906, reprint by Urban Books, 197, page 211.

<sup>18</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, "Henry Higby Gutterson," monograph, BAHA.

<sup>19</sup> *Oakland Tribune*, "Berkeley Society," Oct. 13, 1907; "Wins Honors Abroad," *The San Francisco Call*, Aug. 15, 1907.

were permitted to be foreigners. Gutterson was one, and ultimately studied there for two years.

While at the Ecole, Gutterson apparently did well. According to Gutterson scholar Susan Dinkelspiel Stern Cerny, Gutterson experienced financial difficulties while in Paris, and so had to return earlier than intended.<sup>20</sup>



He returned to the United States from Paris in 1909 and worked for a short time in the New York area.<sup>21</sup> Notwithstanding reports in the paper that he was going to settle in Los Angeles, Gutterson returned to the Bay Area in 1909. After returning to Berkeley, Gutterson taught architectural design at U.C. Berkeley for at least a year.<sup>22</sup> According to the 1910 Census, he

was a boarder at 2500 Ridge Road. He lived for a time with his sister on Hillegass Ave.<sup>23</sup>

Gutterson married Helen Arnett in July 1911. They lived first on Prospect Avenue<sup>24</sup>, but moved to 2922 Garber Street in a house he designed in 1912.<sup>25</sup>



(left: *San Francisco Examiner*, May 30, 1909; left: Gutterson Home at 2922 Garber, photo: R. Kehlmann, 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, "Henry Higby Gutterson," monograph, BAHA.

<sup>21</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, "Henry Higby Gutterson," monograph, BAHA; *San Francisco Examiner*, May 30, 1909.

<sup>22</sup> "Berkeley Society," *Oakland Tribune*, July 11, 1911. The Blue and Gold yearbook for 1912 lists him as an instructor.

<sup>23</sup> In 1910, the US Census listed Gutterson as living in an apartment at 2518 Hillegass Street in Berkeley, with his sister, Geraldine (born c. 1890 in CA). (The California Voters Register listed his address in 1910 as 2116A Hillegass Street.)

<sup>24</sup> 1911 Voter Registration List.

<sup>25</sup> <http://berkeleyplaques.org/e-plaque/henry-gutterson/>.

## b. CAREER

A 1910 Directory shows Gutterson listed as a draftsman for J.J. Donovan in Berkeley. By the next year he apparently joined Howard's San Francisco architectural firm.<sup>26</sup> Four years later, Gutterson opened his own firm, although he continued to work closely with Howard with whom he worked on the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exhibition. Gutterson initially maintained an office in San Francisco, but eventually moved that office to Berkeley. His was one of the only firms at that time to employ women architects.<sup>27</sup>

The first homes Gutterson designed in Berkeley evidence his design flexibility: one is a brown shingle house on Berryman and the other a "stucco and wood chalet" on Tunnel road. Both date to 1914.

(photo right: Howard House at 2044 Berryman; photo EBRD; photo below CED)

Around that same time, he designed two of his more famous early houses, the Sophie McDuffie House and the Charles Mallory Dutton House (shown below).



Of these, Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny wrote, "Both were designed and constructed from 1914 to 1915 and have unusual site specific floor plans that treat the garden as an extension of the house."<sup>28</sup> Gutterson's site specific

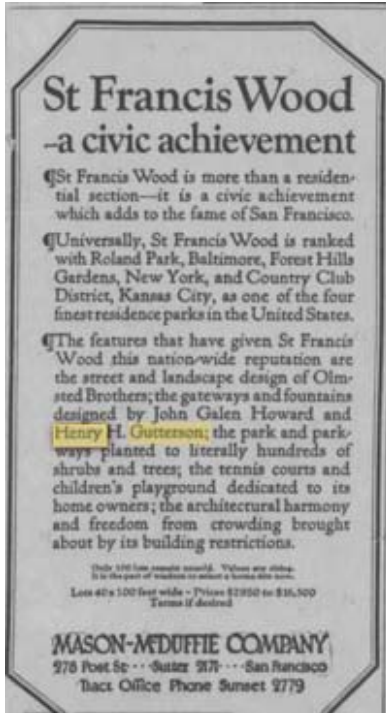
plans and integration of the garden into his houses became the hallmark of his residential design. During this period, he also designed the Eleanor Smith House and cottage (Berkeley Landmark #36) (House since demolished).

<sup>26</sup> <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/gutterson-henry>

<sup>27</sup> Gertrude Elizabeth Comfort Morrow (Cal BS 1914; MS 1916) was one of those listed as working for him in 1916. See also, <http://berkeleyplaques.org/e-plaque/henry-gutterson/>;

<sup>28</sup> Cerny, Susan Dinkelspiel, "Henry Gutterson," *Towards a Simpler Way of Life*, University of California Press (1997) (Robert Winter, ed.) at 74.

Around 1912, his mentor Howard was commissioned by developers Mason-McDuffie to develop a parcel that came to be known as St. Francis Woods in San Francisco. The project was part of what is sometimes referred to as the “City Beautiful” movement, which was brought to San Francisco by Daniel Burnham after the 1906 earthquake.<sup>29</sup> (Of course, Gutterson had contributed drawings to this plan while in college). Four years after Howard was hired to work on St. Francis Woods, Gutterson joined Howard on the project (1916).



Because the development was intended to be park-like, Madison-McDuffie retained the Olmstead Bros. firm of landscape architects – owned by the sons of famed landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmstead -- to design the grounds. Notably, Howard and Fredrick Law Olmstead had collaborated previously on the Hearst Plan for the University of California (Berkeley). As with the much earlier plan for the campus, the plan for St. Francis Woods featured a picturesque layout with ample open space and garden features that made the most of – and paid attention to-- the area’s natural topography. The property was designed along the lines of Forest Hills in New York: a lush green parkland with unique homes for the well-to do middle class. The homes had a minimum construction cost of \$6000 and had strict design criteria.<sup>30</sup> By

1925 (around the time 1450 was constructed), St. Francis Woods was home to over 500 families. When Howard stepped aside, Gutterson became supervising architect, a position he held until his death in 1954.

(left: photo Joe McCarville)



The photo above of one of Gutterson’s designs in St. Francis Woods illustrates how Gutterson paid careful attention to the landscaping as well as the house design, integrating the two into a whole.

<sup>29</sup> Wilson, Mark, "Mason-McDuffie and the Creation of St Francis Wood," *The Argonaut*, San Francisco Historical Society, Fall 1997.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

According to Mary Brown, San Francisco's Preservation Planner, during World War I, Gutterson "enlisted in war camp service."<sup>31</sup> Gertrude Morrow, whom Gutterson had employed after her graduation from Cal's Architecture Department, took over Gutterson's St. Francis Wood work for the duration.

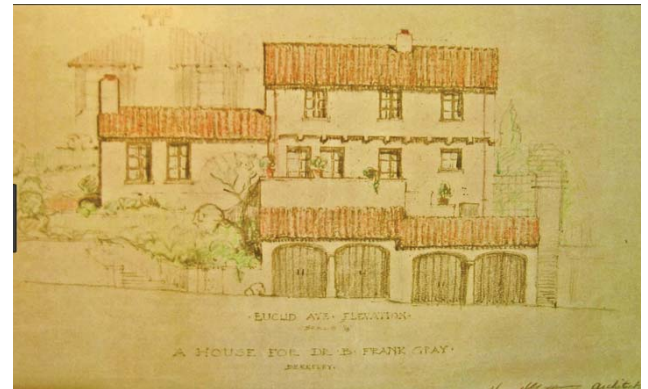
After the War, Gutterson was extremely busy and productive. As one Gutterson scholar explained:

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He taught briefly at UC Berkeley from 1920 to 1921, was the supervising architect of St. Francis Wood, and took on independent commissions in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland. Not only did he assist Maybeck in Berkeley on two important commissions – Rose Walk and the Sunday School addition (1927) to the First Church of Christ, Scientist (Maybeck, 1910) – he "found time to design a 5,559 square foot mansion in Carmel for Paul Flanders, called the "Outlands" in 1925 (which is on the National Register of Historic Places), and he supervised Flanders' subdivision in Carmel, called Hatton Field.<sup>32</sup>

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As noted, Gutterson continued to design residences in Berkeley in addition to his commissions at St. Francis Woods.



(2910 Garber St. Photo: Richard Grant; drawing: CED archives)

In around 1922 he returned to Cal as a lecturer,<sup>33</sup> but it seems doubtful that he abandoned private practice given his plethora of projects.

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<sup>31</sup> Brown, Mary, "San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement," Final Draft, September 2010, at 240-41.

<sup>32</sup> Brandi, R. "Henry H. Gutterson, Supervising Architect of St. Francis Wood," 2007, available at <http://outsidelands.org/gutterson.php#1>;

<sup>33</sup> A directory of that year shows his occupation as instructor at U of C.

Gutterson's mature designs in Berkeley from this time – which include the Sperry-McLaughlin House and Marsh House – display his conviction that the garden and landscape should be integrated into the home. As Susan Cerny noted, “Gutterson’s homes today blend into the gardens that surround them. Often hidden amongst now mature trees and shrubs, they are the homes that one passes with the feeling that they are retreats from the otherwise hectic world.”<sup>34</sup>



Another Gutterson scholar, architectural historian Richard Brandi, describing Gutterson’s integration of natural landscapes, wrote, Gutterson “treat[ed] the garden as an extension of the living room.”<sup>35</sup> “Gutterson’s penchant for incorporating the garden into his homes is seen in the provision for the living room to open to the garden through the three sets of doors.”<sup>36</sup>

The photo of the Sperry McLaughlin

House above illustrates how Gutterson quite literally opened the home to the outdoors. (photos courtesy of BAHA). Gutterson’s integration of landscaping with his residential design was recognized in 1927 when the American Institute of Architects gave him an award, noting, “we wish to commend the garden treatment about these buildings, which was so successful in keeping with the architecture.”<sup>37</sup>

Given how important the landscape was to his designs, it is no wonder that Gutterson collaborated with the most talented landscape architects of the day, including Fredrick Law Olmstead and, later, Olmstead’s sons, and Thomas Church.<sup>38</sup>



<sup>34</sup> Stern, Susan Dinkelspiel, “Henry Higby Gutterson,” monograph, BAHA.

<sup>35</sup> Brandi, R. “Henry H. Gutterson, Supervising Architect of St. Francis Wood,” 2007, available at <http://outsidelands.org/gutterson.php#1>; see also Cerny, Susan, “Gutterson,” *Towards a Simpler Way of Life*, (Winter, Robert, ed.), University of California Press (1997) at 73- 78.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> Architect and Engineer, June 1927, Honor Awards of Northern California Chapter AIA, page 39

<sup>38</sup> Brown, Mary, “San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement,” Final Draft, September 2010, at 35.





The photo at left shows Gutterson (far left), landscape architect Butler Sturtevant and interior designer Ivy Capitola who spoke together at the Sixth Annual California Spring Garden Show. Gutterson frequently spoke at events with popular landscape architects at the time.

Some of Gutterson's most well-known Berkeley residences are the houses along nearby Rose Walk, across from the cottages designed by Bernard Maybeck. The residences, which are now landmarked, are in a Swiss Chalet style with strong heavy tiled roofs and prominent chimneys. As with his other designs, they sit in a designed landscape that is of a piece with the homes. (Photo: Danielle Thompson) They are Berkeley

Landmark # 165.

Although at the outset of his career, Gutterson was closely associated with John Galen Howard, as his career matured, he worked with other distinguished architects most notably Bernard Maybeck. He assisted Maybeck with the First Church of Christ Science in Berkeley (Berkeley Landmark #5) and took over from Maybeck the large project at Principia College in Illinois, which is landmarked (NR # 93001605).

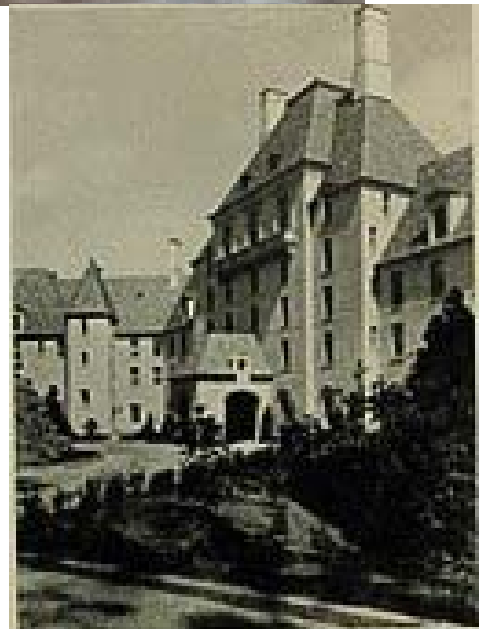


Gutterson's solo church projects include the Second Christ Science Church on Spruce, which is still standing, and another Christian Science Church in Santa Barbara that has been landmarked. Gutterson was himself a Christian Scientist.

Gutterson designed Old Jefferson Elementary School on Rose Street (Berkeley Landmark # 117); the theatre at his alma mater Berkeley High, which has landmark status. (Berkeley Landmark #179). In Berkeley he also the Vedanta Society, Berkeley Civic Center Fountain and Park (Berkeley Landmark # 202), and Berkeley High School's Shop and Science Buildings (as well as its Community Theater). He designed a retirement home (Arden Wood) in San Francisco and several in Marin County.



(Above: Berkeley Community Theater, Berkeley Landmark #179; photo by Daniella Thompson; below, Arden Wood, SF: photos *Architect and Engineer* (1930)



Photos of Flanders House, Carmel; source: Nat'l Registry of Historic Places



The Flanders House, which is landmarked (NPS #89000228), bears a striking resemblance to the Sperry-McLaughlin house in form, although not building materials (as the Flanders House is not stucco). Like the Sperry-McLaughlin House, the Flanders House has a long central structure with a terracotta tile steeply peaked roof -- specifically, Gladding McBean & Company's "Berkeley" trough ceramic tiles fired in a russet color and laid irregularly -- featuring dormers at regular intervals. As does the Sperry-McLaughlin House, the Flanders House is sited very specifically to take maximum advantage of the natural contours of the site.

During this period of great professional success, Gutterson suffered a strange physical attack. In November 1925, Gutterson was almost killed when one of his clients -- the owner of an apartment building that Gutterson was working on -- came

to his San Francisco offices and shot Gutterson and two employees.<sup>39</sup> Gutterson and the others survived but the gunman did not; he shot himself. At least one historian has commented that this violent experience rattled Gutterson to such an extent that he turned away from design towards more involvement in public service.<sup>40</sup>

#### c. PUBLIC SERVICE

Gutterson was not only an active architect, he was also active locally and nationally in community and government programs. He served on the Berkeley Planning Commission (1934-36), the State Board of Architecture (1929-34) and was active in local and national architectural trade associations. He co-founded and was president of the Berkeley Planning and Housing Association, was a director of the State Association of California Architects, and was president of the local chapter of the AIA (American Institute of Architects).<sup>41</sup> In 1945, the AIA gave him an award for unification of the profession.<sup>42</sup>

During World War II, he was the executive director of the USO's Western Operation<sup>43</sup>, and traveled widely to promote its agenda and locate facilities for the USO. In this capacity, Gutterson was also in charge of overseeing the location and construction of facilities for the Jewish Welfare League, apparently for refugee resettlement.<sup>44</sup>

#### d. LEGACY

Since his death in 1954, the quiet brilliance of his design has been recognized repeatedly in books, articles, architectural tours, and landmark designations. Known projects that have received landmark or other recognition include the Flanders Mansion in Carmel, the Camp Fire Girls' Headquarters in San Francisco, and the Principia College in Illinois, all of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gutterson by all accounts was not prone to self-promotion, and it is possibly for this reason that he is not better known. He wrote but not widely or prolifically. His designs, particularly his residential designs, tended to handsome and livable rather than flashy or groundbreaking. Nevertheless, his legacy has endured not the least of which because of how comfortable and handsome they are. When one lives in a Gutterson house, one grows to love the house deeply.

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<sup>39</sup> "C.M. Moore Shot In Arm By Crazy Man," *San Francisco Call*, Nov. 28, 1925.

<sup>40</sup> Brandi, R. "Henry H. Gutterson, Supervising Architect of St. Francis Wood," 2007, available at <http://outsidelands.org/gutterson.php#1>;

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.aiaf.org/page/presidents>

<sup>42</sup> <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/gutterson-henry>

<sup>43</sup> "New USO Chief to Arrive Tomorrow," *Oakland Tribune*, June 24, 1944.

<sup>44</sup> Numerous letters exist to Gutterson at the USO regarding his assistance for locating facilities for refugees.

For fun, Gutterson loved to sail on the San Francisco Bay. Around the time he designed the Sperry-McLaughlin House, he had a boat named, "The Imp," that he sailed out of the St. Francis Yacht Club in San Francisco. Given his love of sailing the Bay, he surely would have been a great fan of Sylvia McLaughlin's efforts to save the Bay in the decades following his death in 1954.



### 3. MABEL SYMMES (PIONEERING FEMALE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT)

#### a. BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

Mabel Symmes was born August 1, 1876, to Frank and Anne Symmes. Frank Symmes was a prominent businessman in San Francisco, which is where Mabel and her brothers and sisters grew up. Mabel was a good student and made the honor roll throughout her early years. After high school she enrolled at U.C. Berkeley, from which she graduated in 1896 (with classmate Julia Morgan).



*(Left: Mabel Symmes – 1921 Passport photo taken 2 years before she designed the 1440-1450 Marsh-Sperry Garden)*

Not much is known about Symmes's college years other than that she was a member of Kappa Alpha Theta,<sup>45</sup> but her post-college life is better documented and shows that it was initially filled – as was typical for young ladies of the period – with parties, trips, and other social activities. She associated with the Wheeler and Hearst family during this time. The only recorded work history from this period is a note that she taught Sunday School at a church in San Francisco. Her travels took her to Hawaii, Europe, and Tahiti.

Although her older sister married well – to business owner Alston Blake – Symmes never married. Independently wealthy and financially astute<sup>46</sup>, Symmes chose to re-enroll at Cal in 1914 to study landscape architecture right after the school established that department.<sup>47</sup> That department was established thanks to the generosity of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, who helped establish the Architecture Department some 10 years earlier.

<sup>45</sup> *California Historical Society* Blake [insert cite]

<sup>46</sup> Mai Arbegast, "Mrs. Blake and the Garden in the 1950s," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 280.

<sup>47</sup> Mai Arbegast, "Mrs. Blake and the Garden in the 1950s," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 273.

The Landscape Architecture Department was initially known as “Landscape Gardening and Floriculture,” and was part of the College of Agriculture when it was first approved by the Regents on January 1, 1913.<sup>48</sup> The head of the college, Thomas F. Hunt, selected John W. Gregg to lead that department.<sup>49</sup> When Gregg began teaching at Cal, the field was a comparatively new one: ASLA was founded in 1899 and Harvard was the first University to graduate students with degrees in 1901. At the time, there were very few landscape architects based in the Bay Area.



After he joined the University, Gregg brought over pioneering California horticulturalist Katherine Davies Jones (1860-1943), who was already teaching courses at Cal on the selection of plants suitable for California’s soil and climate. Jones (photo above: CED archives) eventually became the Department’s resident botanist. Mabel Symmes had been a classmate of Professor Jones – both graduated from Cal in 1896<sup>50</sup> -- and joined in 1914 as a “non degree student” of the department. Symmes was close to Jones<sup>51</sup>, and when Jones died at 86, she bequeathed her records to the University and specified that Mabel Symmes complete the book she was writing on landscape design.<sup>52</sup> After her death, Symmes wrote a monograph about Jones.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Laurie, Michael, *75 Years of Landscape Architecture at Berkeley: An Informal History Part I: The First 50 Years*, 1988, at 4.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> Arbogast, *supra*, at 275.

<sup>51</sup> Arbogast, *supra*, at 275.

<sup>52</sup> “UC. Botanist Wills Writings,” *Oakland Tribune*, March 5, 1943.

<sup>53</sup> Symmes, Mabel, “Katherine Davies Jones,” *Madrono*, April 1946.

Given the small size of the classes at that time, Symmes must have known Willa Clair Cloys Carmack who graduated in 1915 (getting her diploma in 1916) and went on to become a very well-known Bay Area Landscape Architect (see article below). She also knew Harry Shephard (undated photo at right: CED archives), who was a classmate and eventual professor in the



department. It is not known for how many years, Symmes studied under Gregg and Jones, or when she began taking private commissions.



#### b. CAREER

Mabel Symmes was commissioned to design residential gardens throughout the East Bay.<sup>54</sup> The Marsh-Symmes garden is likely one of her earliest commissions. By far her most famous project was the landscape design for Blake House.

In 1921, Symmes lived on Piedmont Avenue in Berkeley, likely with or near her sister Anita and brother-in-law Anston Blake. The Blakes were displaced by the University in 1922 when the University acquired land through eminent domain to construct the football stadium.<sup>55</sup> Rather than purchase new property, the Blakes decided to build homes on land that they had previously acquired in a remote area now known as Kensington. That land was divided between Anston Blake and his siblings. Anston decided to build houses for himself and another for his mother and other relatives on two of the parcels. His house became what is known as Blake House and was eventually bequeathed to the University where, as noted above, she lived with Anston Blake and her sister Anita, who was an avid botanist.

<sup>54</sup> Linda Haymaker, "The Historical Validity of Blake Garden," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 365; see also Mai Arbegast, "Mrs. Blake and the Garden in the 1950s," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988.

<sup>55</sup> Riess, Suzanne, "Interview History," Blake Estate Oral History Project," University History Series, Bancroft Oral History Library, 1988.



Symmes designed the key features of Blake Garden, including the reflecting pools, water features and formal rose gardens.<sup>56</sup> Her friend Katherine Jones assisted with tree selection. Among other things, Jones provided Mabel Symmes with seeds for Chilean Soap-bark trees (*Quillaja Saponaria*) – trees that Symmes also planted in the Marsh-Sperry Garden and that remain there to this day.<sup>57</sup> Mrs. Blake loved to collect and propagate plants, some of which were planted in the garden. Mabel Symmes by contrast was more taken with the overall concept of landscape design than creating a hodgepodge of plant varieties. Of course, both Blake House and the Hawthorne Terrace homes featured non-native varieties, but they did so as an integrated whole rather than as individual specimen plants.

Symmes' design for Blake Garden exemplified what commentators at the time were espousing, namely formal gardens interwoven with tamed but still rugged natural landscapes that molded to the existing natural hill structure.



According to Linda Haymaker who worked in Blake Garden for years and has written and spoken about it, Symmes promoted the unique topography of the site, rather than change it.<sup>58</sup> “She also did things – this is sort of the flip-flop of her design ability: she was able to create this formalistic effect

exceedingly well, but then you watch what she did down in the canyon area, and you see how she has this whole naturalistic system down through there.”<sup>59</sup>

(Photos of Blake House Rose gardens c. 1958, CEB archives and Blake House Blog)

<sup>56</sup> Mai Arbegast, “Mrs. Blake and the Garden in the 1950s,” an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 276.

<sup>57</sup> Symmes, Mabel, “Adelante,” *The Journal of the California Historical Society*, at 216.

<sup>58</sup> Haymaker, at 369.

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*



If you could say there's two sections of the garden that you really must preserve in their intended way, it would be the formal garden and the redwood canyons.

– Linda Haymaker, “The Historical Validity of Blake Garden”



You can see the structure of the garden as laid out by Miss Symmes. It hasn't been changed, but you can see the various axes that Miss Symmes laid out that are all linked: from the front of the house looking east towards the grotto, or the reflecting pool; looking straight north there's a kind of a circle; and then there's a reservoir and a series of circles with dancing figures etc. On a plan it has a very Italiante look. . . . All the redwoods were cuttings taken from the redwood trees which were where the University stadium is now.

■ Mai Arbegast (1986)

Symmes also designed the gardens for the Charles Merrill House in Orinda (NRI No. 05000251).<sup>60</sup> The gardens there show the same integration of formal areas containing flowering shrubs, lawns and water features, with more natural wooded areas with winding paths and natural Berkeley Rhyolite rock walls.

(Photos: National Landmark Preservation files for Charles Merrill House and Gardens)



The landmarks preservation form prepared by Dr. Robert R. Weyeneth, Department of History, University of South Carolina, states:

“Ratcliff worked closely with **landscape architect Mabel Symmes** to fashion a setting that joined the residence with its rustic hillside setting. In this way, house and grounds were designed from the beginning to complement one another. Attention turned to designing the grounds even as the site was prepared, the system of stonework terraces erected, and the house itself constructed.”

This sensitivity to site is evident in the Marsh-Sperry Garden, as is her use of local materials. Several Bay Area landscape architects and architects used these local materials in their designs. Mabel Symmes certainly did so at Blake House, the Charles Merrill House, and the Hawthorne Terrace gardens.

<sup>60</sup> Charles Merrill house is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/05000251>.

The photo below shows the rock wall on the Southern Exposure of the 1450 property along Vine Lane (with original wood saloon door).



In the twenties I believe there was a strong new phase in garden development – I think it was probably allied with this arts and crafts style that was happening in California then, during the twenties – a returning to the native material and locally crafted arts, exploring the natural beauty that hopefully would be existing in the area.

Linda Haymaker, Blake Garden Oral History, 1987

Although Symmes was part of the region's burgeoning landscape design esthetic, it is important to remember how pioneering she was. She was absolutely at the forefront of professional working women at a time when females born to well-to-do families were not expected (indeed were often actively discouraged) from engaging in a profession. According to Mai Arbegast (1922-2012), a professor and landscape architect in Berkeley who knew Symmes in her later years, Symmes and her contemporaries were underappreciated: "[T]here were quite a number of other women practicing in the area at the time [1920s] . . . Women don't practice in a way that they are noticed, you know, they're working quietly behind the scenes."<sup>61</sup> Linda Haymaker, who worked at and wrote about Blake Garden, observed:

I think she was a really bright woman. I think she probably worked a lot by herself. . . . I don't think she promoted herself at all. I think she had enough means through the family and through colleagues to get work to do certain thing as a designer within the region and to stay busy in this field of work. I think a lot of it – her low profile – was probably because she was a woman, but I think part of it also was that she . . . chose to go about a quiet way of designing.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> Linda Haymaker, "The Historical Validity of Blake Garden," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 365.

By the 1930s, Symmes's design for Blake Garden was becoming well-known and tours were organized by local groups to visit it.<sup>63</sup> Blake Garden was divided before the property was deeded to the University. One parcel was sold to the Catholic Church, which used it to as a Carmelite monastery. The nuns who lived there so enjoyed



the gardens that were on that property, they sought and obtained papal recognition for Mabel Symmes and her sister Anita. By the time that she died in 1962, however, landscape design (and the feminist movement) had changed dramatically and her passing unfortunately received no media attention.

(article above, Berkeley Gazette, June 30, 1931; photo: Mabel Symmes, undated, Blake collection)

Unfortunately for us, few of Symmes's gardens have survived. According to Arbogast, one close to campus was destroyed to make way for an apartment building.<sup>64</sup> There are additional references to work by Symmes in the Claremont area; however, none are known to have survived intact.<sup>65</sup> Of the three preserved Symmes gardens – Blake Garden, Charles Merrill House Garden, and the Marsh-Symmes Garden at 1450 & 1440 Hawthorne Terrace – the first is



<sup>63</sup> See, e.g. "Eastbay Rose Club Formed," *Oakland Tribune*, Oct. 16, 1932; "Arlington Club Plans Tour," *Oakland Tribune*, May 20, 1945.

<sup>64</sup> Mai Arbogast, "Mrs. Blake and the Garden in the 1950s," an oral history conducted in 1986 by Suzanne Riess, in *Blake Estate Oral History Project*, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1988, at 281.

<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, the University also initially did not fully appreciate Blake Garden when the property was promised to the University; at least until Dr. Gardener – a long time resident of the Gutterson house directly across from 1450 Hawthorne Terrace – came on the scene. *Id.* at 288.

preserved by the University, the section is a landmark, and the third is presently unprotected.

#### 4. AXEL CEDERBORG (BUILDER)

During the 1920s when Sperry engaged him to build the twin houses on Hawthorne Terrace, Axel Cederborg (also known as Alex) ran a booming business as a builder out of his Oakland home at 1455 Excelsior Avenue. He specialized in large residences in Berkeley<sup>66</sup> and Piedmont as well as some commercial projects. During an earlier period, his company was called Cederborg & Anderson.<sup>67</sup> It is not clear when that business

WM. CAVALIER RESIDENCE A. Cederborg, Builder Allet Fox, Architect

EARNEST L. DYER RESIDENCE A. Cederborg, Builder Newton Dow, Architect

33 GLEN ALPINE ROAD A. Cederborg, Builder Allet Fox, Architect

**A. CEDARBORG**  
 Builder of Distinctive Homes  
 Consult Your Architect  
 1455 EXCELSIOR AVENUE FRUITVALE 7140-W

Oakland Tribune APRIL 7, 1929

**UNIQUE HOME BY CEDERBORG IN BERKELEY**

**Unique New Home**  
 Recently completed by A. Cederborg, at 1551 La Vaca avenue, Berkeley, according to the design of architect Guyon Offner. The residence has a Southern east front, inspired by the Alhambra Hotel corporation.

**Radio Prize Awarded**  
 Mrs. Owen Jones of San Francisco and P. H. Lyon, president and general manager of Chasler and Lyon Inc. Mrs. Jones was winner in the Youth Automatic Radio contest.

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name changed.

His ads ran in the *Oakland Tribune* (right) and *San Francisco Examiner*.

Cederborg, born in Sweden in 1885, was one of many prosperous Swedes who made the Bay Area home<sup>68</sup> around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>66</sup> These include 924 Arlington,

<sup>67</sup> Building and Engineering News, Volume 16, Issue 1, p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.nordstjerner.com/news/people/7768/>

Century, such as Erik Oolf Lindbloom, the Oakland tailor who struck gold and built a mansion at Hillegass and Parker in Berkeley and built and owned the Claremont Hotel,<sup>69</sup> and others who hired Julia Morgan to design their church in Oakland.

Like Lindbloom, Cederborg was a key figure in many turn-of-the century buildings in Berkeley, including the Madison McDuffie Building, described above, and a multitude of homes in the Claremont and North Berkeley areas.

Cederborg specialized in utilizing the highest quality materials and finishes and even employed new “fire proof” building materials and techniques in his buildings. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Sperry hired him to build his homes in 1924 after the Berkeley fire. Cederborg died in 1935.

Oakland Tribune APRIL 28, 1929

### NEW MASON McDUFFIE CO. BUILDING

**In New Home**

This structure, built by A. Cederborg at Shattuck avenue and Addison street in Berkeley, will be occupied on May 1 by the Mason McDuffie company. Below, Duane McDuffie, right, president, and Froy T. Tompkins, vice-president. The building carries some fine examples of architectural wood-work from the mill of Lammson Brothers.

**SOUND MOVIES AND EUROPEAN MARKETS**

The rapid development of the sound picture and talking time by American producers has brought about competition in the European market, according to Trade Commissioner George H. Kent, in a survey which has just been issued by the Commerce Department. Because of the huge expense involved in installing the necessary apparatus, it is a question, Kent states, as to how many of these sound picture European countries will accept. The open question indicates that only the largest of the European foreign markets will be available in 1929 during the current year. European exhibitors take a far greater than the usual importance of American pictures being their present dominant position from the quality standpoint at least. For the most part these talking films can be shown in Europe only on silent pictures, except in Great Britain, where some theaters are now wired and where the language difficulty will not be serious. In most cases, it can be presumed that without changing the talking picture will appear stand-up, a situation which will probably result in favor of European silent films. However, there is little possibility

Plastering for the Mason McDuffie

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### Cederborg, Building Contractor, Dies

Axel G. Cederborg, 53, building contractor, died at his residence at 1455 Excelsior Boulevard last night following a lingering illness.

Cederborg, a native of Sweden, was prominent in Swedish church activities in Oakland, holding the secretaryship of the Swedish Mission Church for 20 years. He is survived by his wife, Hilma; two sons, Chester G. and Edward; and two daughters, Esther and Marilyn. Services will be held at 3 p. m. Saturday and will be conducted at the Truman mortuary. Interment will be at Mountain View cemetery.

<sup>69</sup> Muriel Nelson Beroza, "The Lucky Swede," *Nordstjernen*.





# SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPERTY



1. JAMES C. SPERRY: “MAN WHO SAVED THE REDWOODS”<sup>70</sup>

a. FAMILY

James Cameron Sperry (b.1874) was the son of James L. Sperry, a successful businessman in Northern California, and his wife Mehitable, a poet. James L. Sperry’s brother Willard ran the family business, Sperry Flour Mills, in Northern California.<sup>71</sup> James L. was a large land owner and hotel operator in Calaveras County. His acquisition of property there roughly coincided with the start of the Gold Rush, and as his hotels were on a popular trail from Nevada, his business prospered. By the 1850’s, James L. Sperry owned and operated the Sperry and Perry Hotel (a/k/a Murphy’s Hotel) with a partner (Perry) in Murphys, California.



Eventually he also acquired the Mammoth Grove Hotel (a/k/a Mammoth Trees Hotel). Many notable figures stayed at the hotels including Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), John J. Astor, John Muir, John Bidwell, Charles Bolles (a/k/a Black Bart), Henry Ward Beecher, Horatio Alger, JP Morgan, and Thomas Lipton. Murphys Hotel is landmarked: NPS-1971000134; NRI 71000134; and CA Historic Property No. 267; Murphys community is CA Hist. Ppty. No. 275.



(Above left: James L. and Mehitable Sperry; above, Murphys Hotel; below left Mammoth Hotel. Photos courtesy of the Calaveras Historic Society)

<sup>70</sup> Headline of his obituary. See page 75.

<sup>71</sup> Obituary, Sacramento Daily Union, vol. 92, No. 39, Sept. 29, 1896.

The big trees—giant sequoias (*Sequoia Dendron giganteum*) – which were discovered a few years before James L. came to the area, became an international sensation drawing tourists from far and wide to Sperry’s hotels.<sup>72</sup> James L. Sperry purchased land around his hotels containing undisturbed groves of sequoias called the Calaveras Big Tree Grove, for \$500.<sup>73</sup> The famous Pioneer Cabin Tree (a/k/a the Tunnel Tree), which was located in that park until it fell in 2017, was cut through at James L. Sperry’s request so that tourists could pass through it.



[The Pioneer's Cabin and Pluto's Chimney - Big Tree Grove, Calaveras County"](#)  
(Albumen Photograph). Library of Congress. 1866. Retrieved January 9, 2017.

James L. Sperry worked hard to preserve them. John Muir recognized James L. Sperry’s efforts to protect his unique trees: “[T]he Calaveras Grove for forty years has been faithfully protected by Mr. Sperry . . . and still is in primeval beauty.”<sup>74</sup>

After his partner Perry died in James L. Sperry gained another partner, French aristocrats, when Perry’s widow sold them her shares in the hotel.<sup>75</sup> Sperry and his new partners had a falling out, and litigation ensued all the way to the United States Supreme Court. Sperry was eventually ordered to sell the Big Tree Grove property. However, his brother (the owner of the flour company) stepped in to buy the grove

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.calaverashistory.org/article/big-tree-cottage-area>; <http://www.calaverashistory.org/post/murphys-big-trees-road>

<sup>73</sup> Kramer, Carol, California Big Trees, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

<sup>74</sup> Muir, John. Undated writings published in Sierra Club Bulletin, vol. XI, No. 1-January 1920.

<sup>75</sup> Kramer, Carol, California Big Trees, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

and restore it to the family.<sup>76</sup> The Big Trees State Park, founded in 1931, is located there now.<sup>77</sup> The Murphy's Hotel is, as indicated above, a landmark.

James C. Sperry grew up in Murphys, California, and spent the summers with his family at the Mammoth Hotel, which they managed between 1871 and 1892.<sup>78</sup> He quite literally grew up amongst the big trees. His father sold the Murphys Hotel to Perry's widow, but the Mammoth Hotel (shown below) remained in the family and was eventually (by 1900) operated by James Cameron's sister Marion (who also acted as postmistress). Marion Sperry hosted John Muir when he came to visit the sequoias in 1900.

Photo courtesy of Calaveras historical society.



In the 1890's James L. Sperry, who could no longer pay for the grove's maintenance, tried to interest the government in acquiring the Big Tree Grove at a steep discount in the hopes of preserving them as parkland for future generations.<sup>79</sup> He did not realize his dream because the U.S. Congress approved the purchase but failed to fund it, so it fell to his son James Cameron Sperry to fight for their preservation in the 1920s. In the meantime, on February 25, 1900, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published an article under the headline, "The Calaveras Big Trees: Cry of Alarm from California that the Entire Grove May Be Sold and Cut Down for Lumber," which was picked up by the national press. Despite much lamentation, no one stepped up to fund its donation to the park service, and ownership passed in the early 1900s to Robert Whiteside, who promised Sperry not to cut down any trees. James L. and Mehitable retired to Berkeley.

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<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=551](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=551)

<sup>78</sup> Kramer, Carol, California Big Trees, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

<sup>79</sup> Kramer, Carol, California Big Trees, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

Around the time his father was trying to sell his land to the federal government, James C. Sperry left the area to attend U.C. Berkeley, where he focused his studies in the sciences. He participated in the then-well-known archeological expeditions lead by Berkeley Professors to gather fossils in the Pacific Northwest.<sup>80</sup> In 1902, when his father died, James Cameron was described as a “recent” graduate of the University.<sup>81</sup>

## b. CAREER

Little is known about how James C. Sperry spent his first few post-graduate years employment wise, but he seems to have remained in Berkeley. His obituary reported that he was a retired mining engineer. By the 1920s he had secured a position as an executive with Magnavox.



Magnavox was one of the first California Tech Start Ups.<sup>82</sup> At a facility in Napa, around 1911, the founders of the company discovered a way to magnify sound dramatically via a speaker system. The product came to be known as the “moving coil” horn loudspeakers because of its shape. (Photos, Oakland Wiki).



When Sperry was an officer in the 1920s, the Magnavox manufacturing plant was located at 2725 E. 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Oakland. It manufactured the loudspeakers, European style telephones, and other small electronics.<sup>83</sup> In 1923, Magnavox engineers developed the

<sup>80</sup> “Students Leave on Exploration Trip to Oregon,” *San Francisco Call*, May 10, 1900.

<sup>81</sup> “Death Calls James L. Sperry, Once Owner of Big Tree Grove,” *San Francisco Call*, vol. 87, No. 66, Feb. 4, 1902.

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.radiomuseum.org/dsp\\_hersteller\\_detail.cfm?company\\_id=2789](https://www.radiomuseum.org/dsp_hersteller_detail.cfm?company_id=2789).

<sup>83</sup> [http://www.antiqueradio.com/Sep07\\_Eckland\\_Magnavox.html](http://www.antiqueradio.com/Sep07_Eckland_Magnavox.html).

world's first personal sized radio, described as follows by the Magnavox Historical Association:

In 1923, Magnavox invented the world's first single-dial radio. The radio, TRF-5, is shown with the R3 speaker. The set used 2 RF and 2 Audio amplifier (type A) tubes, plus 1 detector tube (type D), A&B batteries and covered the AM broadcast band.



(photo courtesy of the Magnavox Historical Society). Sperry's executive role increased over time. He was vice-president in 1922<sup>84</sup>, treasurer in 1923<sup>85</sup>, and later became president. On November 22, 1928, the *Oakland Tribune* reported that J.C. Sperry had resigned as president and was "retiring to private life."<sup>86</sup> The next day the news was also reported in the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>87</sup> Magnavox eventually relocated to the Midwest.

### c. LIFE ON HAWTHORNE TERRACE

It is not known where Sperry and his wife Adelia were living in Berkeley before the 1923 fire, but after the fire, it appears they live on Hearst. In 1924, he applied for a permit to build the Hawthorne Terrace structure that had, as noted above, "the distinction of building the most expensive structure in the area."<sup>88</sup> Our best guess is that the Sperrys moved to Hawthorne Terrace in around 1925-1926.<sup>89</sup> James Sperry and his wife Adelia raised their children, James O., Bruce, Cynthia (m. Harris) in the home. Muriel was socially active; James attended Berkeley High from which he graduated in 1937. Cynthia was married in the garden of the 1450 Home.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>84</sup> "Magnavox Co. Is Prosperous During 1922," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 26, 1923.

<sup>85</sup> *Magnavox Co. v. Jones*, 105 Cal. App. 98, 100 (Cal. Ct. App. 1930).

<sup>86</sup> "Magnavox Earnings Set New Record," *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 22, 1928.

<sup>87</sup> "Sperry Resigns as Magnavox Leader," *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 23, 1928.

<sup>88</sup> "Tombstones of Berkeley's Fire Crash Before the Advance of Progress," *Oakland Tribune*, Sep. 17, 1924.

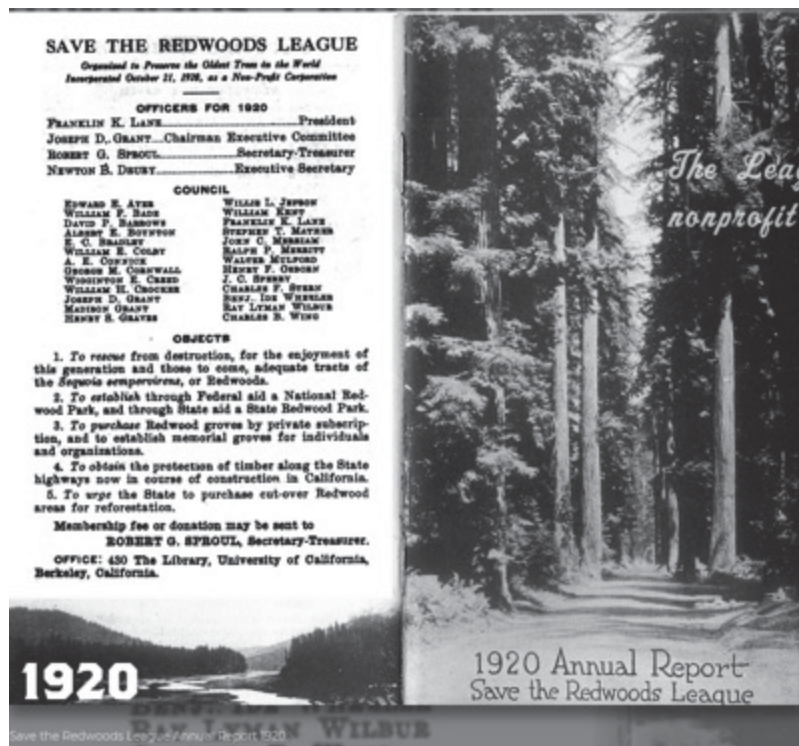
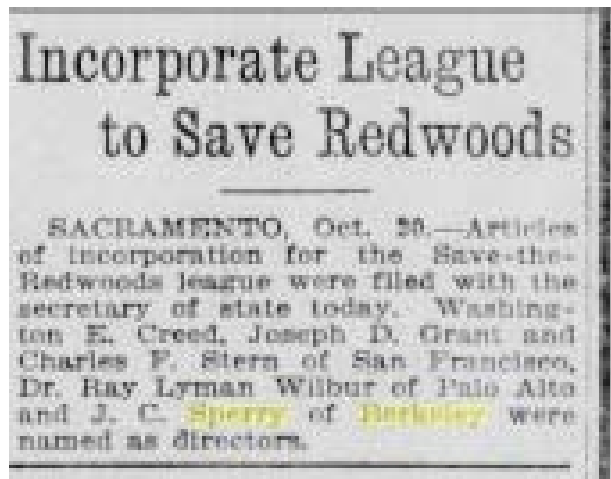
<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, his wife and sister were in a car that collided with a street car on April 25, 1925. At that time their addresses were reported as 2425 Hearst and Cleyne Court respectively, so presumably they moved to Hawthorne Terrace sometime after April 1925. Both ladies were hospitalized (one at Alta Bates Sanitarium; the other at the University Hospital). "Two Women Hurt as Auto, Street Car Hit," *Oakland Tribune*, April 25, 1925.

<sup>90</sup> "Muriel Glass to be Married at Sperry Home," *Oakland Tribune*, Jul. 11, 1932; "Helen Judd Betrothal Announced," *Oakland Tribune*, July 17, 1932.

#### d. SPERRY'S LIFE'S WORK: SAVING THE BIG TREES

Although his father had sold the family's interests in Big Tree Grove, James C. Sperry remained deeply committed to the preservation of Northern California's unique big trees and work tirelessly to ensure their preservation.

He was one of a group of early California environmentalists who incorporated the Save the Redwoods League in 1920.<sup>91</sup> (*Right: Announcement of Incorporation of Save the Redwood League. Los Angeles Herald, Vol. XLV, No. 303, Oct. 20, 1920.*) The League had been formed three years earlier by John C. Merriman, Madison Grant, and Fairfield Osborn.<sup>92</sup> J. C. Sperry was the League's first manager. During its formative early years, J.C. Sperry served as a director as well and negotiated actively to acquire key groves. The first memorial grove was established in 1921



In 1924, the League decided to focus its efforts on preserving four areas: Bull Creek and the Dyerville Flats, Prairie Creek and the Humboldt Lagoons, Del Norte Coast, and the Mill Creek/Smith River redwoods. John D. Rockefeller pledged \$1 million for the Bull Creek Area and contributed an additional \$1 million to the League. Two years later, James C. Sperry was selected to be a part of the team negotiating with the owners of Bull Run on behalf of the League. Those negotiations lasted 6 years!

<sup>92</sup> See [www.savetheredwoods.org/about-us/mission-history/](http://www.savetheredwoods.org/about-us/mission-history/)





The article to the left ran in the *Oakland Tribune*, August 25, 1924, and shows James C. Sperry with other dignitaries at the dedication of a saved redwood grove to the former Secretary of the Interior (and Californian) Francis K. Lane, who was the League's first president.<sup>93</sup> J.C. Sperry is pointed out by the red arrow.

In 1926, Sperry played a key role with in negotiating on behalf of the League with Pacific Lumber over the sale of additional large acres including

Bull Run, as described in the article below, which ran in the *San Francisco Examiner*, on January 31, 1926.

**SUCCESS SEEN IN REDWOODS SAVING MOVE**

**League Confident Reservations in Both Humboldt and Del Norte Will Be Set Aside**

Success is crowning the determined effort made by a group of nature-loving Californians to preserve the oldest living things on earth—the Redwood.

In the annual report, just issued, of the "Save-the-Redwoods League" this statement is contained:

"A great Redwood Forest Reservation, comprising approximately 1,500 to 2,000 acres and representing a valuable of several million dollars is contemplated in place recently acquired and given approval by the council of the Save-the-Redwoods League at its annual meeting in San Francisco on September 8, 1925.

Announcement in this effort has just been made by Dr. John C. Merriam of Washington, D. C., president of the league, and J. C. Sperry of San Francisco, chairman of the league's board of directors.

"This reservation of established will be of national significance, both as to size and importance, and will, according to the plan, be located on the banks of the South Fork and Red rivers at Eureka, Humboldt County, California, and will comprise the major portion of the water shed of Bull Creek, a tributary of the South Fork of the Red."

**"NO FINER FOREST"**

Madison Street at New York square

**Where the Redwood Is at Its Best**

Scene at the mouth of Bull Creek, in Bull Creek Flat, proposed Redwood reservation. This stream of perennial flow furnishes abundant moisture, which is one reason for the perfect development of these great trees in this section.

—Photo by H. C. Weston

**Move to Save California's Redwoods Making Progress That Cheers League**

(Continued from Page One.)

factors were such as to favor their persistence only in California. These Redwoods then are in many ways the sublimate type of the earth's vegetation. For untold thousands of years this race of trees has been growing here—the finest example we have on the earth today of the vegetation of the Miocene epoch. And now—do we mean to sweep clean from end to end the finest part of the Redwood belt, where the forest is most representative of the vegetation of a geological age long since past? That would be a shameless thing to happen."

It is interesting to note that over seventy per cent of all the lumbermen, owners of great stretches of Redwoods, support wholeheartedly the project of setting aside two large national reservations and a number of smaller parks where these California trees could be preserved for posterity.

**LUMBERMEN TO OPERATE**

The owner of this timber, the Pacific Lumber Company, one of the largest operating concerns in the lumber industry, is co-operating with the "Save - the - Redwood League" in order to determine a fair valuation of the area to be purchased from them and taken over for public use. Conferences to this end between officials of the league and the company are now taking place. It is expected that within a short time the exact price at which this property is to be purchased will be determined and then it will rest with the interested public to secure funds necessary for setting aside this magnificent area.

The league is lending its wholehearted support to this project. A finance committee has been appointed to represent the league in handling pledges and funds. It consists of J. D. Grant and William H. Crocker of San Francisco, Duncan McDuffie and J. C. Sperry of Berkeley and H. G. Sproule, vice president and comptroller of the University of California.

The committee appointed to negotiate with the Pacific Lumber Company consists of the chairman, Colonel Henry H. Graves, former chief of the United States Forestry Service and now professor of Yale University and dean of its Forestry School, Professor Walter Mulford, head of the Department of Forestry in the University of California, J. C. Sperry and Duncan McDuffie.

—one well known forestry expert, Major David T. Mason, who for a number of years has been directing the reforestation plans of the lumber interests in Mendocino and Humboldt counties, is participating in the negotiations.

**Highway Commission Plans New Bridges**

**EXAMINER BUREAU, SACRAMENTO, Jan. 29.**—New construction and repair plans covering four California bridges, notably a new span over the Santa Maria River, were announced today by the State Highway Commission.

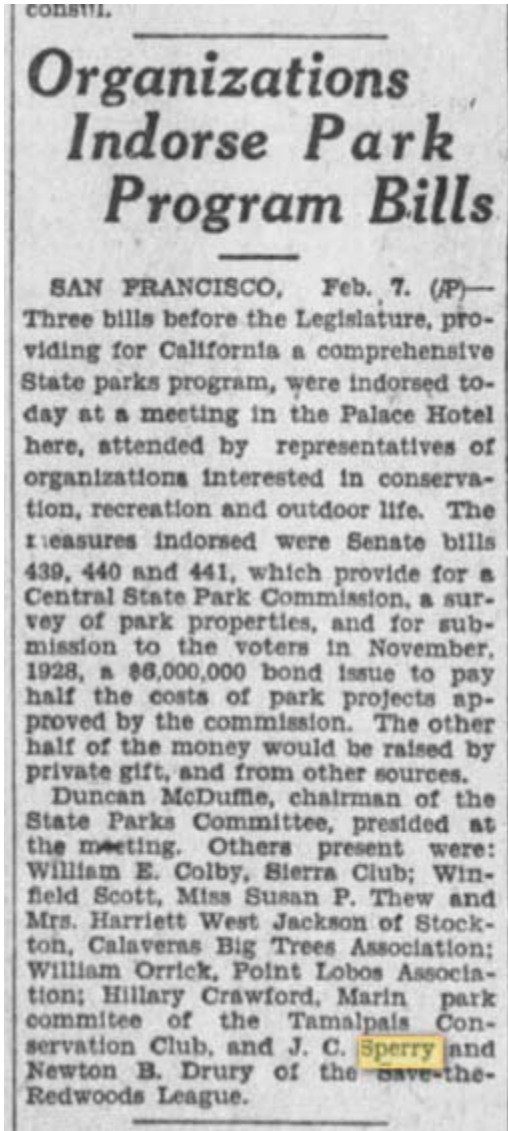
The Santa Maria River bridge, on the Coast Highway north of the town of Santa Maria, will be 1200 feet long and of the reinforced concrete pile trestle type with a clear roadway width of 24 feet.

Other plans include construction of the Honey Creek bridge on the Pacific Highway in northern Shasta County, rebuilding of the Santa Ana River bridge in Orange County and widening of the Rio Hondo bridge in Los Angeles County.

<sup>93</sup> "Franklin K. Lane Memorial to be Dedicated Aug.24," *Oakland Tribune*, Aug. 5, 1924.

Interestingly Duncan McDuffie, the real estate developer who worked with Gutterson on St Francis Woods, was involved alongside Sperry in those negotiations on behalf of the League. The negotiations lasted 6 years but were successful; Bull Run was saved. In 1931, that acreage became the Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Sperry and McDuffie crossed paths again in 1927. As noted in the article to the left, which ran in the *Los Angeles Times* on February 8, 1927, Sperry represented the League at a meeting in San Francisco of environmental preservationists, including McDuffie, chairman of the State Parks Committee, where the groups voted to endorse three bills pending before the state legislature “providing California a comprehensive State parks program.” That legislation eventually passed in 1928, creating and funding the state’s parks system.



The League had success later that year as reported in the article shown below, which



appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, on July 8, 1927, and described and describes a ceremony celebrating the addition of “vast scenic regions of Kern River Canyon, Mt. Whitney and the headwaters of Kaweah” to the Sequoia National Park. Sperry attended on behalf of the Save the Redwoods League.

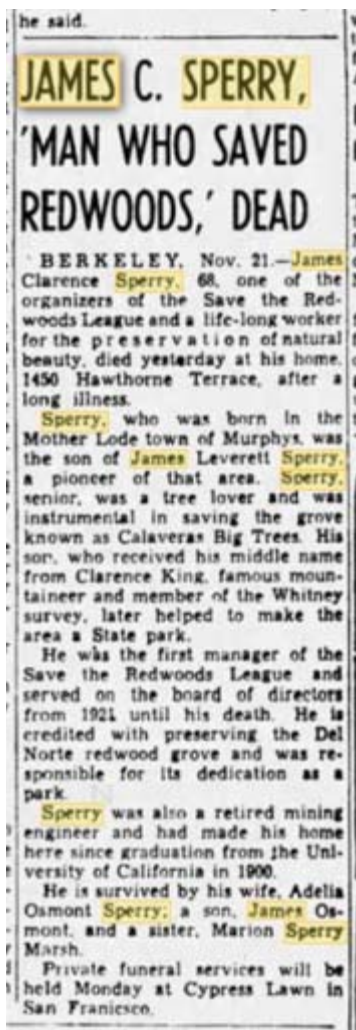
In addition to Save the Redwoods League, J.C. Sperry and other “prominent citizens” including his cousin, Mrs. William H. Crocker, formed another organization – the Calaveras Grove Association – in 1926 in an attempt to acquire the famous North Grove from Whiteside (the person to whom J.C.’s father sold his holdings).<sup>94</sup> The North Grove totaled 1760 acres of old growth forest, including 110 “big trees.” With the League’s assistance, the North Grove was acquired and eventually become Calaveras Big Trees State park in 1931.

The Sperry Family’s love of trees –and particularly big trees -- is evident in the landscape that they commissioned Mabel Symmes to create for the twin homes on Hawthorne Terrace, which features a redwood grove at the corner of Vine Lane and

Hawthorne Terrace. It includes a rare so-called dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), which is deciduous. Dawn redwoods were so rare that they were originally thought to be extinct. That grove remains to this day as a wonderful reminder of the Sperry family’s love of those trees.

Interestingly, the Sperry’s love of redwoods was shared with the next owners of the 1450 House, Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin. Both Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin sat on the board of Save the Redwoods League.<sup>95</sup> The techniques for preserving large areas for park land that the Redwoods League pioneered in the 1920s and 1930s were later used by Sylvia McLaughlin in connection with her work for Save the Bay, Citizens for the Eastshore State Park, and Trust for Public Lands.

(Obituary, *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 22, 1942; photo above courtesy of BAHA)



<sup>94</sup> “Battle to Preserve Calaveras Big Trees Opens: Purchase for State Park Is Present Plan,” *San Francisco Examiner*, Oct. 24, 1926.

<sup>95</sup><https://www.advocate-news.com/2016/01/21/sylvia-mclaughlin-last-living-founder-of-save-the-bay-dies-at-age-99/>

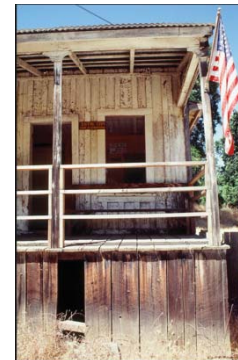
## 2. MARION SPERRY MARSH (FIRST OCCUPANT)

When Marion Marsh, James Cameron Sperry's older sister, moved into the house at 1440 Hawthorne Terrace in 1925, she had been a widow for over 10 years. Like her brother, James, she was born and brought up in Big Tree Country in Calaveras County at their parents' homes in Murphys and Mammoth. (photos below right: Calaveras His. Soc.)

As noted above, her father James L. was a Gold Rush era pioneer who came to California with his brother Willard and cousin Austin. Austin started a mill in Stockton in 1853 to produce feed for the pack animals of the prospectors who were flooding the state at the time.<sup>96</sup> The venture, Sperry



Flour Company, eventually became the largest mill west of the Rockies, and was a household name in California well into the mid-1940s. James L.'s eldest son Willard went to work for the family's flour company, managing their mills in Marysville<sup>97</sup>, and later ran a large and prosperous dairy.<sup>98</sup> The Sperry family eventually sold the company to General Mills.



Marion was born June 27, 1871, a few years before her brother James Cameron Sperry. After James left for college and her parents retired, Marion remained behind. At 19, she became "postal master" for the area around the Mammoth Hotel<sup>99</sup> (also known as Sperry's Hotel and the Big Trees Hotel, pictured above; post office to the right), which the family still owned at the time. She was in that position for several years (until August 1900)<sup>100</sup> and also was involved in running the Mammoth Hotel. In that capacity she hosted John Muir, whom she showed around the nearby groves, as well as other notable visitors.<sup>101</sup> The photo at left is of Muir in the grove (Photo: John Muir papers

<sup>96</sup> "Mrs. Marion Sperry Marsh of Famed Milling Family Dead," *Oakland Tribune*, Feb. 26, 1959.

<sup>97</sup> "Death of J.L. Sperry," *San Francisco Call*, Feb. 4, 1902.

<sup>98</sup> Another son worked with the Crocker family (to whom they were related by marriage) in the oil business. *Id.*

<sup>99</sup> "Postal Matters," *The Record-Union* (Sacramento, CA), May 3, 1891; "Military and Postal Matters," *San Francisco Call*, May 4, 1891; Kramer, Carol, *California Big Trees*, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

<sup>100</sup> "Postoffice Changes and List of Pensions Granted," *The San Francisco Call*, Aug. 16, 1900.

<sup>101</sup> Kramer, Carol, *California Big Trees*, California Big Trees Historic Association publication.

– F24-1333, University of the Pacific). In 1900 she traveled to Paris with a friend to attend the Paris Exposition.<sup>102</sup>



After her father sold the hotels and the Big Tree Grove, Marion appears to have accompanied him on a trip East to visit his birthplace. When her father died in 1902, she was still unmarried.<sup>103</sup> Sometime between 1908 and 1910, she married James Morrill Marsh.

The Marsh Family has a colorful history in California. James M. Marsh was related to Dr. John Marsh, the colorful

California pioneer who was the state's first Western-educated medical doctor. John Marsh eventually settled on a large cattle ranch in what is now Contra Costa County. He was famously murdered in 1856 near what is now Martinez (photo left: John Marsh, California archives; below: the landmark marking the spot of his murder). His house remains as part of the Marsh Creek State Park.<sup>104</sup>



The branch of the Marsh family that Marion Sperry married into, was a generation removed from John Marsh, and spent only part of the year in California. James M. Marsh's father George owned a soap manufacturing plant in Lynn, MA, called Marsh Soap & Tallow and later Good-Will Soap. By 1910 James Morrill Marsh was married to Marion and was treasurer of the family soap business, which had been sold a few years before to the Swift meatpacking conglomerate. James and Marion lived part of the year in Massachusetts, first in Lynn and later at an estate in Topsfield; and

the remainder in Southern California where James owned a home and orange groves and had another manufacturing business.

George's brother James (not to be confused with George's son James Morrill) lived as a prosperous



<sup>102</sup> "Miss Crocker to Wed in the Month of Roses," *The San Francisco Call*, May 6, 1900.

<sup>103</sup> "Death Calls James L. Sperry Once Owner of Big Tree Grove," *The San Francisco Call*, Feb. 4, 1902.

<sup>104</sup> <http://johnmarshhouse.com/>

farmer in the Stockton area. By the late 1800's, James Morrill was also spending a substantial part of the year in Southern California.<sup>105</sup> James purchased land there in 1908<sup>106</sup> and owned a residence in Indiola (now Indio) and acres of oranges by the time of his death in 1913.<sup>107</sup>

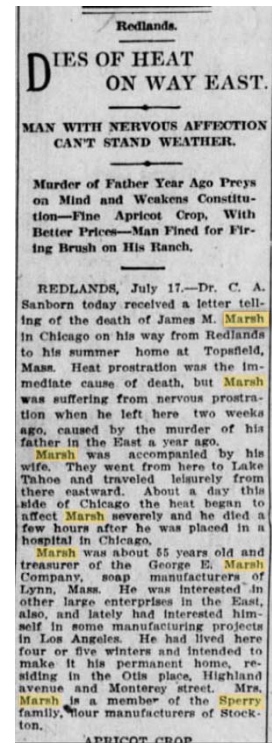


Like his relative John Marsh, George Marsh also came to a violent end at the hand of a Californian. George, the “millionaire manufacturer,”<sup>108</sup> was murdered in Lynn in 1912 by Willis Dow, a Stockton resident, whose mother lived in Berkeley.<sup>109</sup> The murder was motivated by the large inheritance George’s brother James had left to an adopted daughter (Dow’s aunt and lover) in California. George stood to inherit the daughter’s money if she died, and so Dow traveled to Lynn and killed

George to ensure that did not happen.

The murder caused a sensation. It was reported on the front page of the New York Times,<sup>110</sup> and the subsequent man hunt<sup>111</sup> and trial were widely reported in newspapers on the East Coast and California.<sup>112</sup> James and Marion Marsh were in California at the time of the murder, but James was said to have assisted in the hunt for his father’s killer.

James inherited the bulk of his father’s estate,<sup>113</sup> but he did not live long to enjoy it. James, apparently never in good health, suffered a “nervous breakdown due to the death of his father,”<sup>114</sup> and died the



<sup>105</sup> “Notes,” *The San Bernardino County Sun*, April 11, 1895; “At City Hotels,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 7, 1907.

<sup>106</sup> “In Westminster Terrace,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 23, 1908.

<sup>107</sup> “James M. Marsh Dead,” *The Boston Globe*, Jul. 8, 1913.

<sup>108</sup> “Bear Valley’s Road Flooded,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 19, 1913.

<sup>109</sup> “Stockton Man Charged with Marsh Murder,” *The San Francisco Call*, April 16, 1912.

<sup>110</sup> “Wealthy Man Slain; Woman is Sought,” *New York Times*, April 13, 1912: The Times reported that Marsh had been shot five times: “George E. Marsh, President of the Goodwill Soap Company of this city, was found dead on the rocky embankment of the Point of Pines Boulevard today. He was murdered in an automobile and a woman figured in the tragedy, according to the theory of the police tonight.”

<sup>111</sup> “Stockton Man Charged with Marsh Murder,” *The San Francisco Call*, April 16, 1912.

<sup>112</sup> A local Lynn historian summarized the scandal: “The story made the front page of the *New York Times*, but then was almost overshadowed by the sinking of the Titanic a day later. Detectives eventually received tips of a “blue car” being seen near Marsh’s house on the day of the murder and that led them to young man who had been in a boarding house nearby for a few days before the murder. That man was Willis Dow. A search of Dow’s belongings uncovered a coat, with all the buttons missing. A thread on the button matched the weave on the coat (the other buttons has been removed by Dow to in a futile attempt to thwart any subsequent investigation). Eventually, the blue car was located and the California car dealer who sold it to Dow identified him as the purchaser. Why would Dow travel from California to Massachusetts to kill Marsh? It turned out that Dow was having an affair with his own aunt, Opra Marsh, who was the foster daughter of George Marsh’s deceased brother James. She was the heiress to a considerable fortune and Dow knew this and seduced her. Opra named him as sole beneficiary in her will. . . . Dow planned on killing George, and did, to hasten the transfer of monies to Opra. To shorten a long story, Dow was convicted and sent to the electric chair at Charlestown State Prison on March 24, 1914.”

<https://www.facebook.com/CSI.LYNN/>

<sup>113</sup> “Not Mentioned in Will,” *The Boston Globe*, May 4, 1912.

<sup>114</sup> “Bear Valley’s Road Flooded,” *The Los Angeles Times*, Jul. 19, 1913.

next year (1913) from heat prostration in Chicago on his way back East with Marion.<sup>115</sup> The Marsh money passed not to Marion, but to George's granddaughter.<sup>116</sup>

**Mrs. Marion Sperry Marsh of Famed Milling Family Dead**

BERKELEY, Feb. 26.—Death has claimed Mrs. Marion Sperry Marsh, 87, member of the Sperry Flour Co. family and descendant of pioneer Californians.

Mrs. Marsh was born at Murphy's in the Mother Lode where her father owned the famed Murphy's Hotel and for 50 years, also, owned Calaveras Big Trees.

He came to California in the Gold Rush days, with a brother, Willard and a cousin, Austin. Austin started a mill in Stockton in 1852 to produce feed for pack animals during the gold rush. That business grew to become the largest milling enterprise west of the Rocky Mountains. In 1929 when the Sperry Flour Co. was merged with General Mills the new company became the biggest flour producer in the world.

Mrs. Marsh spent her life in California except for a period in Lynn, Mass. where her late husband, James M. Marsh owned a manufacturing plant. He died in 1914.

She died yesterday at her home, 1440 Hawthorne Terrace. She had been in failing health for years.

She had lived here the last 35 years and was a member of All Souls Episcopal Church, Holly branch of the Children's Hospital of the East Bay and the English Speaking Union.

Private funeral services were held today at Berkeley Hills Chapel conducted by the Rev. Albert Olson, pastor of All Souls' church. Inurnment will be at Lynn, Mass. with her late husband.

**McLain Named to Advisory Post**

SACRAMENTO, Feb. 26.—Gov. Edmund G. Brown today named George McLain, veteran pension promoter and head of the California Institute of Social Welfare, as a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Aging.

Four other new appointments to the committee announced by Brown are George Hellyer Jr., San Francisco attorney; Mrs. Ann Boyd of Lancaster, a member of the Los Angeles County Public Welfare Commission; Rev. Harold E. Baker of Chula Vista, administrator of the San Diego Methodist Home for the Aged; and Miss Barbara Rosien of Los Angeles.

Reappointed were Dr. Richard L. Johnson, Sacramento; T. R. Hyde, Santa Cruz; and Mrs. Edna Bonn of Atherton.

**Big Tanker Launched**

KOBE, Japan, Feb. 26.—The Bering Sea, a 38,750 deadweight ton tanker ordered by the Gulf Oil Co. was launched at the Kawasaki heavy industry dockyards today. It is registered in Liberia and scheduled for completion in April.

Marion traveled to Europe after James's death, and returned to California in 1914 to live there permanently. Between 1913 and 1925, Marion lived in San Francisco and at various locations in Berkeley, including 2600 Ridge Road. After moving to 1440 Hawthorne Terrace in 1925, Marion (Sperry) Marsh effectively retired and lived a quiet life surrounded by family. Shortly after she moved in, her older brother Willard (a business man) and his wife Mabel Sperry moved into the 1440 House with her. Marion died in 1959.

### 3. McNIVEN FAMILY (SECOND OWNERS)

In September 1959, James O. Sperry (James C. Sperry's son) sold the house to Prof. Hugh and Marion McNiven. Hugh McNiven was a professor of civil engineering at Cal, where he taught for 34 years. In addition to teaching, Hugh served as director of the University's Earthquake Engineering Research Center (1980-85) and president of the University Art Museum (photo below right, Oakland Tribune, May 5, 1968; photo below left, UC Regents). He was responsible for the museum's

acquisition of the Alexander Calder sculpture *The Hawk for Peace* and other important works. He passed away in 2009.<sup>117</sup>



Admiring the new Reubens acquisition at the University Art Gallery were Professor Hugh McNiven, Mrs. Tevis Jacobs and Frederic D. Weekes

<sup>115</sup> "James M. Marsh Dead," The Boston Globe, Jul. 8, 1913.

<sup>116</sup> *Id.*

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sfgate/obituary.aspx?n=hugh-mcniven&pid=138827372>



His wife Marion Fitzhugh McNiven is (ironically) also a descendant of California Pioneer John Marsh. A graduate of U.C. Berkeley's School of Architecture, Marion McNiven has devoted herself to restoring the Marsh-Sperry House and Garden.





(photos: above, Hugh & Marion McNiven; left 1987 reception in the shared patio; photo below: same, Sylvia McLaughlin and Nancy Hitch – wife of former U.C. President Charles Hitch and former Blake House resident – talking with Dr. Alfred Compton) (photos: McNiven family).



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## APPENDIX

- A. Survey and Maps
- B. Original Building Permit Paperwork
- C. Original Landscape Design by M. Symmes
- D. Original Hardscape Drawings by H. Gutterson
- E. Article about zoning application pertaining to property
- F. Berkeley Urban Conservation Study
- G. Articles about Owners & Occupants