

Governor Pardee House
672 Eleventh Street
Oakland, Alameda County
California

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
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GOVERNOR PARDEE HOUSE

Oakland, Alameda County, California

ADDRESS: 672 Eleventh Street
OWNER: Misses Helen and Madeline Pardee
OCCUPANT: Misses Helen and Madeline Pardee
USE: Residence

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Pardee house was built by a pioneer Californian, Dr. Enoch Homer Pardee. It was occupied later by his son, Dr. George Cooper Pardee. Both men were physicians who had a strong interest in politics. Each served the City of Oakland as Mayor, and George Cooper Pardee was Governor of California (1903-1907). With their wives and families, the Drs. Pardee made the Eleventh Street house into an important social center of the East Bay and California. Constructed soon after the earthquake of 1868, the residence is a notable three story example of Italianate architecture. Occupying almost a half city block and set amidst handsomely planted grounds with period garage house at the rear; this is one of the few later 19th century private dwellings still standing in central Oakland. The Misses Helen and Madeline Pardee, daughters of Dr. George C. Pardee, maintain the building and grounds in immaculate order.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Enoch Homer Pardee was born in Rochester, New York, April 1, 1829. With his French father and German mother, he went to Michigan at the age of seven. Becoming afflicted with an eye disease which almost blinded him, Enoch Homer Pardee found a cure from Dr. Bigelow in Detroit, with whom he subsequently worked and learned the secret of

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the cure. He began his formal medical schooling at the University of Michigan, but interrupted it to go to California - arriving on the steamer Panama, in 1849, at San Diego. By January of the next year, he was in San Francisco and began a practice of medicine in various locations, specializing in eye conditions. Although he had as many as eighty to one hundred and forty patients a day, Enoch Homer Pardee felt the lack of full medical training, and returned to Chicago in 1865 to achieve that end. He went to Oakland in 1867; and finding the climate to his liking, he built his handsome new house on Eleventh Street soon after the earthquake of 1868. Although he continued to practice medicine, he increasingly was drawn to politics. An ardent Republican he became Mayor of Oakland in 1876. In 1855, he had married a girl, also named Pardee. George Cooper Pardee was born in 1857; his mother died in 1870.

George Cooper Pardee, who did not have quite the rough and tumble youth of his father (a quondam gold miner, who left the mines in 1851 with a pile of \$12,000 or \$15,000), was born in San Francisco on July 25, 1857. Like his father, he was an active sportsman. His father had been reknowned as one of the world's great marksmen of his time; George Cooper Pardee inclined more to the sport of baseball. He graduated in the famous class of 1879, from the University of Leipzig. Returning to Oakland, in 1885, he married and began practicing medicine in both Oakland and San Francisco. Like his father, he was deeply interested and committed to a conservative political position. He soon became Mayor of Oakland, and in 1902 was elected to a term (1903-1907) as Governor of California. Disillusioned by the machinations of the Southern Pacific's "machine" in 1907, he changed to a more progressive political attitude. It was during his tenure as Governor that the San Francisco earthquake occurred, and Dr. George Cooper Pardee won wide acclaim for his on-the-spot devotion to restoring the devastated cities of the bay area. He was also a dedicated conservationist and student of California's water problems. A large dam in the Sierra foothills was named for him in the 1930's. George Cooper Pardee's marriage to Helen N. Penniman on January 25, 1887 was a long and happy one; four daughters were born of this marriage, and two of them (Helen and Madeline) occupy the family home today.

The history of the Pardee House is less richly filled with fact than the lives of its occupants. It was built soon after a serious earthquake, which particularly affected the East Bay - in October of 1868. The property had been purchased on January 13, 1868.

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Dr. Enoch Homer Pardee's name first appears in an Oakland City Directory in 1869, at the Eleventh Street address. During construction, the Pardees lived in a small house on the corner of Castro and Eleventh - since demolished. Across Castro, on the north side of the street, was a large house stylistically related to ^{the} Pardee house but probably built later. It formed the nucleus of a group of buildings owned by the Seventh Day Adventists (including their Pacific Press) in the 1890's - but they have since moved to Mountain View. Jane and Peder Sather's house was on the east side of Twelfth Street, across from Pardee's carriage house. George Cooper Pardee inherited the house and land from his father in early 1898; and the house is still listed in the telephone book under his name, although he died in 1941 and Mrs. Helen Penniman Pardee died in 1945.¹

NOTE (Historical Information)

1. The Misses Helen and Madeline Pardee were exceedingly generous and hospitable; many family stories were recalled on these visits, and an open inspection of the house was possible under the most pleasant personal conditions. Of interest are the portraits of Enoch Homer Pardee and his wife by Charles Christian Nahl, in the living room; there is also a pair of portraits of Enoch Homer and George Cooper Pardee by an unknown artist, in a nearby parlor. The name of the builder was tantalizingly close in memory, but could not be recalled by either sister. (Gibson?)

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS AND SOURCES

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Halley, William. The Centennial Year Book of Alameda County, California, Oakland, William Halley, 1876, pp. 538-540 (Enoch Homer Pardee).

Oakland Tribune, May 6, 1945 and December 31, 1961 (articles by Virginia Koontz and article in Knave section, respectively).

Poulton, Shirley. "The Pardee Residence" Paper submitted by Art 188B, University of California, Davis, January 8, 1962. (This acknowledges information supplied by Albert E. Norman of Oakland, who also has an old stereo view of the house.)

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Staniford, Edward F. "Administration of George C. Pardee"
PHD Thesis for History Department, University of California,
Berkeley, California (copy on the Bancroft Library).

Who's Who in California, 1928-1929, p. 230 (George Cooper Pardee).

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

EXTERIOR

The Pardee house is of redwood, on a brick foundation. Horizontal exterior boards have been scored to make them appear rusticated - a common practice in 18th century New England. At the corners are wooden quoins, simulating blocks of stone. Originally painted a sand-gray with red trim (the quoins), the house is now all white. Stylistically, this is an exceptionally well preserved example of the Italianate. The massing appears symmetrical, viewing the facade from the exterior; the extreme right and left portions of the house (slightly stepped back from the main central mass) are reworkings of old porch space, after the house was first constructed. Interiorly, the plan is less symmetrical in effect, although there is still a pronounced emphasis on a "centralizing" hall running from front to back, with stairs in the middle of this long corridor.

Seven wood steps lead up to the small entrance porch, with wood spur walls framing the steps. (Wood urns which occupied framing positions at the bottom of these spur walls were removed in 1965, as they had rotted;) The porch proper has wood Corinthian columns (at the front) and pilasters (attached to the house walls) which "hold up" a small balcony at the second level. The details of this porch of the 1860's, as one notes particularly in Sacramento, are more correctly Classical than the ornament on the house itself. Modillions at the cornice level and capital parts are carefully studied. The balusters of the balcony balustrade are a trifle squat, but follow acceptable Georgian models. A large arch rises above the front door, which consists of two glazed and wood leaves with a semicircular fan light above. Thus far it could be a late Georgian house from Portsmouth, New Hampshire or Salem, Massachusetts.

The main windows of the first floor front, however, reveal the Italianate vogue. Tall, slender double-hung windows, with paired arched tops, are grouped beneath a Mannerist pattern of elongated

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consoles and pseudo-keystones supporting a flattened pediment (filled with classicizing anthemion-like ornament). The windows are framed in tall, paneled pilasters, and smaller consolettes seem to support these pilasters, below the window sill. In the second level, front, lower paired arched windows occur in the center, behind the balcony; and rectangular windows are squeezed up into the cornice level at the sides. The cornice departs from the Classical correctness of the porch; regular modillions, in groups of two, are spaced by elongated consoles, which are used again in the cornice of the broken pediment at the second level center and in the cupola at the top of the house - rising above a hipped roof, now covered in asphalt shingles. In the cupola, the pattern of windows is based on a simple arched type with double-hung form - two arched windows in the center grouped together with smaller arched windows at the side.

The sides of the house are related to the facade, although here the window pattern is less elaborate due to the presence of slanted bays - a feature more commonly seen in the 1870's in California. These bays have tall, arched windows flanked by very thin pipestem colonnettes; the arched window type is used elsewhere on the sides of the house. (Extra interior space was gained at some unknown period in the later 19th century when front, side porches were made into enclosed rooms. Stylistic ornamental matching was careful, to accord with the design of the main structure; arched windows on the first floor and squeezed rectangular windows in the second echo types in the main central mass of the building.) Brick chimneys indicate the position of interior fireplaces (they were never used after 1906; they smoked badly before, due to wind direction, and were rarely used then). Flattened hipped roof sections above the new additions at the front, sides, echo and continue the main roof.

INTERIOR

On the first and second floors, a complete repainting was effected by W. J. Sloane and Company in 1956. (Mrs. Helen Penniman Pardee could not stand the smell of paint; and furthermore her collection proclivities made any major moving of objects difficult.) New hardwood floors were installed on the second floor, and the first was fully carpeted. Since the Sloane decorator simply rearranged the old furniture and the many objets d'art in the house, the present effect is a more orderly version of former interiors - and certainly, more attractive. Most of the furniture is 19th century,

although not all American of manufacture. (The dining room suite was purchased in the 20th century, from the possessions of von Bopp, a German representative in San Francisco - jailed in World War I.) Some of the furniture "came across the Isthmus".¹

The house is built on a symmetrical plan with glazed double entrance doors opening to a foyer, beyond which is the stair hall separated from the foyer by an arched opening. The stairway is approached from the rear of the hall and doubles back to the second floor from a midway landing. Originally there was a "pent" over the stair hall which was filled in by Mrs. George Cooper Pardee to prevent children from falling through. Near the rear of the hall is a fine stained glass door. To the left (north) of the foyer are a large parlor and another room, made from the old porch, to the rear of which is a dining room with octagonal bay, and kitchen (now divided into wash room and kitchen). To the right (south) of the hall is another parlor with an enclosed porch beyond. (On the facade wall of this parlor is the doctor's medicine cabinet; apparently this room was used as his office.) To the rear are a large library-sitting room (a subordinate hall parallel to the main hall leading from the front parlor or office to the rear of the house was incorporated into this room) and a library (now used for book and other storage) and the present servant's room and bath between library and rear hall. A back porch opens off the main stair hall. On the second level, also with a central hall, there are now five bedrooms and three baths. There was originally only one bathroom, at the rear of the main stair hall.

Space potential suggests eight original bedrooms, one of which is now a bath, one a sitting room, and one a storage area for archeological specimens and guns. The stair leading up to the cupola continues from the main stair, although this is now closed off for safety reasons. Since the repainting, it is hard to estimate the original appearance of walls and ceilings; and necessary improvements of plumbing, electrical details and heating have occurred at different eras in the 20th century. A special basement had to be dug for the furnace, mandatory after the fireplaces were completely discontinued following 1906.

At the rear of the property is the original carriage house and stable of one and a half stories. The walls are of horizontal wood siding (not rusticated) and great carriage doors (opening both to the rear of the house and onto Twelfth Street) remain as they were. The building has a hipped roof with gables and is surmounted by a square dove cote, also with a hipped roof and it in turn is surmounted with a horse weather vain. A lean-to addition has been added to the west side.

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Grounds are carefully maintained, and some of the trees are noble specimens in age and size.² A white picket fence, with molded square pillars surmounted by balls at the entrance gate, surrounds the entire property.

NOTES (Architectural Information)

1. The house is a veritable museum of three generations' taste. Mrs. Helen Penniman Pardee was particularly enthusiastic about collecting and keeping articles of all kinds, including a giant Wapiti head (American elk), in the dining room - which dated from the days of Enoch Homer Pardee. Mounted as a semi-oriental chandelier in the first floor hall, near the stairs, are an important collection of glass plate photographs of the Sierras by Watkins. Indian beads, sea shells, Alaskan snow shoes, African shields, glassware and jewelry - all have their place in the house, on tables or shelves. There is a fine small collection of original paintings by California artists.
2. Some of the trees came from seeds or seedlings brought back from hunting expeditions. Mrs. Helen Pardee planted the great magnolia; and there is the traditional palm so common to California.

SITE

Occupying one half a city block (bounded by Castro, Eleventh and Twelfth Streets), the house is now surrounded by an increasingly sub-standard neighborhood. Valiant efforts are being made to salvage a few neighboring houses. The Pardee house would make an ideal house museum of Oakland City and Alameda County history - as an adjunct to the more formal and didactic presentation of history, science and art in the new Oakland museum complex near the Civic Auditorium.

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