

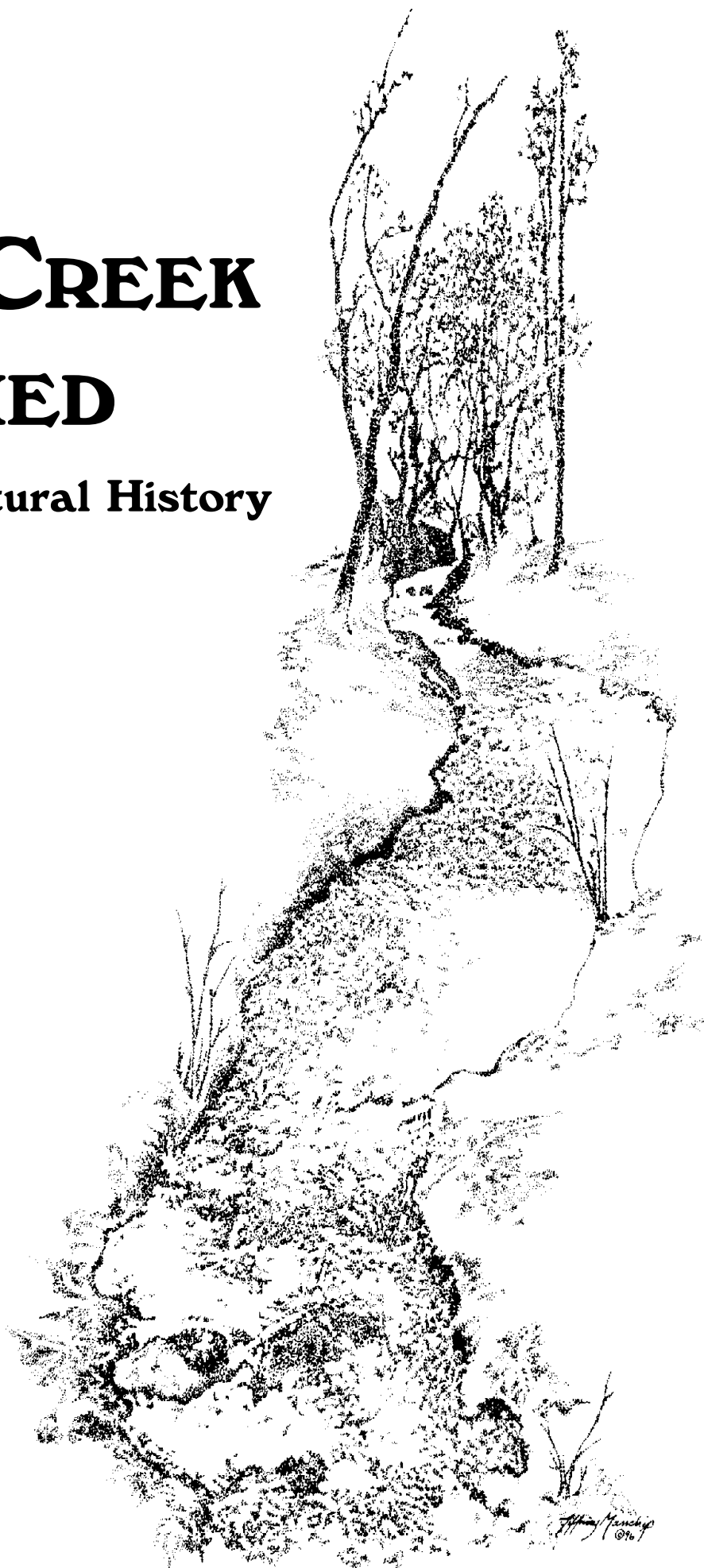
The  
**SAUSAL CREEK**  
**WATERSHED**

**A Cultural and Natural History**

Written by  
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Illustrated by  
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*Prepared by  
the Aquatic Outreach Institute  
and the Friends of Sausal Creek*



*Tiffany Manchip  
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*The Sausal Creek Watershed: A Cultural and Natural History*

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Also offered by the Friends of Sausal Creek:  
*The Gardener's Guide to the Sausal Creek Watershed*  
To obtain copies, contact the Aquatic Outreach Institute.

Aquatic Outreach Institute  
1327 South 46th Street  
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Richmond, CA 94804  
(510) 231-5655

This booklet is one component of the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Watershed Awareness Program, a public involvement program sponsored by the District. The Water District, as part of the Alameda Countywide Clean Water Program, is fulfilling its goal to educate and encourage the public to adopt a less polluting and more environmentally beneficial behavior; increase awareness of local watersheds; and solicit volunteers to help solve creek-specific problems. For more information about the Watershed Awareness Program, write or call Sharon Gosselin at Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, 951 Turner Court, Room 300, Hayward, CA, 94545, (510) 670-6547.

This booklet was also made possible by the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, which assists communities in enhancing their local rivers, trails, open spaces, and culturally significant resources. Staff provide planning and technical assistance to support community-based conservation action. NPS-RTCA can be reached at 600 Harrison Street, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA, 94107, (415) 427-1446 or [www.nps.gov/pwro/rta](http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rta).

# PREFACE

Anyone who visits the Sausal Creek Watershed is likely to see glimpses of the past, whether looking at the buildings along Dimond Avenue or at the redwoods growing in Dimond Canyon. *The Sausal Creek Watershed: A Cultural and Natural History* was written to promote a greater understanding of the role the watershed has played in the history of Oakland. This booklet is one component of the Sausal Creek Watershed Awareness Program, which is sponsored by the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the City of Oakland, the Coastal Conservancy, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's San Francisco Bay Program. The program is coordinated by the Aquatic Outreach Institute.

The passage of time has brought many changes to the Sausal Creek watershed, and these changes have altered the way it functions. Rainwater, instead of filtering slowly through vegetation and soil, races over blacktop before emptying into Sausal Creek. On its way, water picks up oil from roads, pesticides and other toxic chemicals from lawns and gardens, as well as litter from streets before it reaches the creek. These contaminants disturb the creek's ecosystem, making the creek uninhabitable for some plants and animals, and less enjoyable for people as well. Creeks are excellent indicators of the health of a watershed. If a watershed is kept clean and healthy, the creek will be clean and healthy too. The Sausal Creek Watershed Awareness Program encourages people to take action to protect their watershed, thereby making Sausal Creek a healthy aquatic habitat.

The goals of the Watershed Awareness Program are to:

- educate, inform, and inspire people to act on behalf of their community to protect and enhance water resources;
- create a sense of personal and community stewardship for water resources;
- educate residents about sources of pollution, how land use relates to water quality, and ways to address the types of problems encountered; and to
- provide the knowledge, resources, and support participants need to effectively understand and address water quality problems.

As a result of the program, the Friends of Sausal Creek were formed in 1996. The Friends consist of concerned community members who are interested in exchanging information and ideas about their watershed and participating in protecting their creek at a grassroots level. Encouraging citizen participation, from decision-makers to residents, teachers, and students, is critical for building long-term commitments to protect a community's natural resources.

The Friends of Sausal Creek are currently setting goals for the enhancement and long-term management of the creek. The Friends' mission is to "promote awareness and appreciation of the Sausal Creek Watershed; to inspire action to restore and protect the creek and its watershed; and to obtain recognition for the creek as an important natural and community resource. The Friends have identified five broad goals. These are to:

- be an educational resource on the creek and watershed
- build membership and make the Friends an effective, self-sustaining organization
- increase opportunities for experiencing and enjoying the creek
- be a legal and regulatory advocate for the creek
- assess the natural resources and restore the native flora and fauna of the creek.

The Friends meet monthly to discuss watershed issues, plan upcoming events, and draft action plans which will allow them to accomplish their goals. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Dimond Branch Library in Oakland. Community creek workdays are held on the Saturday following the monthly meeting at Dimond Park from 9:00 A.M. to noon. Workdays have been spent restoring 35,000 square feet of the park by creating a Native Plant Demonstration Garden and revegetating the creek corridor with native plants. The Friends are also actively involved in monitoring the water quality of the creek, inventorying bird populations, and sampling for aquatic insects. The Friends of Sausal Creek are protecting and improving water quality as they create programs that bridge generations, cross political boundaries, link the economy and ecology, and give everyone in the community a stake in taking personal action to protect their watershed.

If you would like to join the Friends in their efforts or receive a copy of their monthly newsletter, please contact the Aquatic Outreach Institute at (510) 231-5655.



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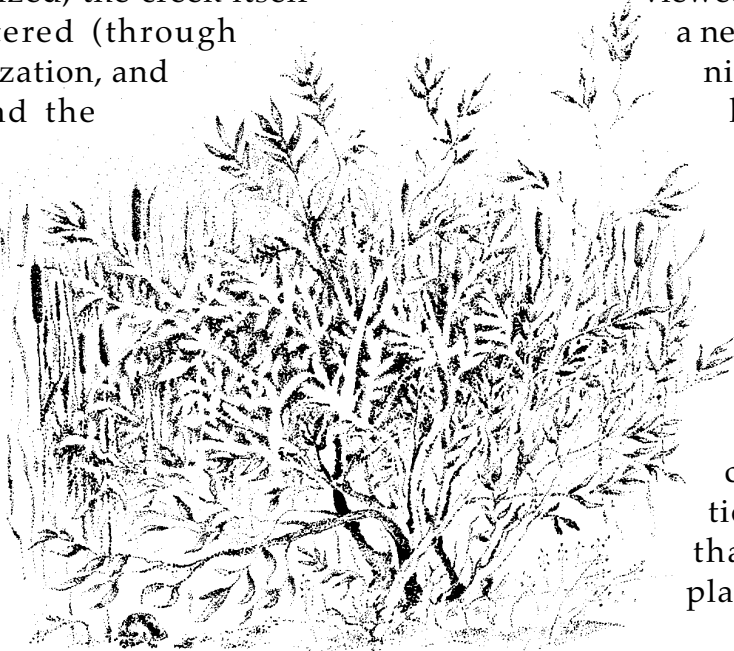
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*“Only big things get easily noticed. If we value just what is worthy of mention in newspapers and on television it is easy to believe that nothing much matters unless it is large enough to shake the earth. But standing in that gully crowded with growth and dampness, I was reminded that great things often come from humble beginnings. In many ways it is the creek that makes the river.”*

— from *The Bird in the Waterfall: A Natural History of Oceans, Rivers, and Lakes*, by Jerry Dennis, 1996, HarperCollins Publishers (used with permission)

**D**uring the past century, the Sausal Creek Watershed, the land that surrounds and drains into Sausal Creek, has undergone many changes. Despite the physical changes occurring around it, the creek has continued carving its path, flowing through the steep canyons of the Oakland Hills, meandering across fertile flatlands, and, until the early 1900s, diffusing into thickets of willows as it reached San Francisco Bay. As land use in the watershed became more urbanized, the creek itself was physically altered (through culverting, channelization, and sedimentation), and the way people described the creek changed from a beloved babbling brook to a raging, unruly torrent. The willow thickets at the mouth of the creek are gone now, and the creek finishes its journey to the Bay in a culvert (a large underground pipe), from which

it empties into the channel near the Fruitvale Bridge, between Oakland and Alameda. The creek has been culverted in many other sections too. But, whether in the open or beneath the ground, whether viewed as a nuisance or a neighborhood amenity, Sausal Creek has continued to flow through the geographic center of Oakland. It also flows through the center of this story, as a witness to the changes, destruction, and renewal that have taken place around it.



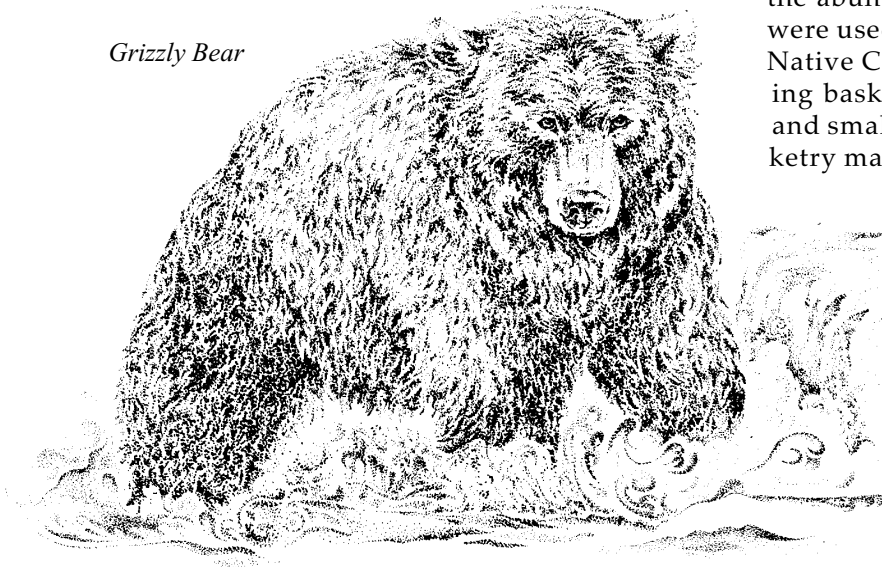
*Willow Thicket*

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## The Creek's Path

Sausal Creek originates about 1,300 feet above sea level, in four branches: the Palo Seco and Cinderella branches in Joaquin Miller Park, the Shepherd branch in the hills above Shepherd Canyon Park, and the Scout Road branch, which flows into the Shepherd branch before continuing downhill. Just east of the Montclair Golf Course parking lot, the Palo Seco-Cinderella branch and the Shepherd-Scout Road branch combine to form one watercourse. Sausal Creek then flows downhill beneath the golf course (underground, in a culvert), through Dimond Canyon and Dimond Park (for the most part above ground), and continues westward toward the Bay, through lower Fruitvale (both above and beneath ground). At International Boulevard (formerly known as 14th Street) it enters the culvert in which it finishes its journey to the tidal canal. Early hand-drawn Spanish maps show the creek ending in willow thickets before reaching the Bay. Most likely, the creek was named for these willows, since "sausal" means willow grove in Spanish. The Palo Seco branch was named for a "dry tree." Although no one knows exactly which tree "Palo Seco" describes, the early Spanish explorers may have been referring to any one of the diverse chaparral-type shrubs or trees growing in the canyons through which Palo Seco flows. The Cinderella and Scout Road branches were probably named in the early 1900s after the many Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts who have camped along these banks since the turn of the century.

*Grizzly Bear*



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## Early Inhabitants of the Watershed<sup>1</sup> (1700-1850)

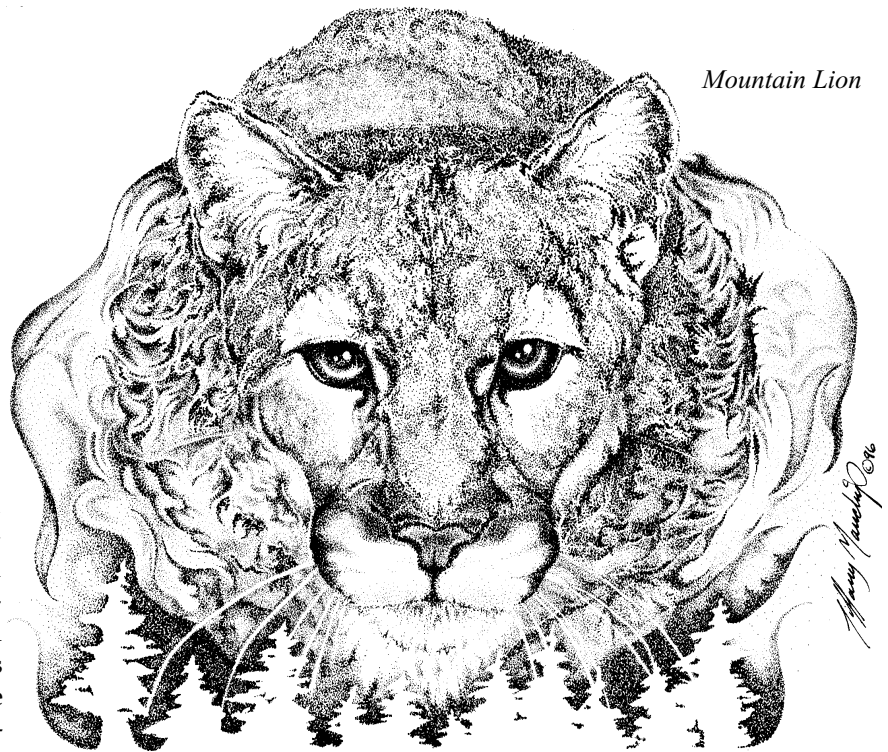
The human population of the Sausal Creek watershed in 1700 was the result of over 12,000 years of migration into California. The Spanish called these first California Indians Costanoans, after the Spanish word "Costenos" (meaning people of the coast); today's descendants of those people prefer the name Ohlone. The Ohlones of the Oakland area probably belonged to the Huchiun or Yrgin tribelets. Since each tribelet usually occupied a small strip of land running from the hills to the Bay, the East Bay's numerous creeks may very well have served as territorial dividers.

In the early days of human habitation, much of what is now downtown Oakland was covered with groves of enormous live oaks, while alders, willows, and big-leaf maples grew in riparian strips alongside the many creeks. Coast redwoods flourished on the East Bay hills, many of the largest on the highest peaks. In the canyons, interspersed amid California waxmyrtle, manzanita, currant, and snowberry bushes, were California buckeyes, bays, hazelnuts, and wild plum trees. Many of these plants can still be found in the Sausal Creek watershed today, in Dimond, Joaquin Miller, and Redwood Regional Parks.

The California Indians lived harmoniously with and depended on the creek, drinking from it, fishing and hunting along its banks, and using its water to leach tannins from the nuts of the California buckeye and acorns (a main staple of the Ohlone diet). Branches from the abundant willows growing along the creek were used to weave the many baskets crucial to Native Californian life, from cradles and carrying baskets to traps and nets for catching fish and small game. Even their homes utilized basketry materials and techniques. Huts were woven from willow branches and tules (large bulrushes) found in the marshes. To create color patterns in their baskets, the California Indians wove the dark red branches of the western redbud and the black rhizomes of bracken ferns into the lighter-colored willow branches or cattail stems. Many plants growing near the creeks were used for food: fiddleheads, (the tender, young fronds of bracken fern), and the leaves and stems of miner's lettuce

were steamed or boiled; the leaves and stems of monkeyflower, columbine, and paintbrush were cooked or eaten raw. Soups made from nuts were stewed in large, water-tight baskets, and the native people also made use of the plentiful berries growing in the canyons and along the banks of Sausal Creek: huckleberries, blackberries, strawberries, thimble berries, gooseberries, and Christmas berries (toyon). Native songbirds—grosbeaks, towhees, and white-crowned sparrows—also relished the berries. Elk and antelope roamed grassy hills colored with lupines, California poppies, and baby blue eyes; the melodious voice of meadowlarks could be heard in every field. Even predators like grizzly bears, coyotes, foxes, and mountain lions co-existed with the early human residents of the watershed. Waterfowl plentiful enough to darken the skies at times landed in the marshes and wetlands where they found abundant invertebrates and small fish, and the creeks were full of salmon and frogs.

The Ohlones did not leave the land untouched, but their impact was minor compared to that of later inhabitants. The Ohlones pruned shrubs in a way that encouraged the growth of branches (for use in baskets), and they weeded out the plants that competed with those they needed for food. They set fires to improve access to certain areas, to attract and improve forage for wildlife (which they then hunted), and to prevent chaparral from out-competing the native grasses, from which they harvested a great variety of seeds. Many parts of plants were used: roots, tubers, seeds, and greens were eaten, and many kinds of stems and branches were used to make tools or weaving materials. Although the Ohlones were hunter-gatherers, they were careful to take no more than they needed to survive, and they wasted nothing. The plants and animals they found upon arriving in the Sausal Creek watershed would have continued to exist long after the Ohlones themselves were driven from the land had later human inhabitants used those resources as carefully and respectfully as the Ohlone used them.



*Mountain Lion*

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### **The Spanish and the Arroyo del Bosque: “Stream of the Woods” (1770–1850)**

In the late 1700s, the Spanish made a number of expeditions to the Bay Area, where they established missions and attempted to convert the Ohlones to Christianity. In the fall of 1770, and again in the spring of 1772, exploratory expeditions under the command of Lieutenant Pedro Fages decided to try to reach Point Reyes by land from the South Bay. In March, 1772, Fages, traveling through the East Bay, and accompanied by a dozen soldiers, a servant, and Father Juan Crespi, crossed five “arroyos” (streams) with running water, eventually reaching Sausal Creek. Fages’ party made note of the Alameda peninsula, and the encinal, or grove of live oaks that lay between the hills and the peninsula. In his account of the journey, Crespi, impressed by the redwood forests on the hills, described the Sausal Creek watershed as an excellent site for settlement. He named the creek “Arroyo del Bosque,” or “Stream of the Woods.”

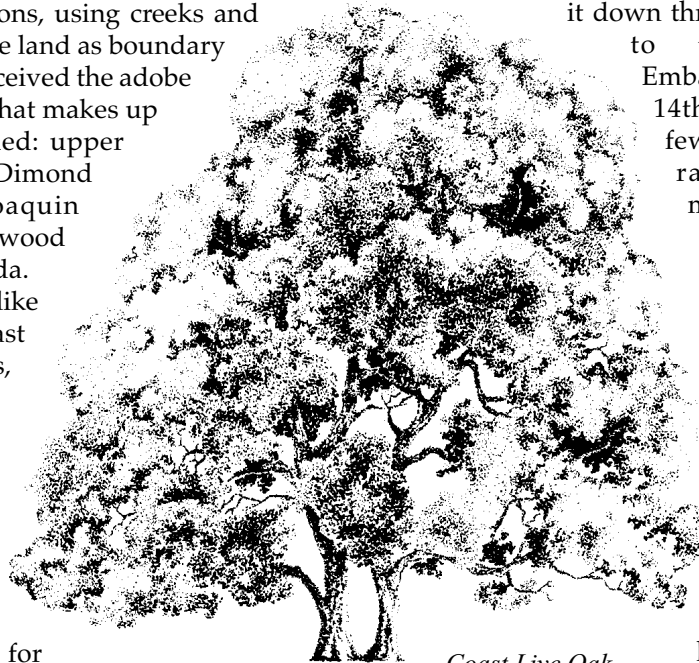
In March of 1776 another team led by Captain Juan Bautista de Anza and Lieutenant Jose Moraga, and accompanied by Father Pedro Font, passed through the Sausal watershed on their way to explore the waters of the Carquinez Strait. They too made note of the Arroyo del Bosque, and Font commented on the small pools of water in various parts of the creek.

In 1820, Sergeant Luis Maria Peralta, who had served in the Spanish military for 40 years, asked Pablo Vicente de Sola (the Spanish governor of California), to award him the land between Cerritos Creek, which flowed to the foot of a “redondo” (little round hill) in El Cerrito to the north, to San Leandro Creek to the south. On August 3, 1820, after completing an investigation into Peralta’s character, Governor Sola granted Peralta’s request, awarding him an enormous parcel of land that includes what is now Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, Oakland, Alameda, and part of San Leandro. Don Luis named his land Rancho San Antonio. In 1821 the Peralta family built an adobe at what is now 34th Avenue and Paxton Streets in Oakland, on the north bank of Peralta Creek, three blocks from Sausal Creek. Don Luis then moved to San Jose and divided Rancho San Antonio among his four sons, using creeks and other natural features of the land as boundary markers. Antonio Maria received the adobe home and the whole area that makes up the Sausal Creek watershed: upper and lower Fruitvale, the Dimond District, Dimond and Joaquin Miller Parks, parts of Redwood Regional Park, and Alameda.

The early Spanish, like the Ohlones, valued the East Bay streams. On their maps, creeks were featured as prominent landmarks and territorial markers, and their homesites were usually established near creeks. These early rancheros relied on the creeks for their own drinking and household needs, and for watering their herds of cattle. These activities, however, had a far greater impact on the land than the earlier Ohlone residents. Spanish cattle muddied the clear streams. Fast-growing plants and grasses from Spain—like the wild oats we see thriving on the hills and in the fields of the East Bay today—began to outcompete the native plants. By 1850, cattle, sheep, and horses had almost completely replaced California’s native elk and antelope. The ecosystems on which the Ohlones relied were greatly altered or destroyed. With natural resources depleted and their tribes rounded up and put into missions, the Ohlone way of life began to disappear. By the time the Spanish missions were secularized by the new Republic of Mexico in 1834, many Ohlones had died of European diseases to which they had no immunity. The remaining few banded together in small villages but were treated as outlaws, persecuted by both the Spanish and other newly-arrived European settlers.

## Dramatic Transformations in the Watershed (1840–1850)

By 1841, the first Anglos had arrived in the Sausal Creek watershed. They were drawn to Antonio Peralta’s portion of Rancho San Antonio, with its giant redwoods in the hills and the fertile soils of the flatlands deposited over millennia by the creek. In 1841, two French Canadian lumbermen cut and sold some of the giant redwoods on Antonio’s land, along the Palo Seco branch of the creek (in what is now Joaquin Miller Park). Those trees were used to help build Yerba Buena, today’s San Francisco. Then in 1847, the Smith brothers and some of their friends began whipsawing lumber and hauling it down through Dimond Canyon to the San Antonio Embarcadero at the foot of 14th Avenue. Although a few had formal lease arrangements with him, most of these early loggers were trespassing on Peralta’s land. In 1848, large numbers of redwoods from the San Antonio Forest (now Redwood Regional and Joaquin Miller Parks and Dimond Canyon) were cut down and sent to build Benicia. Before they were cut down, however, some of the huge redwoods on the hills



*Coast Live Oak*

of the Sausal watershed were used as navigational aids by ships entering the bay. One particular tree with a trunk diameter of 33.5 feet and a height of over 300 feet was named Blossom Rock Tree since sailors relied on it to avoid ramming that treacherous boulder beneath the bay. (In 1997, legislation to shear off the top of Blossom Rock was introduced, since the rock could easily damage the hull of an oil tanker and cause an environmental catastrophe.)

In 1849, the first steam sawmill was built on the Palo Seco branch, and another followed soon after. By 1850 at least 10 sawmills were operating in the upper Sausal Creek watershed, with up to 400 men working in them. No sooner were they cut down, than the redwoods of the San Antonio Forest were hauled downhill in wagons pulled by oxen, or sometimes even skidded down the creek itself to the wharf built in 1851 by James Buskirk



Larue at the mouth of Sausal Creek. By 1856, all usable lumber had been cut from the Palo Seco and other parts of the watershed. Before this logging frenzy, redwoods could be found in much of the watershed, from the hills to as far south as East 27th Street, not too far from where MacArthur Boulevard crosses Fruitvale Avenue today.

In 1893, a medical doctor and naturalist, William Gibbons, described what remained of these redwoods.<sup>2</sup> He noted that what was left of the grove was about five miles square in size and was located just opposite the Golden Gate. Gibbons believed the grove had become isolated (by about 25 miles to the north and south) from the other redwoods of the Coast Ranges, possibly from clear-cut logging.

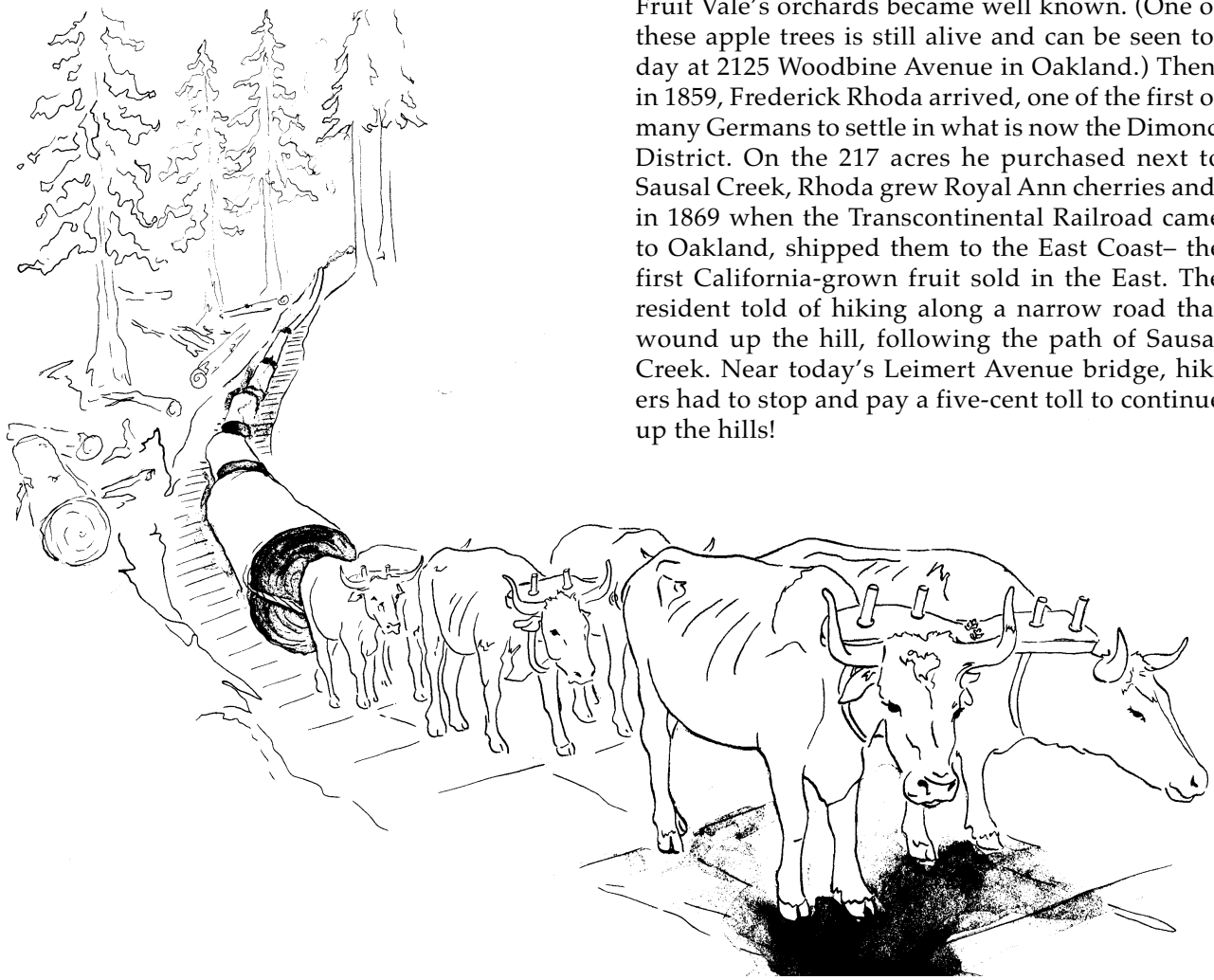
Gibbons commented with regret that as soon as new shoots would begin to sprout from the stumps, local residents would immediately cut them down

for fuel. But he also noted that enough smaller trees had survived the earlier logging frenzy to begin to “rehabilitate the devastated slopes.” Those second-growth trees may be some of the redwoods we see today in upper Dimond Canyon and Joaquin Miller and Redwood Regional Parks.

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### **Farms and Orchards Surround Sausal Creek (1850s and '60s)**

**B**etween 1850 and 1859, Antonio Peralta sold off much of his remaining land, and the rancho soon became farmland. The soils that had been deposited over time as Sausal Creek meandered back and forth in its floodplain proved to be quite productive. In 1856 Henderson Luelling, a Quaker nurseryman, brought 700 cherry trees from Oregon and planted them in 400 acres he had purchased along Sausal Creek, christening the area “Fruit Vale.” Later he added apple and pear trees, and Fruit Vale’s orchards became well known. (One of these apple trees is still alive and can be seen today at 2125 Woodbine Avenue in Oakland.) Then, in 1859, Frederick Rhoda arrived, one of the first of many Germans to settle in what is now the Dimond District. On the 217 acres he purchased next to Sausal Creek, Rhoda grew Royal Ann cherries and, in 1869 when the Transcontinental Railroad came to Oakland, shipped them to the East Coast—the first California-grown fruit sold in the East. The resident told of hiking along a narrow road that wound up the hill, following the path of Sausal Creek. Near today’s Leimert Avenue bridge, hikers had to stop and pay a five-cent toll to continue up the hills!



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## The Creek Flows Through a Rural Paradise (1866–1879)

By 1866, many large estates had been built along the banks of Sausal Creek. Ironically, many of these same wealthy landowners who built next to the creek in order to enjoy its charms had earlier made their fortunes logging the upper reaches of the watershed, causing sediments to erode into the creek while removing most of the native redwoods. Some of these estates backed onto the creek and included gardens so diverse and elaborate they were described as arboretums. The creek seems to have been an integral part of these lavish gardens and was described at the time as one of the few streams in the area that flowed year-round. In the back of the John Spring estate at East 27th Street and Fruitvale Avenue, a huge California pepper tree and enormous camphor and bread-fruit trees grew next to the creek, along with a stand of native redwoods.

In 1868, insurance magnate Caspar Hopkins bought six acres on the southwest corner of Hopkins Street (now MacArthur Boulevard) and Fruitvale Avenue, on which he built his grand estate. Hopkins christened the estate "Alderwood," after the many alders growing along Sausal Creek, which ran through his property. A writer in the 1878 Oakland Daily Times described the estate this way:

*"The grounds are laid out in exquisite order. Cool, shady walks under interlacing cedars or acacias, grassy lawns, rustic bridges, rustic steps leading beside the clear pools of the creek swarming with the recent hatch of the trout family . . ."*

Hopkins also bought four acres on the opposite side of the creek where he planted hundreds of mulberry trees, in a scheme to raise silkworms (and lots of money). When this plan was thwarted by "Mrs. Grundy," a disgruntled neighbor, Hopkins converted the lot to a cow pasture. In his memoirs, Hopkins describes how Sausal Creek "meandered through [the] lot... like the letter 'S'... lined with huge oaks, laurel, alder and buckeye trees."<sup>4</sup> He goes on to describe with disappointment how, some years after he sold the estate, the path of the creek was "straightened and ruined."

In 1870, the enterprising Hopkins decided to capitalize on Sausal Creek's powerful flow. Hopkins created the Sausal Water Company, (with himself as President), to supply the residents of Fruitvale and Brooklyn (East Oakland) with water. Hopkins built a stone dam in upper Dimond Can-

yon to create a reservoir. At its elevation of 325 feet, the dam backed up a million gallons of water. Neighbors chipped in a total of \$20,000 to pay for the waterworks, and along with the Temescal reservoir system, the Sausal reservoir supplied East Oakland with water until the summer of 1872. The Sausal Water Company then ran out of money and was acquired by Anthony Chabot's Contra Costa Water Company.

Near Hopkins' estate, Captain Levi Stevens' prestigious estate also backed onto Sausal Creek. Stevens was a New Englander who had piloted the ship *Southern Cross* to San Francisco, where he established a shipping and commerce company. The Captain was a connoisseur of exotic

shrubs, planting them along the creek's banks and

diverting water from the creek to encourage the plants to grow even more lushly. An

anonymous Oakland Daily Times writer described the Captain's exotic gardens as "the most unique creation... to be seen in a life time," clearly believing them far superior to the more naturally-occurring

vegetation: "Fruit Vale Creek runs through this... the banks of which are some 15 or 20 feet high, and usually covered with wild briars and obnoxious weeds. Here

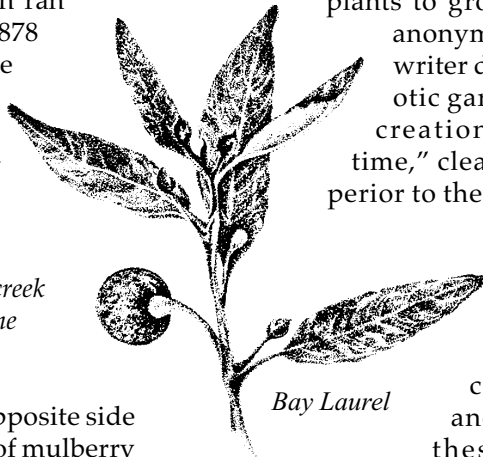
these have given place to palms, pines, magnolias, rose-bushes, fuscias, and all that kind of shrubbery so carefully cultivated in our yards." The same writer goes on to describe clear, gravel-bottomed pools in the creek, "swarming with small trout."<sup>5</sup>

Estate owners were not the only people who enjoyed Sausal Creek's charms. Horse-drawn streetcars, common in the Fruitvale area by 1875, brought people up to Dimond Canyon and other areas in the hills for Sunday outings and picnics alongside the creek, where picnickers relished the delicious berries growing next to the creek. On one occasion, a streetcar on the old Highland Park and Fruit Vale Railroad tipped over the ravine in Dimond Canyon and rolled down the hill into the creek. Officials attributed the accident to a very

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### *Sausal Creek*

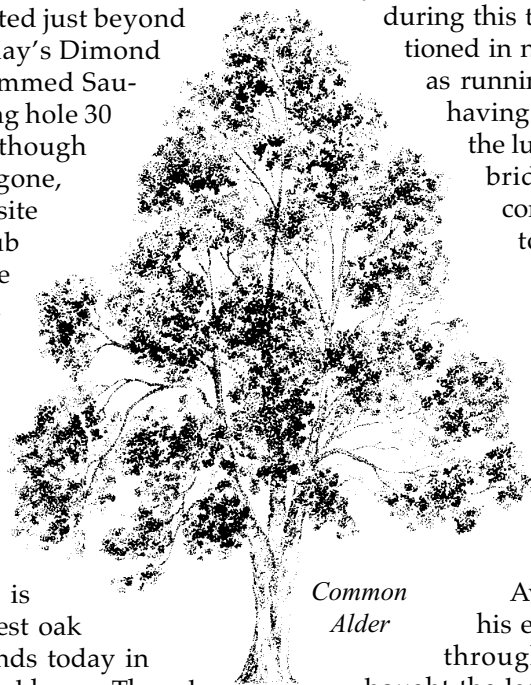
*"... meandered through the lot like the letter S, lined with huge oaks, laurel, alder and buckeye trees."*



*Bay Laurel*

large woman who had been sitting on the side next to the ravine. Amazingly, no one was injured in the incident.

In 1877, Hugh Dimond, an Irish gold prospector who had been successful in the liquor business in San Francisco, moved into his home on the 267 acres he had purchased ten years earlier along Sausal Creek, just above Fruitvale Avenue and MacArthur, at the foot of the canyon. Dimond's home (the site of the former Luelling estate) was a white, two-story, wooden structure surrounded by a verandah, and was situated just beyond the grove of redwoods in today's Dimond Park. The Dimond family dammed Sausal Creek to create a swimming hole 30 feet wide by 100 feet long. Although the swimming hole is long gone, children today swim near the site of the hole, in the Lions' Club swimming pool, built after the City acquired the Dimond property in 1917. The Dimonds used an iron pipe to divert water from Sausal Creek for their household use and built a fishing lodge downstream where they caught trout. (The fishing lodge is now a private home on Woodbine Avenue.) What is believed to be one of the oldest oak trees in the United States stands today in Dimond Park beside the little clubhouse. The oak became well-known locally as the "Champagne Oak," after one of Dimond's son Dennis' friends relayed its story. Dennis and his friends used to sneak bottles of champagne from Hugh Dimond's wine cellar and take them down to the banks of Sausal Creek to drink. On one occasion, when they spotted their housekeeper looking for them, the boys stashed the champagne in a hollow in the old oak. Years later, in the 1940s, the adult Dennis, who had moved to Los Angeles, asked one of his friends to look for the bottles, since as far as he knew, no one had ever removed them. There the story ends, but perhaps the old oak still harbors some bubbly secrets. Next to the "champagne oak," the Dimonds built a clubhouse using some of the adobe bricks from the original Peralta hacienda. Although the original clubhouse burned in the 1950s, some of the Peralta bricks were salvaged and used to build the clubhouse that stands on the site today. Dimond Park, Dimond Canyon, Dimond Avenue, and the Dimond District were all named after Hugh Dimond, who was sometimes called the "Western Prince" by local residents because of his lavish hospitality and generous donations to charities.



*Common Alder*

## **The Creek Flows Through Fruitvale's Center: More Estates and Gardens (1879-1900)**

Although upper Fruitvale in the 1870s consisted largely of orchards, cow pastures, beer gardens, and muddy roads, palatial estates lined Fruitvale Avenue itself. Long rows of eucalyptus grew along the street, and palm, magnolia, lemon and orange trees grew upon estate grounds as well as in the yards of the many cottages built near the creek during this time. Sausal Creek is always mentioned in newspaper accounts from the time as running through Fruitvale's center and having created the rich soils upon which the lush gardens flourished. Many footbridges were built across the creek, connecting the gardens of one estate to another; the creek was a place where one went to enjoy "solitude and shade to the heart's content."<sup>6</sup>

During these last decades of the 1800s, the creek was viewed as an amenity that enhanced the beauty of the elaborate gardens along its banks.

In 1879, horticulturist John Sanborn purchased some land near East 17th Street and Fruitvale Avenue. The following year he built his estate next to the creek, which ran through the grounds. Before Sanborn bought the land, it had been a farm worked by Chinese laborers which may have been irrigated with water from the creek. The Chinese had been brought into the area (after building the Transcontinental Railroad) to build Chabot's Temescal reservoir. Although records of the Chinese presence in the Fruitvale area during those years are scarce, some newspaper accounts at the time refer to a Chinese "wash house," located not too far from the Sanborn estate, which may have been one of the first laundries in the area.

Sanborn planted over 130 species of trees and shrubs on his grounds, some of which were believed to be the first of their kind planted in the United States. Although the gardens were private, university students were permitted to visit Sanborn's treasure trove. Sanborn died in 1889, and in 1925 his widow Elisabeth sold the property, (which by this time was so full of trees it was known as Sanborn Woods), to the City of Oakland, which turned it into Sanborn Park. Some of the trees in the park today were probably planted by Sanborn: a giant Sequoia, a magnolia, and several fruit trees.

In 1882, newly-electrified, plushly-cushioned, double-decked Sessions streetcars began to run throughout the Fruitvale District, encouraging even

more people to settle in the Sausal watershed. Like their earlier horse-drawn counterparts, these streetcars continued to take residents and weekend visitors from San Francisco into Dimond Canyon to enjoy serene creekside picnics.

In 1884, to celebrate his oldest daughter Emma's marriage to Alfred Cohen, grain merchant Watson A. Bray built the couple a mansion on 29th Avenue, on a lot which backed onto Sausal Creek. The mansion sat across from Watson's own estate, part of the 160-acre Oak Tree Farm he established in 1859. The Cohen-Bray House stands today, having been named as an official Oakland landmark in 1974 and later added to the National Registry of Historic Places. The creek that once graced its grounds was culverted in the 1980s, prompting Emelita Cohen (Emma's daughter) to complain, in a letter to the Public Works Department, that the culverting of Sausal Creek "removed from our immediate environment a little bit of wilderness which was enjoyed by the residents of the locale, attracted birds and other wildlife to the watercourse and to the surrounding natural cover, and imparted a sense of serenity to the area.."

She lamented the loss of the open creek as a much needed buffer zone, a tranquil refuge in an area suffering from urban blight. Ken Gilliland, Emma's grandson, who still lives in the house, remembers playing in Sausal Creek as a child in the 1920s and catching tadpoles in it at Hawthorne School. He later installed a pump in the creek, to help irrigate the family's vegetable garden. He remembers a very large bay tree that once grew near the creek, which (according to family legend) General Fremont camped beneath.

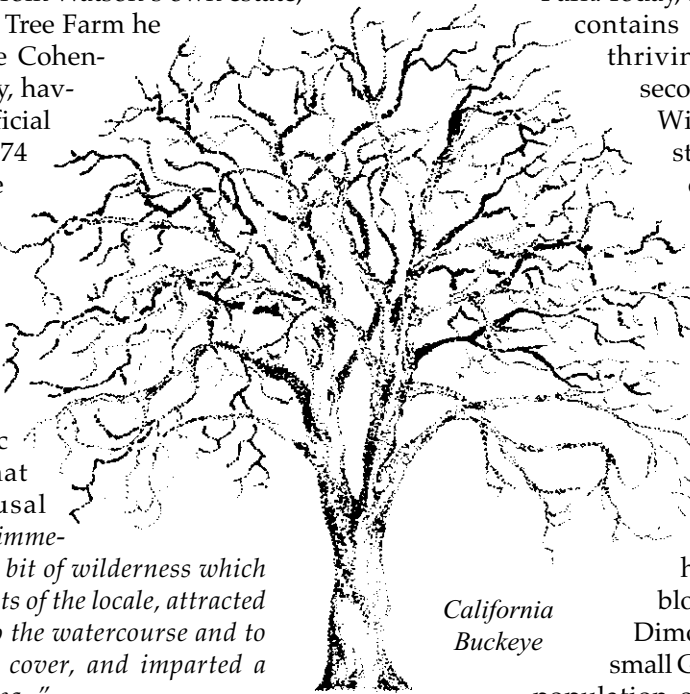
In 1886 the famous poet Joaquin Miller built his abbey high in the hills, along the Palo Seco branch of the creek. Miller hoped the abbey would become a retreat for writers, poets, and artists from all over the world. He planted the hillsides near his home with 75,000 trees, including eucalyptus, acacia, cypress, olive, and Monterey pine. The bewhiskered, white-haired poet often walked along the creek, descending the hills accompanied by his Japanese valet and an old donkey, to buy supplies in the commercial district that was rapidly developing near Fruitvale and MacArthur. In describing the Sausal Creek watershed as he looked down upon it from his estate, he wrote: "I have traveled over most of the world and

I find no spot more beautiful than lies at my feet." The City acquired Miller's property in 1919 and later named it after him. Some of the trees Miller planted still stand today among the native manzanita, madrone, huckleberry, bay laurel, Pacific ninebark, and Coast live oak trees. Native wildflowers such as Douglas iris, California poppy, sticky monkeyflower, silver bush lupine, mariposa lily, cream cups, and golden yarrow still grow throughout Joaquin Miller

Park. Today, the upper Sausal watershed contains the only redwood forest thriving in an urban area: the second and third-growth trees William Gibbons saw just starting to "rehabilitate the devastated slopes" in 1893. These redwoods were saved from developers by concerned citizens in 1928 and made part of Joaquin Miller Park when Oakland purchased them in the 1940s.

In the 1890s, upper Fruitvale, (from just south of MacArthur Boulevard north through the hills and stretching a few blocks to the east and west of Dimond Canyon), looked like a small German town. However, the population of the area was becoming more diverse: in addition to the Chinese who were brought into the area as workers, a number of Scandinavians established themselves in the Sausal Creek watershed. Many started dairies and feed businesses: the area was so rural that, while sitting in classes, school children looked out upon dairy cattle grazing in surrounding pastures. Like the Spanish cattle earlier, these dairy cows quenched their thirst in Sausal Creek's cool waters. A rancher named Thomas Bridge, who owned 15 acres alongside the creek, was said to have brought his best cattle to the creek to drink and to feed on acorns from the still-plentiful oaks near its banks.

In the late 1890s, one of the original German settlers of Fruitvale, Jacob Bold, built a three-bedroom wood-frame home on Minnesota Street. His brother, John Bold, was the proprietor of The Villa, a hotel and saloon at Fruitvale Avenue and East 10th Street. The Bolds played an important role in establishing St. Elizabeth's, one of the first German Catholic churches in Fruitvale. Another German immigrant, Charlie Tepper, opened a creekside hotel and beer garden on the land he bought from Hugh Dimond, at MacArthur between Dimond and Canon Avenues. (The hotel building still stands behind the shops at 2030



California  
Buckeye

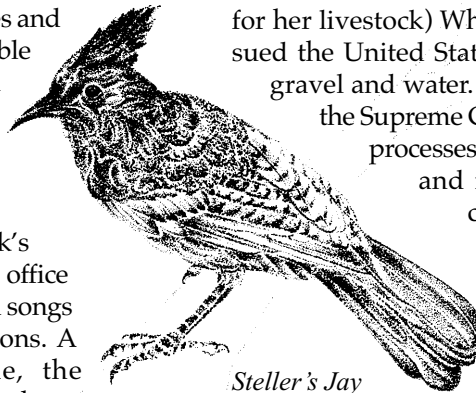
MacArthur Boulevard.) Many residents enjoyed picnics and leisurely afternoons beneath the trees of Tepper's Gardens, next to the creek. On the corner opposite Tepper's stood the infamous Hermitage House, which featured "French dancing girls." At the rear of the hotel was a garden with two cottages and five gazebos, in which some questionable acts allegedly took place. Neighbors and church groups eventually pressured officials into closing the "pleasure palace," and it was quickly replaced by shops. Nearby, other beer gardens, like the Neckhaus, nestled on Sausal Creek's banks, and Bauerhofer's (where a post office sits today), featured German bands and songs and an occasional brawl among patrons. A home for elderly German people, the Altenheim, was built nearby in 1893. The home standing on the site today, however, was built after the original building burned down in 1908. The home's residents today are of many ethnicities.

By the end of the the 1800s, all kinds of businesses had sprung up in Fruit Vale: a meat market, grocery store, dry goods store, post office, boot and shoe repair shop, a wood and coal yard, livery stable, and a blacksmith, drugstore, and barber shop. At Fruit Vale Station (near the site of today's BART station), a heavy wagon bridge was built across the creek so that wagons could load rock (mined from quarries in the hills) onto trains. Fruit Vale Station was also known as "Willow Station" at the time, probably after the nearby willow groves into which the creek meandered (and for which Sausal Creek was named). With the Southern Pacific, the local Fruit Vale and Highland Park, and California Railroad lines running through Fruit Vale Station, Fruit Vale was becoming an even more desirable, accessible place to live.

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### **Altered Flows and Changing Attitudes (1895–1920)**

One of a creek's natural functions is to move sediment, and Sausal Creek is no exception. For years, Sausal Creek had been depositing sand and gravel into San Leandro Bay. In fact, the Alameda County Public Works Department used the creek as a gravel quarry, digging it out each year near Fruitvale Avenue and what is now International Boulevard to a depth of about 25 feet, until the next winter's floods filled it up with gravel again. This project was the catalyst for many discussions on culverting and diverting the "unruly raging torrent" of Sausal Creek. After the creek was culverted and a channel created from the former slough, Alameda became an island, and the flow of Sausal Creek water into the tidal marshlands of Alameda was cut off. For



*Steller's Jay*

many years, Emilie Gibbons Cohen, of the Cohen-Bray family mentioned earlier, used Sausal Creek on her Alameda estate (Fernside) as a supplier of rich gravel and silt (that she used and sold) and fresh water (that she used in natural irrigation to produce green feed for her livestock) When the creek was culverted, she sued the United States for cutting off her supply of gravel and water. However, she lost the case when the Supreme Court ruled that it was the natural processes and characteristics of the creek, and not the implementation of the culvert, that resulted in the change of her gravel and water supply.

After Antonio Peralta died in 1878, his heirs sold his remaining 18 acres to a developer, and the rancho that had become farmland was then subdivided for homes and businesses. And in 1900, when the streetcar lines were upgraded in Fruit Vale, which created better connections with downtown Oakland, more people settled in the Sausal Creek watershed. By 1905, Fruit Vale's population numbered about 16,000. The population increased when the 1906 earthquake brought many refugees from San Francisco to the area. In addition to the influx of earthquake refugees, many of whom were German immigrants, other European Americans settled in Fruit Vale in the early 1900s. Italian Andrew Giambroni, known as the "little mayor of Dimond," ran the Dimond Grocery Store with Caesar Sobrero. Later, Giambroni joined James Anderson, a Danish immigrant, in running a coal yard near Fruit Vale and MacArthur. During this time, Fruit Vale provided fruit, vegetables, bricks, lumber, hay, grain and poultry products to Oakland and San Francisco. The orchards that still existed grew an amazing variety of fruit, but some of the owners now guarded their fruit trees with shotguns on Sundays and holidays when the ever-increasing numbers of residents went on their outings. In addition to apples, pears, peaches, apricots, prunes, plums, and cherries, the rich Sausal Creek soils were now producing pomegranates, loquats, persimmons, nectarines, crab apples, quince, figs, grapes, currants, olives, almonds, walnuts, and chestnuts.

Meanwhile, lower Fruit Vale was becoming more industrial, with a cannery, an oil refinery right at the foot of Sausal Creek, and a number of planing and finishing mills that supplied the lumber for the increasing number of homes and businesses being built. The rural atmosphere of upper "Fruit Vale" ended in 1909, when the City of Oakland annexed the area, paved its dusty roads, and ordered the dairies closed down.

During the early 1900s, many of the old estates and gardens were subdivided into lots for new homes, with real estate agents touting the Fruit Vale area as "one

of the most charming residential districts in Alameda County," a "semi-tropical paradise with the most healthful climate in the world, with flowers and fruit in abundance." Newspaper ads frequently boasted about the soil, a "rich, fertile, alluvial loam well-adapted for growing fruits and vegetables," but, other than the word "alluvial," they no longer credited its source—Sausal Creek. And, as more commercial enterprises developed and residents began to rely on other sources for their water, people forgot about the stream running through their midst.

When World War I broke out, German Americans were treated as second-class citizens and sometimes prevented from speaking German in public. Not surprisingly, many of the beer gardens closed down. During this same time, more Irish and Portuguese immigrants settled in the area. By 1921, the population of Fruit Vale had grown to almost 50,000, the fastest-growing section of Oakland. In 1925, it was Oakland's most populous working class neighborhood: factory workers, firemen, police officers, and street car workers made their homes in the area. Frantic construction of homes continued throughout the 1920s, until most of the remaining huge oaks and redwoods in the lower hills and flatlands disappeared. The new Central Bank built in 1923 replaced the grove of huge cypress, eucalyptus, and redwood trees near 27th and Fruitvale, on the former grounds of John Spring's elegant estate. The Realty Syndicate Company purchased most of the hayfields east of MacArthur and subdivided them into lots for homes. Newspaper ads lured prospective buyers by telling them the land could be used to grow vegetables and berries, raise poultry, pigeons, and rabbits, and "still have room for children!" The area was developed in such a frenzy that the land and "bungalows" consisting of one room were sold as a cheap package deal to get as many people settled in the area as quickly as possible: homeowners were told they could add on to the one-room structures later. As development continued at a rapid pace, the waters of the creek that once provided a place to fish or to enjoy solitude began to change. And as the automobile age began to permanently alter the landscape, replacing the more benign electric trolleys and adding thousands of cars to the watershed's streets, urban runoff consisting of grease and oil from the streets and silt from the land being graded for homes found its way into the creek. The children who still played in the creek no longer found fish in it, as its waters were now too muddy. In 1923, the East Bay Municipal Utility District was formed, and with East Bay cities relying on far-away sources for their water, residents lost their sense of connection with the local creeks. As more creeks and portions of creeks were culverted and put underground, the meaning of "watershed" seemed to disappear. Like many other East Bay creeks, Sausal Creek was gradually losing its identity as a key part of the landscape.

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## Taming the Creek (1930s and '40s)

But in the 1930s and '40s, Sausal Creek demanded attention. Throughout these decades, new commercial development (many banks, and drug and grocery stores) and residential development continued on a large scale. Unfortunately, many builders underestimated both the creek's power and its need to meander, and built homes right on the edge of its banks. As the creek flowed down through the hills, widening and eroding its banks, residents of these homes began to view the creek as their enemy, rather than the "friendly brook" of earlier years.

And with more pavement and rooftops (and less natural vegetation and soil to absorb water), the creek began to run higher and faster during periods of heavy rain.

In 1934, a massive landslide on McKillop Road was blamed on Sausal Creek. The Army Corps of Engineers attempted to sub-

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*Not everyone  
agreed with these  
efforts to control  
the creek. Resi-  
dents complained  
vociferously in the  
local papers,  
accusing the WPA  
of ruining the once  
beautiful, natural  
stream bed.*



due the creek with concrete, and throughout the '30s and '40s, many more attempts were made to "control" the creek. The Works Progress Administration tried to contain the creek with cement "walls" and poured concrete in its bed in an attempt to slow its flow. The dates of these projects (1939-1940) were stamped into the cement and can be seen today at various spots along the creek in Dimond Canyon. Railroad tracks were used to create blockades in the creek, as people were attempting to drive up the newly-paved creekbed. (Today these railroad track "blockades" act as dams for trash, which collects behind them.) And the concrete that was supposed to slow the creek did not: over the years, the creek has swept around and underneath the concrete structures, leaving gaps between them and the flowing water of the creek. At mid-Dimond canyon, a concrete "flume" was poured into the side of one of the hills, probably in an effort to control erosion from a rivulet (the rivulet has since found a new path down the hill to the creek). Not everyone agreed with these efforts to control the creek. Residents complained vo-

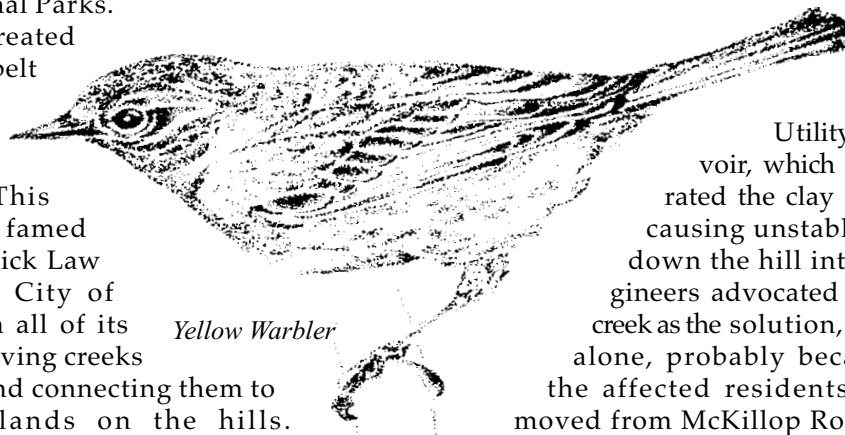
ciferously in the local papers, accusing the WPA of ruining the once beautiful, natural stream bed. A sewer pipe was installed next to and sometimes under the creek; today its contents leach at times into the creek's waters.

Despite all of the concrete and structural efforts to "control" it, the creek overflowed its banks in the heavy rains of 1995, flooding Dimond Park. In fact, the concrete channels, bed and "check dams" keep the creek from developing its natural floodplain and actually contribute to faster flows, backups and flooding.

In the 1940s, the City of Oakland acquired more of the land that we enjoy today as public open space, including properties connecting Dimond Park with Joaquin Miller and Redwood Regional Parks.

These acquisitions created a continuous greenbelt from the center of Fruitvale into over 2,000 acres of redwood forest. This greenbelt was what famed urban planner Frederick Law Olmsted urged the City of Oakland to create in all of its watersheds, by preserving creeks and riparian zones and connecting them to surrounding parklands on the hills.

Unfortunately, his advice was not heeded in most of the other watersheds, making the preservation of the Sausal Creek greenbelt quite an amazing feat. Yet even this environmental foresight did not stop a plan from being concocted in 1946 to dam Sausal Creek in upper Dimond Canyon at the intersection of the Palo Seco and Shepherd branches. The lake created by the dam was to be twice the size of Lake Temescal (which was formed by damming Temescal Creek) and would offer recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and swimming, as well as provide "irrigation" for Dimond Park (a somewhat incongruous idea since plants growing near creeks usually thrive without supplemental water). "Inspiration Lake" was to be backed by a concrete dam 80 feet high and 350 feet long, and built at a cost of \$300,000. Fortunately, that "inspiration" never became a reality. Instead, in 1950, the Montclair Golf Course was built, and Sausal Creek was buried beneath the driving range. The creek, (flowing underground in its culvert), is evidenced by a depression in the lawn the length of the range. Plans to culvert Sausal Creek in Dimond Park (near the swimming pool) to make more room for recreation were also made at this time.



*Yellow Warbler*

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## Urbanization Continues (1950s and '60s)

After World War II, more homes and apartment buildings were built in the Sausal Creek watershed. More paved roads and more rooftops meant more impermeable surfaces adding runoff to the creek's waters. And with more people and buildings and problems from those buildings being built too close to the creek, came more cries to control the creek. By 1956, most of McKillop Road had slid down the hillside into the creek, and more than a dozen homes were relocated. While some residents blamed the creek, others believed the cause of the slide to

be the nearby East Bay Municipal Utility District reservoir, which may have saturated the clay soil beneath it, causing unstable earth to slip down the hill into the creek. Engineers advocated culverting the creek as the solution, but it was left alone, probably because many of the affected residents had already moved from McKillop Road.

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## More Construction and Culverts (1970s and '80s)

In 1977, under a government program to promote jobs, a 90-foot redwood suspension bridge was built across Sausal Creek near Monterey Boulevard. The bridge was an "amazing" structure, according to one park ranger, but it quickly became a bit too popular with local teenagers, who jumped up and down on the walkway, causing it to sway precariously and earning it the nickname "Hell Bridge." Although the bridge was only 15 feet above the creek, it was evidently not well-designed, and the City decided the bridge had to go. A concrete pad that anchored the bridge can still be seen in the creekbed.

In the 1980s, some of the few remaining open sections of Sausal Creek west of MacArthur Boulevard were put underground, including the open section behind the Cohen-Bray mansion. In 1980, the section of creek near 17th and Fruitvale that once flowed through farmland, later the grand Sanborn gardens, and eventually Sanborn Park, was put underground: "steep banks" and safety concerns cited as the reasons. In the heavy rains of the early



'80s, the battle with Sausal Creek continued along other parts of the creek. Residents of homes built too close to the creek worried as the stream eroded retaining walls and foundations. Although those residents wanted the creek culverted, other neighbors, concerned about how culverts would impact the creek's ecology, prevented several culverting projects. As a compromise, the Soil Conservation Service placed tiered cement bags in several places along the creek where homes stood right on the edge of its banks.

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## The Sausal Creek Watershed Today

Today, rock doves from France (pigeons) and European starlings live in the watershed alongside native scrub jays and western flycatchers. On the hillsides, non-native Himalayan blackberry intertwines itself with California blackberry, and German ivy competes with native manroot. European white birches grow alongside native alders, and fox squirrels compete with native western gray squirrels. While the watershed is far from pristine, the natural areas that still exist offer its residents, both human and animal, sanctuary from the stresses of urban life. Despite its many culverted sections, the creek still flows above ground for about half of its length. While following the trail alongside the creek in Joaquin Miller Park and Dimond Canyon, it can be easy to forget you are in the middle of urban Oakland. The whispers of bush-tits are everywhere; if you watch carefully, you may even catch a glimpse of these secretive tiny brown birds flitting through the wild lilac on the canyon

sides chasing insects. Higher up in Dimond Canyon, and on into Joaquin Miller Park, underneath the towering redwoods, in air that is hushed and cool, you feel calmed. The delicious smells of the forest floor, of mosses and decaying leaves, pervade the air. Enormous bay trees bow out over the creek in wide arches, echoing the lines of the Leimert Avenue Bridge. Black phoebes call to each other and fly low over the water, catching insects. Down in the water, backswimmers make tiny ripples in the water. Damselflies glint bright blue in the filtered sunlight, and cliff swallows playfully circle and swoop above the creek, even in urbanized Dimond Park. Brown towhees hop through

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*... underneath the towering redwoods, in air that is hushed and cool, you feel calmed. The delicious smells of the forest floor, of mosses and decaying leaves, pervade the air.*



Redwood

the leaf litter, just as they have done since before the first humans lived here.

In 1939, a writer in the Oakland Tribune angrily accused the Works Progress Administration of ruining Dimond Canyon with its park and creek "improvement projects" by cutting down the oaks and denuding the hillsides. Yet, walking through the canyon today, one can see that native trees are springing up and the hills have begun to heal. The creek will eventually do the same, but it could use your help.

Today, there is new interest in preserving Sausal Creek, the verdant ribbon that for the past century has tied together so many of Fruitvale's parks and neighborhoods, and survived all of the changes around it. The Friends of Sausal Creek, a citizens' group of creek supporters, meets monthly to discuss plans to preserve and restore the creek. The Friends remove ivy and clear trash out of the creek on a regular basis, and many people are interested in bringing the creek above ground in additional areas where possible. If the creek is restored, native amphibians like the Pacific tree frog could be reintroduced into various sections of the creek, along with the native three-spined stickleback, a fish that thrives in other East Bay streams. Students in nearby elementary schools are studying the creek and writing about it. On a recent tour of the watershed, local residents excitedly described the baby ducklings they observed in the creek this past spring.

Today, the Sausal Creek Watershed is home to approximately 80,000 residents of diverse cultures: African Americans, Asian Americans, Caucasians, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, and American Indians. Sausal Creek provides a way

for these residents to connect to a piece of something more wild than the grocery stores, drugstores, banks, and other commercial structures surrounding them. That need of residents—to connect to something wild and natural—may help explain why Sausal Creek still flows openly in as many sections as it does ("unruliness" aside).

Recent biological surveys indicate that, especially if preserved and restored, the creek could support more diversity—of birds, amphibians, mammals, plants, and insects. Riparian habitats are endangered in California; only five percent of our original streamside habitat remains. Preserving Sausal Creek would provide habitat for a number



of creatures in trouble, like the Cooper's hawk or the migratory songbirds that rely on riparian areas to survive the seasons they spend here.

Like its watershed, Sausal Creek has been transformed and altered. But, whether welcomed as a "babbling brook" or feared and fought as a "raging, unruly torrent," the creek continues to carve its path into the land and into history. With a little help from its human neighbors and groups like the Friends of Sausal Creek, it will do so for centuries to come.

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### **Text Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Although this author found no specific references to the Native Californians living along Sausal Creek, the information in this section derives from what is generally known about Native Californians in the East Bay.

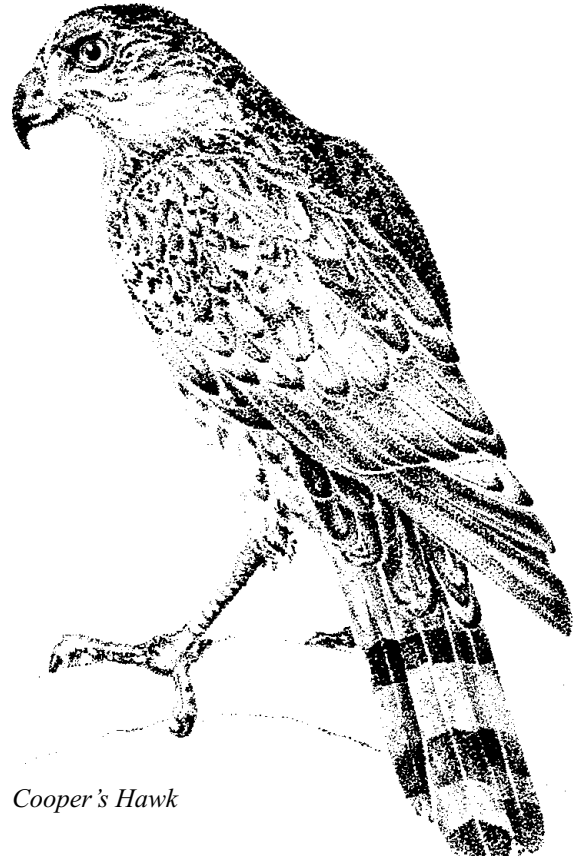
<sup>2</sup> From "The Redwoods in the Oakland Hills," by William P. Gibbons, M.D., *Erythea* 1:161-66, August 1893, as reprinted in the *Oakland Miscellany*, Vol.1, Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library

<sup>3</sup> *History of Rural Alameda County*, Hinkel, Edger J. and McCann, William E., eds. (1937) Oakland Works Progress Administration: Alameda County Library

<sup>4</sup> *The California Recollections of Caspar T. Hopkins*, as reprinted in the Fall 1986 *Oakland Heritage Alliance News*, from the *California Historical Society Quarterly* 27:71-73 (1948).

<sup>5</sup> *Oakland Daily Times*, August 15, 1878

<sup>6</sup> *Oakland Daily Times*, August 15, 1878



*Cooper's Hawk*

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## A Selected Bibliography

Much of the historical information in this booklet, including descriptions of the Dimond District, Dimond Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Sanborn Park, and Fruitvale, and various short quotations that are not footnoted, were compiled from newspaper articles in the clippings files of the Oakland History Room (Oakland Public Library) as well as from microfiche articles from the 1870s through the present. Many of these articles are indexed in the Oakland History Room and can be found on microfilm in the Newspaper Room at the Oakland Public Library. Copies of most of these articles are also on file with the Aquatic Outreach Institute, in the Sausal Creek Master File. Notes from talks given in the summer of 1996 by Steven LaVoie, Oakland Tribune Historian, at Friends of Sausal Creek and Dimond Improvement Association meetings were also used.

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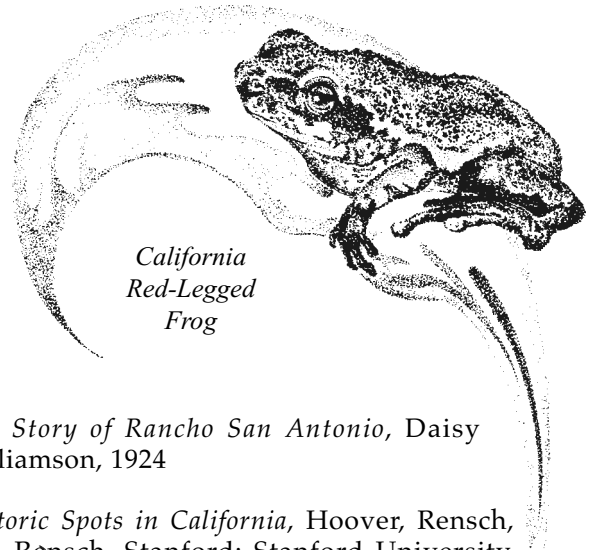
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***For additional information about early European settlement of the Sausal Creek watershed and Alameda County in general, plus maps:***

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## What You Can Do at Home to Help Protect the Sausal Creek Watershed

*Everyday activities can harm local waterways. It is especially important to be careful if you live near a creek. Remember, only rain down the storm drain.*

### Automotive

- Recycling your oil is easy and healthy for the environment! Call the City of Oakland for a free curbside oil recycling kit.
- Wash your car on the lawn so that runoff will not go into storm drains or better yet, use a commercial car wash.
- Keep your car in tune and fix any leaks.

### Household

- Switch to less toxic cleaning products, and use alternative, inexpensive cleansers such as borax, baking soda, or vinegar mixed with lemon and water.
- Dispose of your trash wisely. For your recyclables use Oakland's curbside recycling program.

### Lawn and Garden

- Sweep leaves away from the creek. Compost or use the green yard trimmings cart for curbside recycling.
- Divert rain spouts and garden hoses from paved surfaces onto grass so the water can filter through the soil.
- Dispose of animal wastes in the garbage.
- If you must use pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, use them carefully and sparingly. Do not over water or apply if rain is forecast.

### Landscape with Native Plants

- No fertilizers or pesticides are necessary.
- Native plants provide food, habitat and shelter for native insects, birds and mammals.
- Less water is required for native plants to thrive.
- Fewer herbicides are needed to control growth because natives are less invasive than introduced plants.

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## Important Phone Numbers

### Reporting Spills and Dumping

- Immediate hazard .....911
- Pollution or debris in creek.....238-7630

### Storm Drain Stenciling

- To volunteer.....238-6600

### City of Oakland Sewer Maintenance

- Sewer spills and storm drain flooding.....615-5566

### Oakland Recycles

- Free oil recycling kit, yard trimmings & recycling information.....238-SAVE

### Household Hazardous Waste

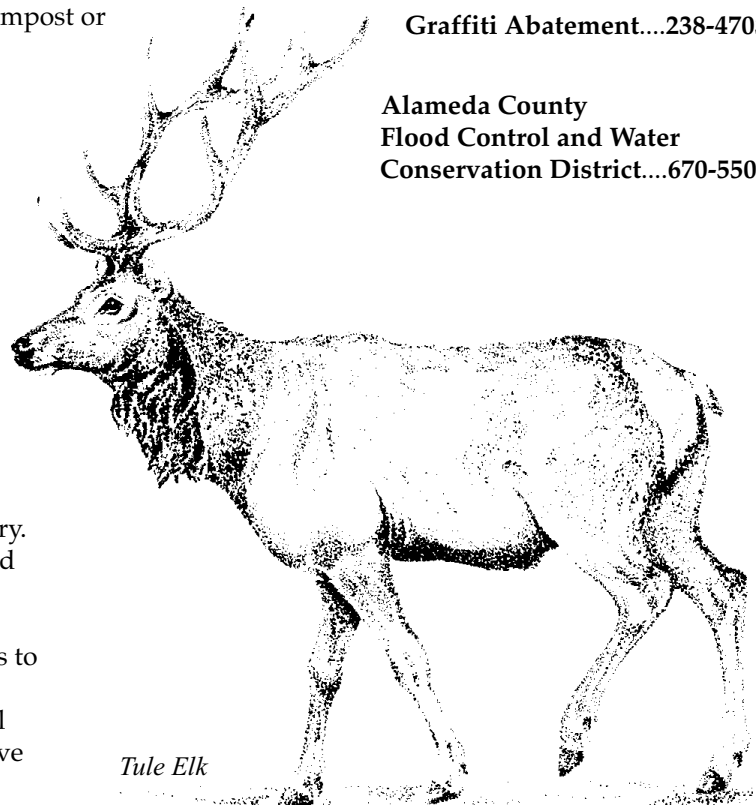
- Disposal.....1-800-606-6606

### Clean Creeks Campaign

- Adopt-A-Creek
- Community cleanups & greening.....238-7630

Graffiti Abatement....238-4703

Alameda County  
Flood Control and Water  
Conservation District....670-5500



*Tule Elk*

## Other Residents of the Sausal Creek Watershed

### Birds\*

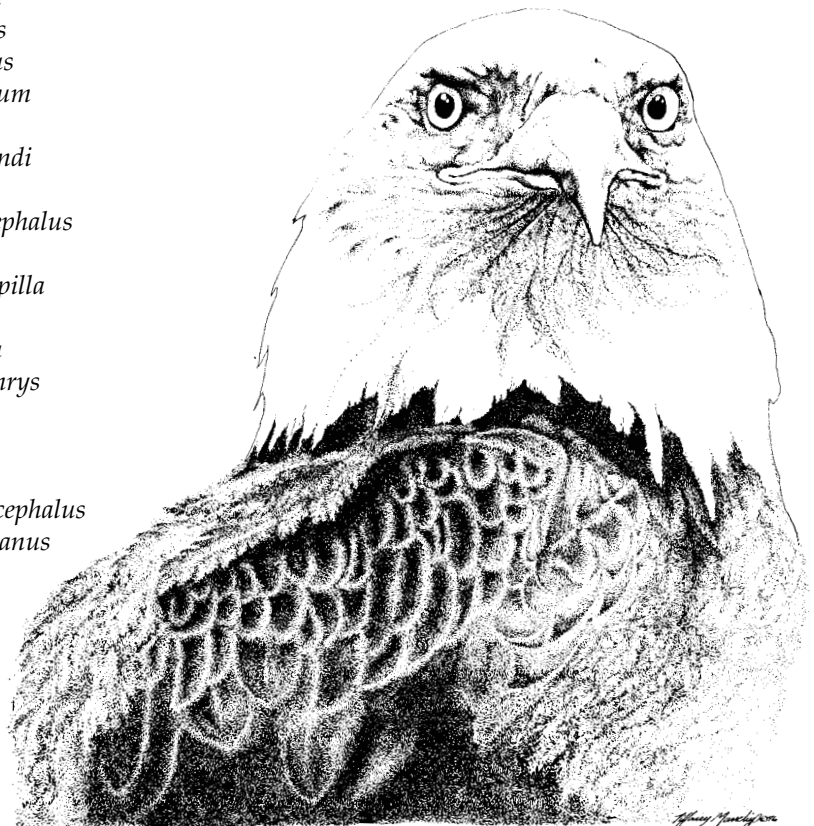
Common Name	Scientific Name
Cooper's hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperi</i>
red-shouldered hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
turkey vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
mourning dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
Allen's hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>
Anna's hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>
rufous hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>
downy woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>
red-shafted flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
black phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
cliff swallow	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>
violet-green swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalissina</i>
common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
scrub jay	<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>
Stellar's jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>
chestnut-backed chickadee	<i>Parus rufescens</i>
plain titmouse	<i>Parus inornatus</i>
bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
red-breasted nuthatch	<i>Sitta canadensis</i>
brown creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>
Bewick's wren	<i>Thyromanes bewickii</i>
house wren	<i>Troglodytes aedin</i>
wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>
ruby-crowned kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>
northern mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
cedar waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
solitary vireo	<i>Vireo solitarius</i>
Townsend's warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>
Wilson's warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>
Brewer's blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>
fox sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>
golden-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>
house sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
white-crowned sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>
brown towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>
spotted towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>
dark-eyed junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
black-headed grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>
house finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
American goldfinch	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>

\*Birds are listed in the order they appear in Peterson's *A Field Guide to Western Birds*.

### Aquatic Insects

Common Name	Order
aquatic worm	<i>Oligochaeta</i>
caddisfly	<i>Trichoptera</i>
damsel fly	Suborder <i>Zygoptera</i>
dragonfly	Suborder <i>Anisoptera</i>
mayfly	<i>Ephemeroptera</i>
mosquito	<i>Diptera</i>
mite	<i>Arachnida</i>
rifle beetle	<i>Coleoptera</i>
sowbug	<i>Isopoda</i>
stonefly	<i>Plecoptera</i>
true fly	<i>Diptera</i>

Insect list from the Friends of Sausal Creek volunteer monitoring surveys.



Bald Eagle

## Native Plants

### ANNUALS

milk maids  
miner's lettuce

*Cardamine californica*  
*Claytonia parviflora*

### FERNS

polypody  
bracken fern  
Ca. maidenhair  
coastal wood fern  
coffee fern  
five-finger fern  
goldback fern  
western lady fern  
western sword fern

*Polypodium calirhiza*  
*Pteridium aquilinum*  
*Adiantum jordanii*  
*Dryopteris arguta*  
*Pellaea andromedifolia*  
*Adiantum aleuticum*  
*Pentagramma triangularis*  
*Athyrium filix-femina*  
*Polystichum munitum*

### PERENNIALS

Ca. figwort  
Ca. fuchsia  
Ca. man-root  
Ca. poppy  
Caterpillar flower  
climbing bedstraw  
coast man-root  
cow parsnip  
elk-clover  
fairly bells  
false Solomon's seal  
giant trillium  
hedge nettle  
horsetail  
hound's tongue  
mugwort  
Pacific pea  
purple needlegrass  
redwood sorrel  
rush  
sedge  
soap plant  
star flower  
thimbleberry  
vetch  
violet  
watercress  
white trillium  
wild ginger  
wood cicely  
wood strawberry  
yarrow  
yerba buena  
zigadene

*Scrophularia californica*  
*Epilobium canum*  
*Marah fabaceus*  
*Eschscholzia californica*  
*Phacelia sp.*  
*Galium porrigens*  
*Marah oreganus*  
*Heracleum lanatum*  
*Aralia californica*  
*Disporum hookeri*  
*Smilacina racemosa*  
*Trillium chloropetalum*  
*Stachys ajugoides*  
*Equisteum sp.*  
*Cynoglossum grande*  
*Artemisia douglasiana*  
*Lathyrus vestitus*  
*Nassella pulchra*  
*Oxalis oregana*  
*Juncus patens*  
*Carex sp.*  
*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*  
*Trientalis latifolia*  
*Rubus parviflorus*  
*Vicia sp.*  
*Viola ssp.*  
*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*  
*Trillium ovatum*  
*Asarum caudatum*  
*Osmorhiza chilensis*  
*Fragaria vesca*  
*Achillea millefolium*  
*Satureja douglasii*  
*Zigadenus fremontii*



Coast Live Oak

### SHRUBS

arroyo willow  
blue elderberry  
blue witch  
bush lupine  
bush monkeyflower  
Ca. barberry  
Ca. hazelnut  
Ca. huckleberry  
Ca. lilac  
Ca. sagebrush  
canyon gooseberry  
chamise  
coast silk-tassle  
cotoneaster  
coyote brush  
creeping snowberry  
dogwood  
hillside gooseberry  
ninebark  
ocean spray  
oso berry  
pallid manzanita  
poison oak  
red-flowering currant  
snowberry  
western leatherwood

*Salix lasiolepis*  
*Sambucus mexicana*  
*Solanum umbelliferum*  
*Lupinus albifrons*  
*Mimulus aurantiacus*  
*Berberis pinnata*  
*Corylus cornuta*  
*Vaccinium ovatum*  
*Ceanothus sp.*  
*Artemisia californica*  
*Ribes menziesii*  
*Adenostema fasciculatum*  
*Garrya elliptica*  
*Cotoneaster pannosa*  
*Baccharis pilularis*  
*Symphoricarpos mollis*  
*Cornus sp.*  
*Ribes californicum*  
*Physocarpus capitatus*  
*Holodiscus discolor*  
*Oemleria cerasiformis*  
*Arctostaphylos pallida*  
*Toxicodendron diversilobum*  
*Ribes sanguineum*  
*Symphoricarpos albus*  
*Dirca occidentalis*

### TREES

big-leaf maple  
Ca. bay  
Ca. buckeye  
coast live oak  
coast redwood  
interior live oak  
Pacific madrone  
red willow  
scrub oak  
toyon  
white alder

*Acer macrophyllum*  
*Umbellularia californica*  
*Aesculus californica*  
*Quercus agrifolia*  
*Sequoia sempervirens*  
*Quercus wislizenii*  
*Arbutus menziesii*  
*Salix laevigata*  
*Quercus berberidifolia*  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia*  
*Alnus rhombifolia*

### VINES

Ca. blackberry  
Ca. honeysuckle

*Rubus ursinus*  
*Lonicera hispidula*

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## About the Friends of Sausal Creek

Formed in 1996, the Friends of Sausal Creek are a group of community members protecting Sausal Creek at a grassroots level. The Friends recognize that citizen participation, from residents to decision-makers, teachers, and students, is critical for building long-term commitment to protect a community's natural resources.

The Friends' mission is to "promote awareness and appreciation of the Sausal Creek Watershed; to inspire action to restore and protect the creek and its watershed; and to obtain recognition for the creek as an important natural and community resource."

The Friends have identified five broad goals:

- be an educational resource about the creek
- build membership and make the Friends an effective, self-sustaining organization
- increase opportunities for experiencing and enjoying the creek
- be a legal and regulatory advocate for the creek
- assess the natural resources and restore the native flora and fauna of the creek.

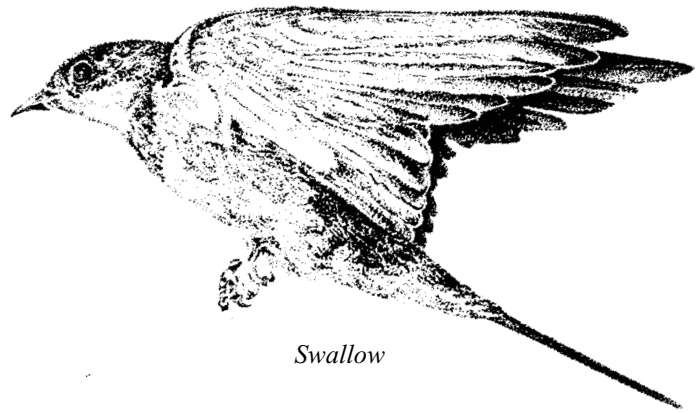
The Friends meet every month (except July) to share information and plan activities. Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. at the Dimond Branch Library in Oakland. Community creek workdays are held on the Saturday following the monthly meetings, at Dimond Park, from 9:00 A.M. to noon. Workdays have been spent restoring 35,000 square feet of the park by creating a Native Plant Demonstration Garden and revegetating the creek corridor with native plants. The Friends are also actively involved in monitoring the water quality of the creek, inventorying bird populations, and sampling for aquatic insects.

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## About the Aquatic Outreach Institute

The Aquatic Outreach Institute creates and carries out involvement and outreach programs on creeks, wetlands, and watersheds for the general public as well as creating programs specifically targeted for educators in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Aquatic Outreach Institute's mission is *to increase public understanding of the effects of human impacts upon the estuary, to promote and encourage understanding and appreciation of our aquatic resources, and to foster an awareness of the need for responsible stewardship of these resources.*

AOI serves local government and the general public primarily through several Watershed Awareness Programs, in which strong community groups that advocate for and take direct action in the stewardship of local natural resources are developed. AOI also works with kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers, college professors, museum staff,



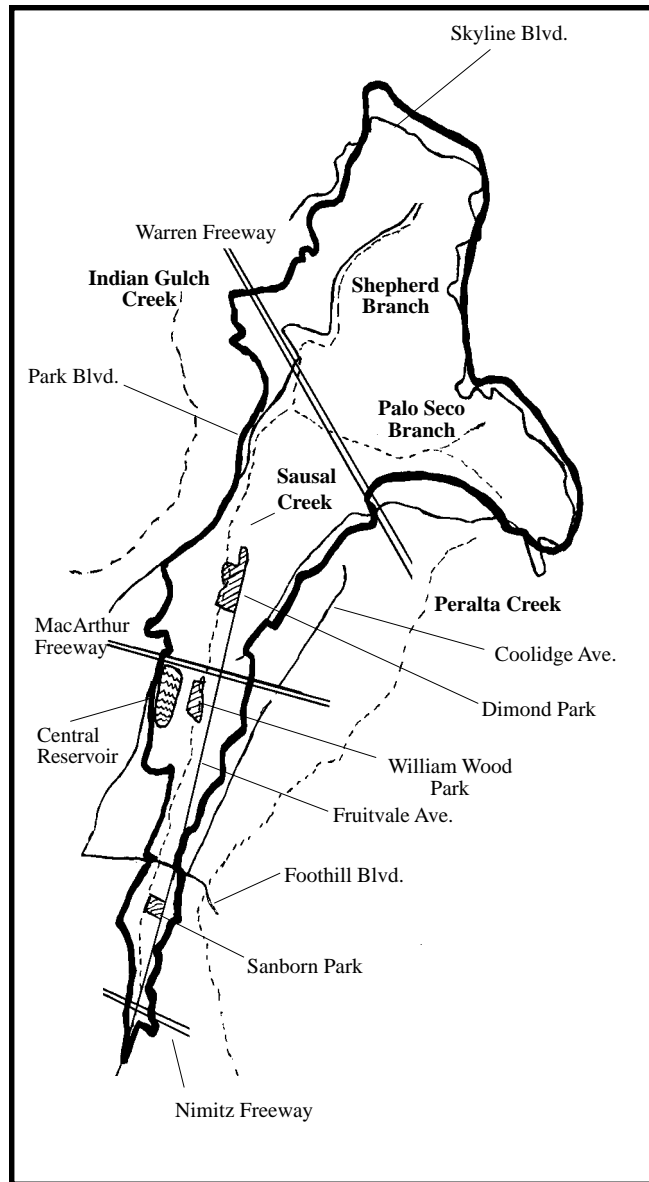
Swallow

docents, and other facilitators involved in environmental education, providing them with training and materials that can be used to increase their own and their students' understanding of the use, protection, and management of aquatic resources. By sharing information on creeks, watersheds, and the bay and delta, and by providing a means to communicate this information, AOI empowers present and future stewards of the San Francisco Estuary with an enlightened environmental ethic and the confidence and skills to actively participate in decisions affecting the protection and use of natural resources.

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## A Special Thanks

The Friends of Sausal Creek are grateful to Lisa Owens-Viani, who donated her time to research and write this booklet. Lisa spent countless hours reading newspapers on microfiche at the library and interviewing longtime residents of the Sausal Creek watershed in order to make this booklet an accurate account of the past. Many thanks also to Tiffany Manchip who, after reading an early draft of the booklet, kindly donated the illustrations which complement the text so wonderfully. A special thanks to AOI interns Janet Javar and Laurie Gold, who helped Program Coordinator Brenda Chatfield with the layout and design of the booklet. Thanks to all of the reviewers, including Kathy Kramer and Anne Hayes of the Aquatic Outreach Institute, who read drafts of the booklet and helped ensure it was accurate and enjoyable for all readers. A very special thanks to the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program; both have supported Watershed Awareness Programs on San Leandro and Sausal Creeks, and to the City of Oakland, which has supported the Friends of Sausal Creek in all of their efforts. Without the assistance of these agencies, the Friends would not be able to achieve their goals.



## The Sausal Creek Watershed

