

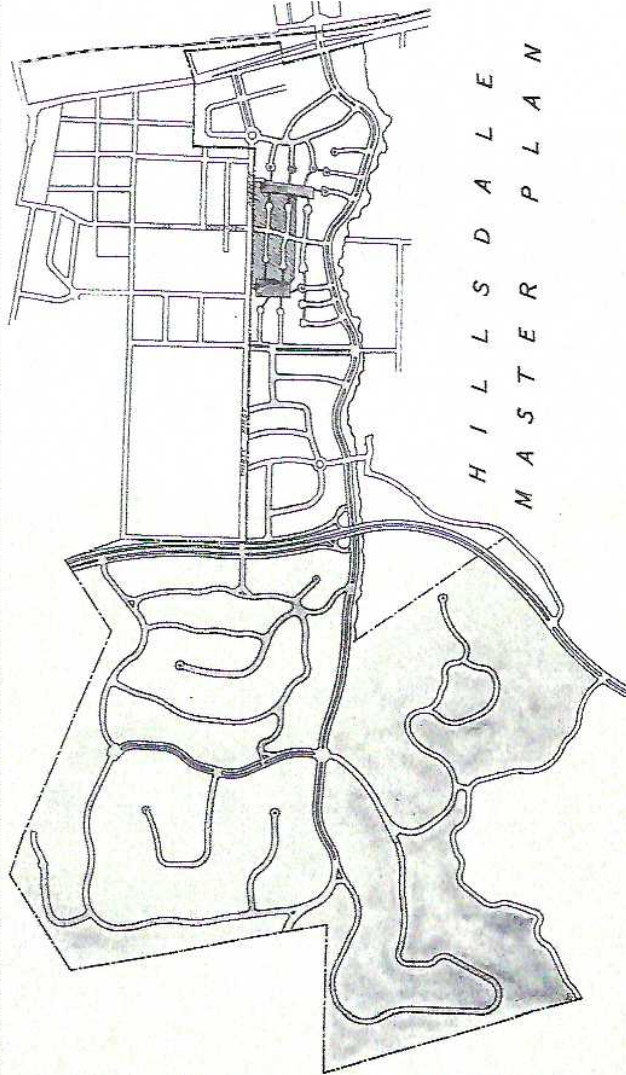


History of Beresford Hillsdale areas of San Mateo

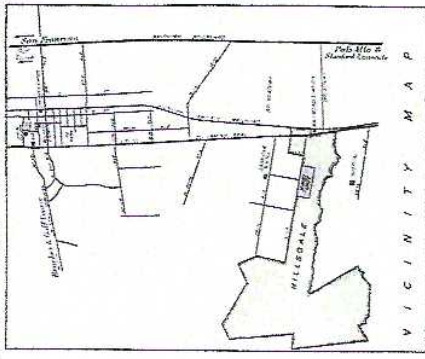
Excerpts from *San Mateo A Centennial History*

by Mitchell P. Postel

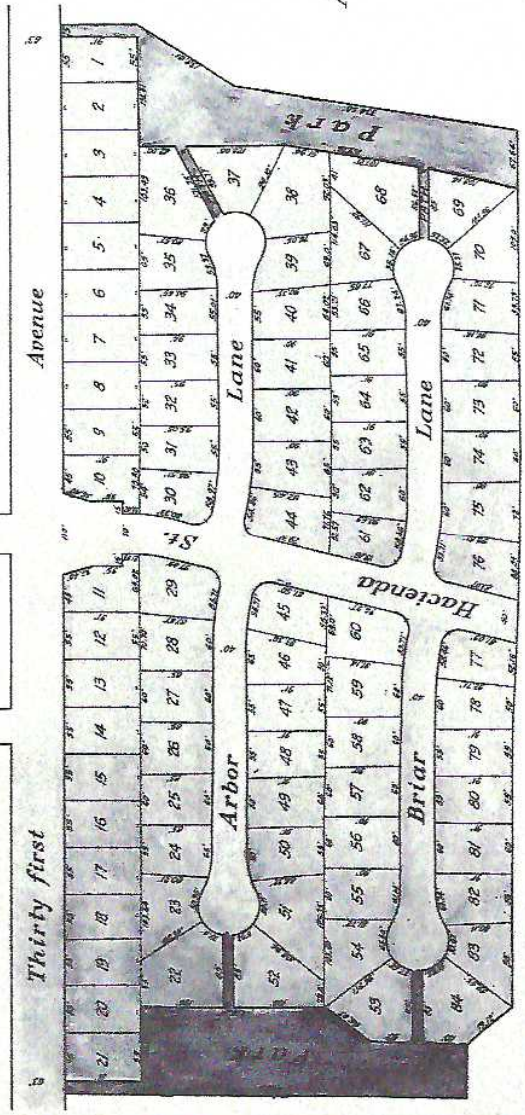
President
San Mateo County Historical Association
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H I L L S D A L E
M A S T E R P L A N



V I C I N I T Y M A P



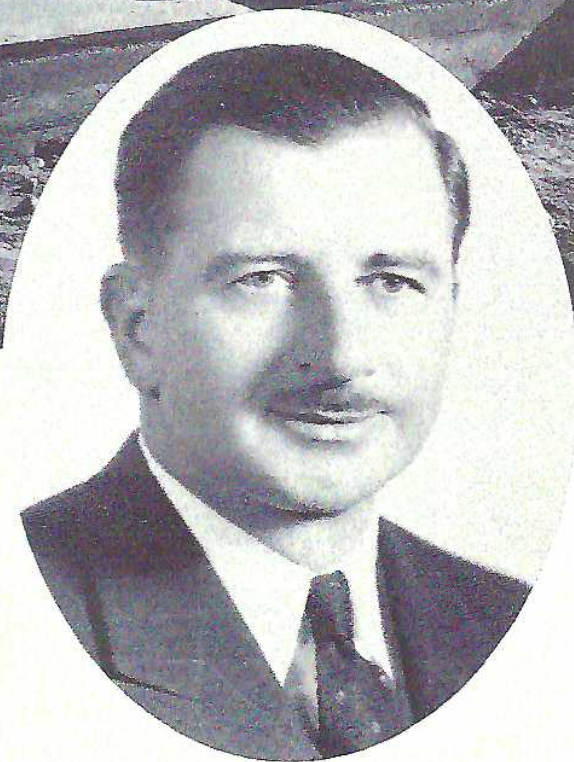
FIRST UNIT
Hillsdale
An Achievement in Community Planning

DAVID D. BOHANNON ORGANIZATION, DEVELOPERS
FOX AND CARSKADON, INC.
DIRECTORS OF SALES
TRACT OFFICE - 31ST AVE. S.W. MIAMI
RONALD CARRELL, PLANNING CONSULTANT



David Bohannon (right) streamlined the process of house-building. At Arbor Lane West (above), dozens of foundations, all poured at once, are ready for pre-cut lumber to arrive.

Courtesy Bohannon Development Company



RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION AS WAR LOOMED

BETWEEN 1920 AND 1940, the City of San Mateo's population more than tripled, from 5,979 to 19,403. Most of this growth occurred during the 1920s. The spread of subdivisions meant businesses were needed outside the downtown area. The first opened in 1937, a store and office building on the northwest corner of El Camino Real and 25th. The distinctive art deco structure was designed to catch the eye of fast-moving motorists. By the end of 1941, the street also had a market (originally Lester's—later known as Humphrey's) and the Manor Theater.

The driving force behind the 25th Avenue

development was Axel Johnson and his San Mateo Investment Company. During the early 1930s he fought against tacky roadside businesses in the area. Johnson and his allies were particularly annoyed with a Shell service station called "The Castle" with its "flamboyant display of gasolines and oils"⁸⁰ towering high above El Camino Real at 25th Avenue. Johnson successfully lobbied against further construction of that kind. He also



staged special Sunday auctions, selling lots on 25th for \$50 each (\$80 for corners), even though the city didn't plan to pave streets in the area until 1940.⁸¹ Johnson successfully developed "San Mateo Knolls," a section of the city between 39th Avenue and Belmont, where 400 homes were built by 1940.

Lawrence Clinton (L.C.) Smith came to San Mateo about the same time. L.C. was born in Rutherford, California in 1903. He worked his way up through the building industry from laborer to foreman to superintendent, and then went into business for himself. He was known internationally as a polo player and horseman, and was a key contractor of San Mateo streets and sidewalks as the city expanded before, and especially after, the War.

Like Johnson and Smith, Thomas J. Culligan, Jr. and his company, Conway and Culligan, got started in the early 1930s. He developed 250 homes in Howard Park, south of the high school. His firm became even more active in the post-war period.

Of all the developers who emerged in San Mateo during the 1930s and early 1940s, none would become better known than David D. Bohannon. Bohannon was born in San Francisco in 1898. His father, an inventor, and a socialist, founded the newspaper, *The California Socialist*.⁸²

His father's greatest invention, the "spring wheel," was rendered obsolete by the balloon tire after World War I. Bohannon and his father then tried gold mining in Nevada. When that proved unsuccessful, young Bohannon returned to the Bay Area. In 1926, at age 28, David landed his first real estate job, selling property in the Devonshire Hills of booming San Carlos. Real estate was a wide-open business during the 1920s. After working for a series of less-than-honest men, he formed

This signboard, remarkably three-dimensional, stood at the corner of El Camino and 31st Avenue, inviting passersby to have a look at Hillsdale.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

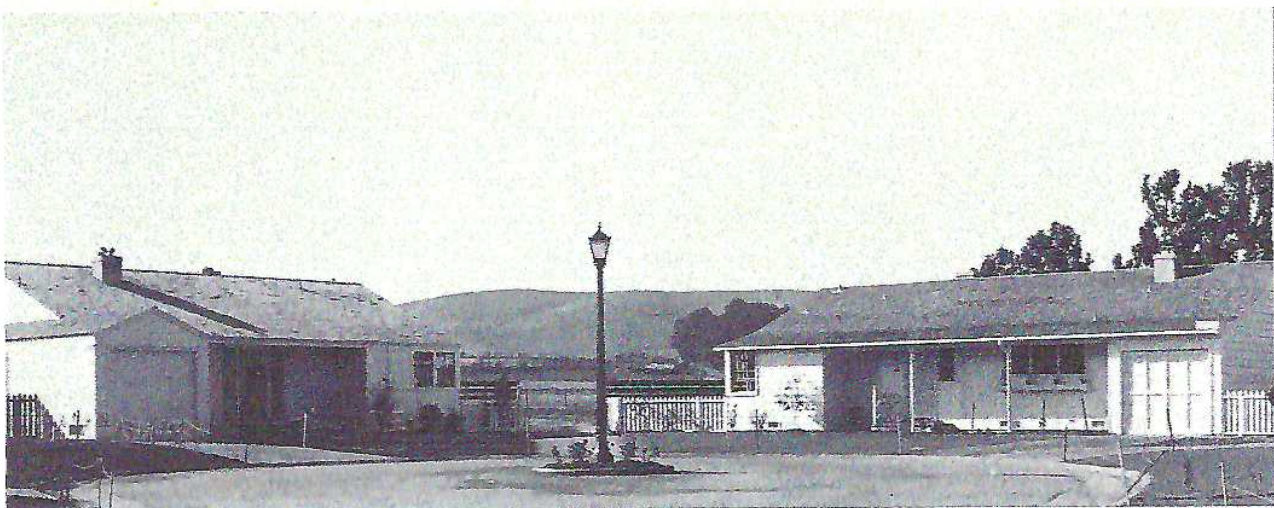
the David D. Bohannon Organization in 1928. His was one of the few real estate operations to survive the stock market crash of 1929.

Bohannon was the first builder in San Mateo County to use Federal Housing Administration loan guarantees. He built his first five houses in the Menlo Oaks area in 1934. Materials were cheap and labor cheaper. He sold the homes for between \$3,500 and \$4,500.

Bohannon became a nationally-recognized leader in real estate development and succeeded in instituting reforms in California to correct much of what he thought was wrong with the industry in the 1920s. As a national business figure, Bohannon traveled across the country to confer with other leaders in the field.

In the late 1930s, Bohannon became interested in San Mateo. He purchased the St. Cyr Estate, formerly Howard property, which included 15 acres in Hillsborough and 10 in San Mateo. Helen Strong, the divorced wife of Jean de St. Cyr, sold it to Bohannon for a reported \$202,000 (the real figure may have been significantly lower). He built El Cerrito Manor on the land and employed the real estate firm of Raybould and Bartlett as sales agents. As part of the agreement, Bohannon agreed to save the property's Japanese garden.

An even more ambitious project was the Hillsdale development. In 1937, Bohannon began negotiations with Burleigh H. Murray of the original pioneer family



Hillsdale houses in Unit One were in the \$5,000 to \$6,000 range. What would they sell for today?

Courtesy Bohannon Development Company

to purchase 848 acres of Beresford lands, equivalent to a significant percentage of the entire City of San Mateo. The sale took years because of the Murray family's concern that the "character"⁸³ of the place be preserved. Among the guarantees Bohannon made was to preserve the "Murray Oak," a great tree that stood in the center of the old farm buildings. In 1952, Bohannon donated the site to the city for the Hillsdale Branch Library. The 300-year-old tree survived until 1963, when diseases weakened it, threatening the library, and it had to be cut down.

Three years after initiating talks with the Murray family, in April 1940, Bohannon finally bought the first 241 acres, with an option for the rest.⁸⁴ Bohannon and his staff decided to stage a public contest to come up with a more descriptive name than Beresford. Unknown to his staff, Bohannon entered his own choice, "Hillsdale," and it won.

The scope of the project was unprecedented in Bay Area history. Bohannon's plan called for the construction of 5,000 inexpensive and well built houses to be priced between \$5,000 and \$6,000. Nationally-known planning engineer Ronald L. Campbell, who was working for San Mateo County at the time, was called in as consultant. Bohannon actually went before the County Board of Supervisors to get their permission to allow Campbell to "moonlight." (Campbell eventually came to work full-time for Bohannon in 1946 as a vice president of his firm.)

Bohannon and Campbell, after studying subdivisions throughout the United States, envisioned a planned community with parks. Various designs and lot sizes would be used to avoid a monotonous tract appearance. Low, rambling California ranch houses were designed by architects Williams and Westell. Two- and three-bedroom homes had stucco, redwood and cedar exteriors, copper pipes, hot-air furnaces, and Venetian blinds.

The first 84 houses of "Hillsdale No. 1" were located on Hacienda near 31st Avenue and down Arbor and Briar Lanes. Sixteen were opened for exhibit on September 16, 1940, with one furnished as a model. According to the *San Mateo Times*, by December, eight of them had sold, and reservations were being taken on the second unit of houses already under construction.

Bohannon supported the sale efforts of real estate agents Fox and Carskadon by building an attractive entrance to Hillsdale on 31st Avenue, a little west of El Camino Real. Nearby a lavish billboard announced Hillsdale as "An Achievement in Community Planning."

Bohannon also replaced the railroad station. There had been a station at this location for many years, variously called Laurel Creek, Cottrell, Beresford and Bay Meadows. Bohannon offered Southern Pacific a new, attractive station to be built by him, at his expense in exchange for calling the station Hillsdale. Southern Pacific agreed, and the structure was dedicated in August 1941. Of colonial design, the new station stood only a few minutes' walk from the residential development. By that time 38 trains a day stopped at Hillsdale. Original Hillsdale home owners remember with fondness the camaraderie among the train commuters in those early days—perhaps engendered by the presence of the cocktail bar on board.

Southern Pacific was important to Bohannon for another reason. Most of his building materials, including practically all of the precut lumber, came in by train and were then trucked to the old Murray barn area (now at Hacienda and Hillsdale Boulevard). Precutting the wood and transporting it by rail saved Bohannon a great deal of money, which helped keep prices affordable.

In June 1941 Bohannon began construction on another 100 homes. These included larger windows, combination living and dining rooms, elevated bedrooms and sunken gardens. Bohannon's achievements were not overlooked by his colleagues; recognizing his innovative successes at Hillsdale, they named him as the first president of the National Association of Homebuilders in 1941.

Bohannon also began his commercial venture at Hillsdale before the War. On October 4, 1941, amid great fanfare, ground was broken for construction of an Andrew Williams Store on the site of today's mall. With 15,000 square feet, it was equal in size to the largest store in Northern California—at that time the Williams store in Oakland. Mrs. Doris L. Williams, president of Andrew Williams Stores, and San Mateo Mayor Frank Simmen assisted Bohannon with the ground-breaking

ceremonies.⁸⁵ With the market's completion, residents of Hillsdale no longer had to go to 25th Avenue to shop.

AT THE BRINK

BY THE START OF THE 1940S, a growing San Mateo still had old-fashioned charm. Telephone dial service would not begin for two years. The entire municipal budget was only \$376,000. The city's quiet character was captured by the motto on its official letterhead—"Homes—Sunshine—Flowers"—depicting a Greek goddess dropping flowers on Spanish haciendas along a California hillside.

But a national crisis was certainly on the minds of San Mateo's leaders. When in June 1940 the San Mateo City Council instituted the flag pledge, Mayor Frank Simmons alluded to "troubled times"⁸⁶ ahead. On October 8, 1940, the *San Mateo Times* announced that the League of California Municipalities had drawn up a resolution "prohibiting trespass upon and loitering about industrial plants and other property deemed essential to national defense." This included gas and electric plants, water works, communication lines, railroad tracks, and bridges. Fear of sabotage and foreign attack were real concerns of San Mateans on the brink of World War II.

NOTES

- ¹ Cloud, *History*, Vol. II, p. 64.
- ² City of San Mateo, *Annual Statement*, 1916-1917.
- ³ Barile, *San Mateo Fire*.
- ⁴ Letter from Oscar F. Weissgerber, City Manager, to Thomas F. Burke, December 23, 1925.
- ⁵ City of San Mateo *Governmental Facts*, Sixteenth Annual Report, for the Fiscal Year 1937-1938.
- ⁶ City of San Mateo, *Governmental Facts*, Eighteenth Annual Report, for the Fiscal Year 1940.
- ⁷ Betty Sears and Alan Hynding, "The Not-So-Dry Years: Early Prohibition in San Mateo County, 1920-1926," *La Peninsula*, Summer 1980, Vol. XX, No. 3, p. 10.
- ⁸ Interview with Norman Burke, the son of Thomas Burke, by the author on April 27, 1993.
- ⁹ Genevieve Altieri, *The House on Grant Street*, Alsten Publications, 1978, p. 181.
- ¹⁰ Official Catalog, *First Annual Horse Show and Race Meet, Gymkana Club*, San Mateo, May 24, 25, 1930.
- ¹¹ Postel, *History*, p. 23.
- ¹² *Ibid*, p. 22.
- ¹³ *Burlingame Advance*, October 2, 1925.
- ¹⁴ Author's interview with Kenge Takahashi on March 23, 1943.
- ¹⁵ Altieri, *House*, p. 79-80.
- ¹⁶ Michael Svanevik, "Daba: An Italian Grocer with Political Clout," *Times*, August 17, 1990.
- ¹⁷ Author's interview with Yoneo Kawakita on March 23, 1993.
- ¹⁸ Author's interview with Ed Ishimaru on March 23, 1993.
- ¹⁹ Author's interview with Mariko Endo on March 23, 1993.
- ²⁰ "Japanese Language School Location Creates Big Stir in San Mateo; New Offer Made," *Advance*, September 3, 1930.
- ²¹ Bill Cox, "A History of the African M. E. Zion Church of San Mateo, California," student monograph #1797 in the archives of the San Mateo County Historical Museum, 1958.
- ²² Vera Graham, "Judge Cotton, Beloved Judge," *The Times*, January 2, 1965.



Bayshore Highway near Bay Meadows, 1949, was one of the busiest and most dangerous highways in the country. Drivers had plenty of billboards to distract them.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

Council to demand the hiring of black teachers. They succeeded when Evelyn Taylor and later George Dabney were hired.⁵

But the minority population did not keep pace with the exploding white population. In 1947, the African American population was 4.2% of the total, with whites at 93.4%. By 1950, the percentage of African Americans had shrunk to 2.9%, while the white population grew to 94.7%.⁶

Before World War II, San Mateo's total population was just under 20,000. By 1946, one year after the war, it was 30,613, a one-third increase in six years. Rapid growth continued in the succeeding postwar years. By 1948, the population was 34,133, and the average per capita income of a San Matean was one-third higher than the national average.⁷

While new residents immigrated from all over the United States, many came from close by. Future four-time mayor, John J. Murray, a native San Franciscan who lived on fog-bound 33rd Avenue, one day said to his wife Hallie: "Honey, I can't stand putting on my overcoat to water that little front yard," and resolved to move down the Peninsula.

Murray was acquainted with developer Axel Johnston, who was building houses on the site of a former victory garden southwest of 25th Avenue. Murray bought a lot for \$2200 on Del Mar Way. The city would

have preferred that Murray build a dwelling of Southern Colonial design to conform to the other homes in the neighborhood, but John had met an architect of the Frank Lloyd Wright school who talked him into a one-story house with a modern look. It would also be equipped with a new type of radiant and convection heating. The city opposed the design and the heating system, and delayed construction for many months. But Murray succeeded in building his dream house, which eventually was featured in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Sunset Magazine*. He also gained an unquenchable interest in San Mateo city government that would inspire him to run successfully for city council several times.⁸

By 1950, with a population of 41,782, San Mateo had spread out over 7,879 acres. While mostly residential in character, it did have commercial centers, which included five banks and two building and loan associations. There were also 19 churches. By 1957 the town had 65,999 people, eight banks, three savings and loans, and 30 churches.⁹ By 1963, population reached an astonishing 77,250 people, living in 25,334 housing units.¹⁰ In the seventeen years since the end of the war, the city's population had grown by 149%.

BOHANNON RESUMES DEVELOPMENT OF HILLSDALE

WHERE WERE ALL THESE NEW RESIDENTS going to live? A group of energetic developers changed the face of the landscape in the San Mateo area from open fields, bayside marsh and grass-covered hills to block after block of housing. Depending on one's perspective, this might be construed as either the answer to every American's dream of owning his own home, or environmental

disaster. Most San Mateans would probably find a middle ground between the two points of view. But no one can deny that the postwar developers were highly successful in identifying a market and providing a desirable product. Unquestionably the best-known of this entrepreneurial group was David Bohannon.

During the war, Bohannon's Hillsdale project lay dormant. The sites of future housing tracts were reserved for "victory gardens." By December 1942 all the original homes in Hillsdale were sold, including the models.¹¹

While Hillsdale was inactive, its builder was not. Bohannon became involved in a variety of wartime housing activities. He built temporary housing for defense workers throughout the Bay Area, and some 3500 permanent homes, including 1500 in a "completely planned community" called San Lorenzo Village.¹² At one point during this development, a house was completed every 48 minutes.

Not long after the war ended, Bohannon returned to his San Mateo project. In June 1946 the *San Mateo Times* announced that work on "Hillsdale No. 3" would begin. Another 200 houses were to be started. Paving and widening of side streets and the extension of Alameda de las Pulgas south to Laurel Creek commenced. Hillsdale Boulevard was extended to the Alameda. The new Bohannon subdivision would occupy the area bounded by Laurel Creek on the south, 31st Avenue on the north, Alameda to the west and El Camino to the east.

In January 1947 the *Times* announced a 150-acre addition, "Hillsdale No. 4," extending north to 27th Avenue and west to Monterey. "Hillsdale 5 and 6," also planned, would extend far into the hill country. The 200 homes to be created on No. 4 were designed to sell for \$12,000 to \$20,000. In November 1949, Bohannon asked the city to begin annexing the area, before even a single home was completed.¹³ The city complied, eventually taking a one-hundred-acre portion of the development, pushing the city limits relentlessly westward.

Bohannon's Hillsdale encompassed all the changes the housing industry experienced across the nation during the postwar period. His large tract development was quite unlike the prewar standard of lot-by-lot purchase and building by the individual owner. Before the War, there were builders like him, but they were essentially small operators who could put up only a few houses, sell them and move on. Not much planning or imagination went into them.

Bohannon was the prototypical big-time developer. He created whole communities, hundreds of houses at a time, with consideration for community, recreational, social and educational needs. Liberal lending policies by public and private institutions made this transformation possible in the postwar period. New materials and techniques brought into existence during the war also

helped to cut prices and made large-scale construction feasible.

In 1949, Bohannon stated his purpose in creating Hillsdale:

To take care of the forgotten man—the guy in the middle income bracket. . . He wants and needs a good home in good surroundings, but can't afford to pay the tab on a custom-built house. In Hillsdale, I have tried to give him the custom-built feeling at mass volume prices.¹⁴

He mentioned that part of his success at Hillsdale was due to his foresight some years before:

I got the land when the price was right . . . So now I plan to make nothing on the construction of the house, but take my profit from the sale of the land.

Houses he had sold before the war for less than \$7,000 were fetching \$20,000 in 1949.

BOHANNON'S GENIUS was not only in constructing, but in promotion as well. He marketed his houses as living quarters for the new postwar middle class.

After he saw the 1948 movie "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" with Cary Grant, Myrna Loy and Melvyn Douglas, he had an inspiration. The film, depicting all the nightmares associated with people building their own houses, rang true for millions of Americans. Bohannon reasoned that he could offer people their dream house, while saving them the pain of building.

In the spring of 1948, in partnership with RKO Films, Macy's Department Stores (which provided furnishings) and General Electric (which supplied the appliances), Bohannon constructed a "dream house" in Hillsdale, modeled after the one in the movie. After its completion the public was allowed to tour the "dream house," after paying an admission fee which was donated to the YMCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Bohannon later sold the "dream house" for \$19,000, but in the course of his effort he had introduced his product to thousands of potential buyers.¹⁵

In September 1954, Bohannon announced the development of another 40 acres in the hills to the west of his earlier developments, to include houses on Sunset Terrace, Verdun and an extension of 31st Avenue. This project came under some protest from residents down the hill, who were tired of construction noise, trucks, and mud. Nevertheless, building continued.¹⁶ By 1961, the last of the houses had been completed, high up on 31st Avenue and West Hillsdale Boulevard, 1000 feet above those Bohannon had built twenty years before. As thousands realized their dream of owning a home, Bohannon made a fortune, and won award after award



Bay Meadows Airport continued in use until 1947

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

from regional and national organizations, testifying to his buildings' excellence.

Besides housing tracts, Bohannon also built apartment complexes. In April 1948 he unveiled a plan to build 503 apartment units on both sides of Hillsdale Boulevard. These "garden style" apartments would be similar to the Park Merced project in San Francisco. Bohannon later explained: "My idea was to give people who like apartment life a chance to enjoy the country." The development included 54 one-bedroom, 383 two-bedroom and 66 three-bedroom units. Also planned were garages for 479 automobiles and eight playgrounds for children. The complex would include machine washers and dryers, which would "eliminate unsightly lines full of clothing."¹⁷

This project met some opposition. The Planning Commission asked whether San Mateans wanted so much of their city to be devoted to renters. Some residents complained about the removal of some 300 trees. Nevertheless, the project won the Commission's approval. In February 1949 work began on a \$10 million development, constructed in several sections.¹⁸ By the

fall of 1950 twelve of the buildings had been completed, with units renting for \$125 to \$144 a month.

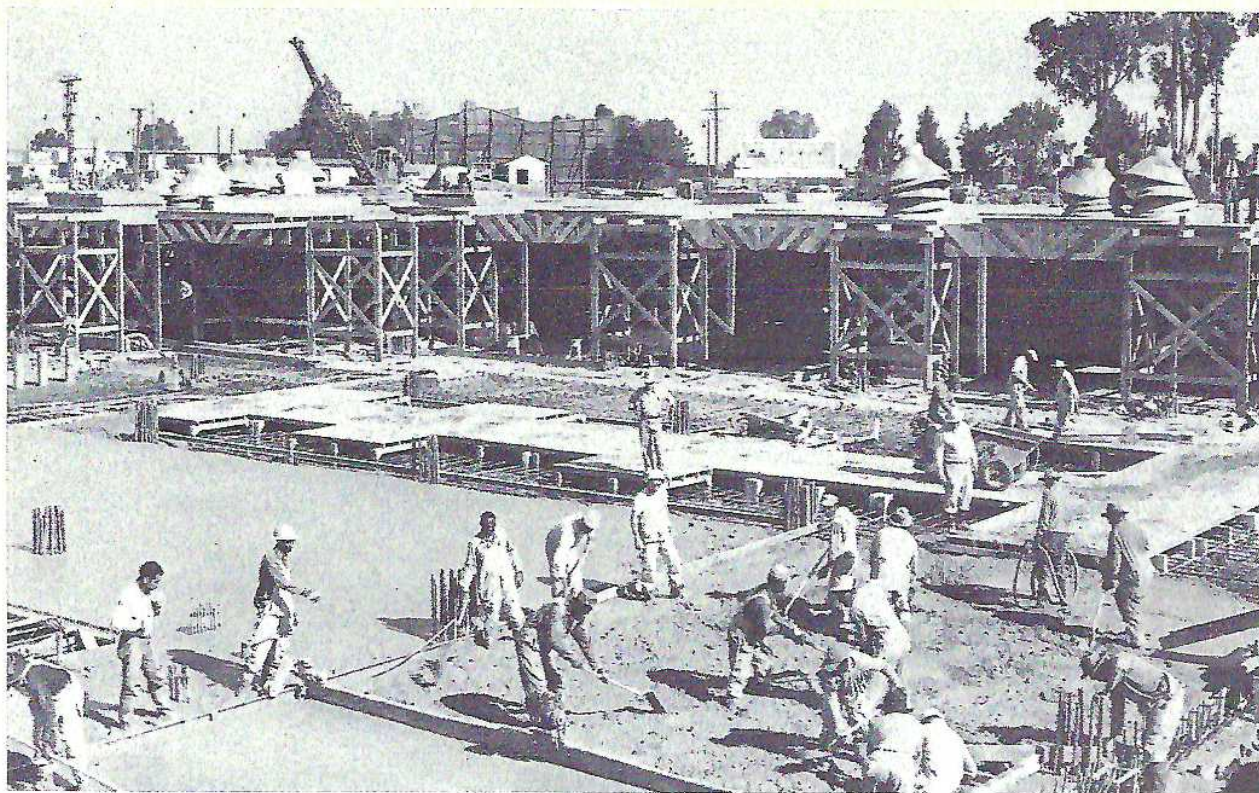
Bohannon shocked Peninsula residents in 1953 when he sold the apartment houses for \$7.5 million to an eastern realtor (actually this was a 99-year lease). By that time the complex had grown to 705 units. This transaction was the largest real estate transaction in San Mateo County history up to that time.¹⁹

While Bohannon sold his homes and disposed of these apartments, he held on to his commercial property and eventually converted it into one of the premier shopping centers in the world. In April 1948 he announced his first coup: Sears had selected the site for the placement of a store. When it opened in 1951, thousands attended the ribbon cutting.²⁰

Bohannon later revealed that before the war he had planned to build a community shopping center to serve only local people. But during the war his plan changed:

We had time to stop and survey and think. And we came to the realization in view of the population and merchandising trends, that we had a future regional center on our hands, a center designed to serve an area of up to 300,000 people, a center with practically all the merchandising units to be found in a big city's downtown district.²¹

Bohannon's commercial developments were as innovative as his houses and apartments. He had built residential developments with the automobile in mind, so his shopping center featured easy road access, vast



Pouring the concrete slab for the basement of Macy's store in Hillsdale, March 1954. The store opened only three months later.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

parking accommodations and short walking distances from parking spaces to stores. He put retail stores in the center and surrounded them with parking.

Also part of his plan were underground facilities for truck loading and unloading of merchandise to help ease traffic congestion and add to the attractiveness of the center. This idea was borrowed from a Los Angeles shopping center with subterranean features. In August 1951, as the Cold War intensified and the Korean War raged, the San Mateo City Council requested that this underground area be made available as a civil defense shelter. Bohannon consented, helping his \$20,000,000 project gain approvals.²² The Korean War made construction materials scarce. However, in May 1952, the National Production Authority approved plans for Bohannon's mall and the Stonestown center in San Francisco.²³

Macy's then announced plans to build a \$6 million store at Hillsdale—its first suburban project in California. At the same time, Bohannon revealed his overall design for the 42-acre center, complete with three department stores and 75 shops.²⁴

Ground breaking for Macy's took place in 1952.²⁵ On May 28, 1954, amid considerable fanfare, San Mateo Mayor Wesley P. Johnson and Martin A. Poss of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors cut the ribbon. Also announced that spring was the \$200,000 remodeling and

expansion—by 8,000 square feet—of the former Andrew Williams supermarket, at that time a Mayfair.²⁶

By 1956, Bohannon had 50 shops in place, augmenting the Sears, Macy's and Mayfair. In April 1961, ground was broken for a third "anchor" store, the Emporium. It was completed in September of 1962.²⁷ By 1970 the Hillsdale Mall included more than 150 stores and shops. Its \$400 million in sales contributed greatly to the economic well-being of the city, adding significantly to the tax base.

A few argued that this had a negative effect on San Mateo. Certainly it changed the entire character of the city. Since stagecoach days the center had been near San Mateo Creek, between the tracks and El Camino. Now, suddenly, a regional suburban shopping center had changed that, and the commercial focus of the city had shifted south. In order to compete more effectively with Hillsdale and other shopping centers, the downtown merchants in 1957 organized a non-profit Downtown



L. C. Smith, the contractor who built the Nineteenth Avenue Freeway and installed most of the sidewalks in the city.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

Association to promote their businesses in a unified way. The Association has been able to keep downtown business viable.

Suburban shopping malls are seldom thought of as centers of art, but once again the innovative David Bohannon did things differently. While the mall was under construction, Bohannon commissioned Benjamin "Benny" Bufano to create eleven granite statues to adorn his shopping center. Bohannon even had a studio built for the artist. By the fall of 1956 his eighteen tons of statuary had been completed. Except for "Saint Francis on Horseback," all the pieces depict animals, ranging in size from an 18-inch mouse to a 12-foot-high owl. At a dedication on October 15, \$500,000 worth of art was unveiled to some 4,000 spectators, including California's Lieutenant Governor, Harold Powers.²⁸ Since that time, millions of people have enjoyed Bufano's art at Hillsdale.

When "Benny" died in 1970 he was mourned, in many knowledgeable circles, as the greatest artist in San Francisco Bay Area History.

Besides being a dynamo in real estate development and a patron of the arts, Bohannon was also influential in local politics. He was a perennial leader of the County Development Association and a major supporter of freeway projects and the improvement of the San Mateo Hayward Bridge.

Because his residential and commercial real estate successes were founded on the primacy of the automobile in the California life style, it is not surprising that Bohannon backed road development and opposed public transportation projects. In 1961 he spoke out against Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and led the opposition to its adoption in San Mateo County. For better or worse, Bohannon helped to keep BART off the Peninsula for many years.

MORE DEVELOPERS

WHILE DAVID BOHANNON was perhaps San Mateo's best known developer, he certainly was not the only one. A variety of builders accomplished projects comparable in scope to Bohannon's. Included in this lofty arena was L. C. Smith.

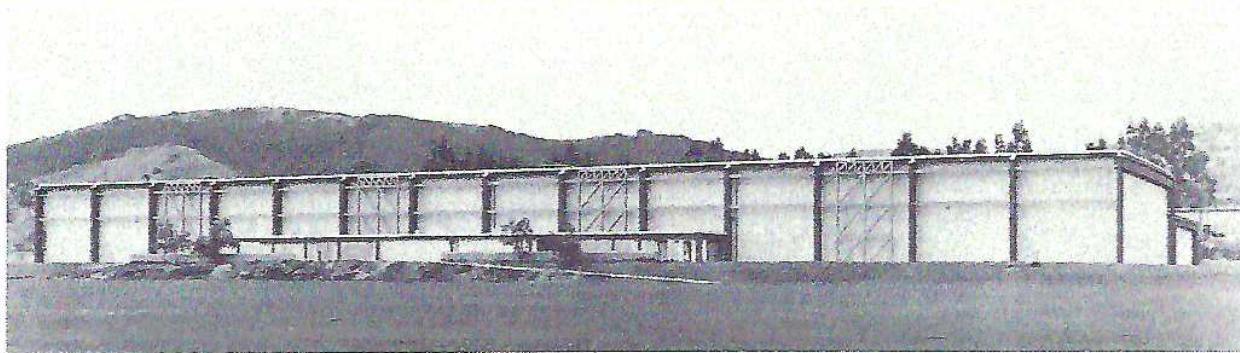
Smith, at one time an internationally-known polo player, had been very busy during the war, building roads, excavating, grading, and paving. In the postwar period, Smith became San Mateo County's premier sidewalk, street and highway developer, doing all the work for most Peninsula cities and completing projects throughout the Bay Area. Between 1957 and 1969, he was responsible for \$250 million in road work alone.

Smith also became involved in residential construction. In 1952 his Concord Ranch Enterprises purchased Leslie Salt properties to develop 19th Avenue Park. The city approved plans in 1954, and Joseph Eichler's Moorepark Company began construction in 1955, using the designs of architects Emmons, Anshen and Allen. By 1956 the houses were finished, and virtually every one was sold. Smith then developed the Lauriedale area. In 1966 this southwestern section was annexed to the city.

Among Smith's largest commercial successes was bringing the \$15-million Royal Coach Inn of Texas to his site on Bayshore and 19th Avenue (today the hotel is known as the Dunfey).

Smith, active in Democratic politics, became personally acquainted with President Harry S. Truman, Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown and State Senator (later United States Senator), Alan Cranston. These political connections could not have hurt him in his quest for government road-building contracts.

In local affairs, Smith worked hard with such men as



For many San Mateans, the great change in the landscape was hard to take. Long-time residents such as educator Winifred M. Burke lamented over the “fallen eucalyptus, pines, bay and oak a century old.” She worried that only “old-timers” would weep over “the despoiling we are forced to witness.” But soon a generation of citizen ecologists would take up the cause of protecting the local environment.

In the meantime, the postwar period meant creation of new streets and roads and the improvement of old ones throughout San Mateo. Perhaps no single intersection in the City received more attention than Hillsdale and El Camino. The shopping center, Bay Meadows, and nearby railroad tracks created considerable congestion there. Then in 1959, a horrible accident occurred at the intersection: a baby was killed, trapped in its mother’s car which was stalled on the tracks. The City Council asked the state for \$1,000,000 to create an underpass here.⁴⁰ While this request was being processed, the city also began considering lowering El Camino at Hillsdale. The Council approved plans for this underpass in the spring of 1962. In 1963, bids were accepted for the \$2,100,000 job of undergrounding Hillsdale at the tracks. The state provided \$891,000 of the necessary funds.⁴¹ Later that year the state granted \$825,000 more toward the \$1,650,000 El Camino Real underpass. The County Board of Supervisors contributed \$112,000 toward the El Camino project.⁴²

Hillsdale High School (top), 1960, and Sunnybrae Elementary School, 1948; the horizontal designs illustrate the architectural values of the era.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

EDUCATION—KEEPING PACE

THE UNPRECEDENTED INCREASE in San Mateo’s population during the postwar period was primarily due to an influx of families, and families needed schools. In many other parts of California, the educational system buckled. Children were forced to attend half days in overcrowded classrooms. But San Mateo’s school system kept pace with growth on every level—elementary, secondary and junior college.

When the boom began in 1945, San Mateo was already building a new school. Back in 1938, the elementary school district had paid \$8,300 for 4.7 acres on South Delaware, south of 10th Avenue, from Roland Borden and Associates of American Homes Inc. Plans had been drawn up during the war years, and Sunnybrae school opened in 1945. The school’s modern design influenced the construction of San Mateo elementary schools to come, with single level, airy classrooms opening onto individual play yards and gardens. The



When the war was over, the Merchant Marine Academy at Coyote Point became home to a new campus of College of San Mateo. All the major buildings are gone now.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

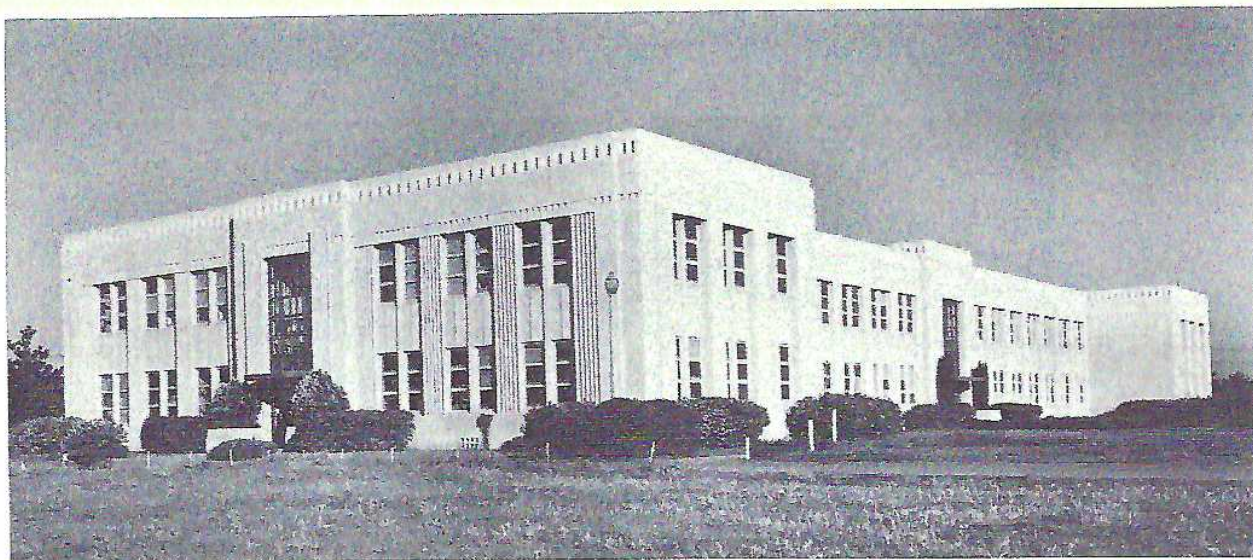
property for Laurel School on 36th Avenue was purchased during construction of Sunnybrae, and the new campus was completed in 1946.

That same year, San Mateo Schools Superintendent Albion Horrall died in office at the age of 55. His assistant, Walter Jack, took his place. Jack had been principal of Peninsula back in 1929, and had also been principal at San Mateo Park School before becoming Horrall's assistant in 1945. During eleven years as Superintendent, Jack presided over a virtual explosion in elementary school education. By all accounts, he met the challenge admirably. He started with eight schools and finished with 19.

Shoreview school opened in 1948. Two years

previously, condemnation proceedings had to be employed to purchase the property, which was being used as a duck farm. The construction site was on an old native mound, where an ancient body was discovered and sent to the County Historical Museum. As opening day approached, the school's furniture was destroyed in a train accident in Ohio, and the school had to open with folding tables and chairs. Shoreview's new principal, John Daly, watched as the carpenters, painters and other workmen departed almost exactly as classroom supplies and children arrived. For the nine schools that followed during Jack's tenure, similar stories of pressing need, rapid construction and hectic openings are told. These schools included George Hall (1950), College Park (1950), Meadow Heights (1951), Albion Horrall (1953), San Mateo Knolls (1953), A. J. Abbott (1954), Fiesta Gardens (1955), Parkside (1956) and Buena Vista (1956). By the time Jack retired in 1957, there were 10,089 children in the elementary school system.

Within the high school system, the need for more buildings was also urgent. In 1949 the San Mateo Union High School District began negotiation with David



Bohannon for land for a high school. Finally, in 1956, Hillsdale High opened. It was followed by Aragon High, which had been scheduled to start classroom instruction in September of 1960, but because of a steel strike, did not admit students until February of 1961.

Both schools were designed by architects John Lyon Reid and Partners. Their "New Brutalist Style" drew considerable comment by architecture critics. One well-known local reviewer, Alan Temko, described the schools as products of their time. Of Hillsdale, he wrote: "Confronting a suburb littered with TV aerials, the school asserts its own disciplined ideal of rational order in a technological age." He concluded that the design suggested an Orwellian "hemmed-in, troglodytic . . . dream of technocracy, as if the year were already 1984."⁴³

In the postwar period, San Mateo Junior College continued to occupy a primary position in San Mateo and the Peninsula. Its small buildings on the Baldwin Avenue and Peninsula Avenue campuses soon became overcrowded. By 1947 enrollment swelled to 2,000 full-time and 4,500 adult students, with 77 instructors. The G. I. Bill helped local veterans who wished to continue their education; the optimism of the times was demonstrated by their eagerness to learn and get ahead. Formal dinner dances at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel were full of gaiety, symbolizing the better future these young people knew they could achieve.

In order to relieve overcrowding, the classroom facilities at Coyote Point's 24-acre former Merchant Marine Cadet School were officially leased in 1947. Now the College was located on three campuses. Students and instructors were hard pressed to zip across town in order to make all their classes. French instructor Dorothy Herrington, recalled:

This sturdy Art Deco building was San Mateo Junior College's second campus, built in 1937 on Peninsula Avenue. Just twenty years later it was sold, demolished, and replaced by the Woodlake Apartments.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

One year I had a 9:00 class in the Baldwin building and a 10:00 class at Coyote Point. Of course I couldn't get from the Baldwin class to my car and drive to Coyote Point and park and get to class in the ten-minute interval so I had to leave the Baldwin class a few minutes early and maybe arrive a few minutes late at the Coyote Point classroom—utterly out of breath.⁴⁴

Regardless of such inconveniences, the college continued to expand and improve. In 1948, a "Parents' Nursery School" was formed to assist young adults with their children; the project gained national acclaim. The school's jazz band, which included budding entertainer Merv Griffin, was widely popular.

In 1952, the junior college's great inspirational leader "Jum" Morris died while attending a championship basketball game. Two years later the school changed its name from San Mateo Junior College to College of San Mateo, or CSM, as many have referred to it ever since. The name change reflected the fact that CSM was no longer a junior college, but a community college. Some college officials said that the name was changed so that the new initials would be the same as those of Charles S. Morris.

In 1955, the College's new President, Elon Hildreth, called on a nationally-known architectural firm to plan the future college site at Coyote Point. Hildreth also proposed that the Baldwin Avenue campus be traded to the Navy for use as a naval reserve training school.

The San Mateo County Historical Museum also moved up the hill. In 1959 the College agreed to finance half the cost of building a new home for the Museum. Representatives of the Museum Association, including J. Hart Clinton, Mrs. David D. Bohannon, George N. Keyston, Paul A. McCarthy and Dr. Frank Stanger went before the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to request the additional \$50,000. College representatives Julio Bortolazzo, Eleanor Nettle, Robert A. Taver and G. W. Bromfield supported the request. The supervisors agreed, and the county finally had what everyone thought then was a permanent home for its historic heritage.

The campus library had not yet been finished when the new campus opened. Students used a lounge area as study room. The card catalog and circulation desk were placed there, and a book mobile outside provided reserve and reference materials. But by the end of 1963, the 35,000-volume library was fully functional.

In 1964, the innovative district made use of federal grants to create a public television station, KCSM. CSM became the first educational institution in northern California to broadcast from its own television station. Faculty and students staffed the station, whose first program was "Health for Better Living." KCSM's first live broadcast featured a debate between incumbent Congressman J. Arthur Younger and his opponent W. Mark Sullivan. By 1965, KCSM was producing fourteen live shows a week. This and other achievements earned it national attention through an article in *Time* magazine on March 5, 1965.

The nationally turbulent 1960s were reflected locally by KCSM's "Inquiring Student" program, which covered significant student involvement in controversial topics. One especially provocative segment was titled "Evolution or Revolution to Solve Campus Problems?"

In 1968, KCSM won a Broadcast Media Award for its series "Dimensions: The Universe" directed by Nina J. Martin, featuring astronomy instructor Michael Chriss.

By June of 1968, CSM had a total student body of 22,000, with 9,000 day students and 13,000 night students—the largest enrollment of any community college in the state. That fall its south county sister college, Cañada, opened for classes and began taking the pressure off. The District's third campus, Skyline College in San Bruno, was dedicated in 1970. The coastside college never materialized.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS— KEEPING PACE

AS THE TRANSPORTATION and educational systems grew to accommodate the population increases of the postwar period, so did almost every department within the city's government. For the San Mateo Public Library, this meant library branches. As early as 1947, David

Bohannon promised to donate land in the southern part of the city for a library site in exchange for approvals on his Hillsdale Garden apartment project. However, progress was slow. In the meantime, the library opened a "book station" at Beresford Park School, containing some 200 volumes. In 1950 this facility was expanded to take up an entire classroom. A year later, the city secured a lease and moved the library into a building owned by the San Mateo Investment Company on 25th Avenue, where it remained until 1957.

In the meantime, on December 12, 1952, Bohannon deeded appropriate lots on Hillsdale and Hacienda to the city for the purpose of establishing a branch library. In 1957 voters approved a bond issue for construction of the Hillsdale Library, serving the southern part of San Mateo.

The city also moved to provide a facility in the eastern section. In 1954, commercial space was leased in the Shoreview Shopping Center. In 1966, the Marina Branch Library was constructed on property purchased by the city on Susan Court.

With two branch libraries established, the city turned its attention to its 63-year old main library at South San Mateo Drive and Second Avenue. Mills Hospital was planning an expansion and wished to purchase the property. The city resolved to move the Library to 55 West Third Avenue and began planning a modern facility. The 35,000 square foot structure would require a \$1,200,000 bond issue. A. L. Stoner led the political campaign which succeeded in September of 1966. Architect William Gay Garwood designed the new facility. On December 15, 1968, under Mayor Roy Archibald and Librarian Pauline Coleman, the Central Library was dedicated.⁴⁸

By 1950, the Police Department consisted of 49 officers, two secretaries and three part-time crossing guards, contrasting with the wartime force of 25.

In 1950 Robert O'Brien, a native of San Mateo, a San Mateo High football hero (he was on the 1926 state championship team) and a popular member of the force since 1930, retired. Martin McDonald took his place.

During the 1950s the Department outgrew its station in the old 1914 City Hall building. Voters passed a bond issue to build a new 30,000 square foot building on Delaware. The station was completed in 1962 and was described then as one of the best in the state. By that time the force had a total payroll of 105 people. Six years later, it had risen to 122, with 91 full-time officers plus supporting staff. The Police Department was now a modern, large urban force, with a \$1,430,943 annual budget.

The Fire Department also kept pace. In 1947, a bond issue funded two new station houses—one at 27th Avenue and Edison, and another on Fourth Avenue and Humboldt—to be added to the downtown headquarters

THE BATTLE OF THE MALLS

ACCORDING TO DAVID BOHANNON, the battle between the Hillsdale and Fashion Island Malls began one day in the mid-1970s, when he failed to make a binding deal with Bullock's Department Stores. Bullock's then turned to Ernest W. Hahn, a developer in Southern California, whom they had worked with before. Bohannon contends that Bullock's put Hahn up to the San Mateo Mariners' Island project. Before that time Bohannon and Hahn had been friends. When Bohannon confronted Hahn with his opinion that two regional malls in San Mateo could not survive, Hahn's response was something like "business is business."²⁵ The fight was on.

In Ernest Hahn, Bohannon had a worthy opponent. Like Bohannon, he had relatively modest roots. Hahn's father was a German immigrant who came to the United States as a baker. During World War II, Ernest served in the Navy as an electronics technician. After the war he became a contractor who specialized in building shopping centers. In 1967 he moved into the development field. His first project was the highly successful La Cumbre Plaza in Santa Barbara. Others followed, and by the mid-1970s he was a nationally-known figure.²⁶

Opposing him was the aging Bohannon, who in 1975 had already retired, leaving the presidency of his company to his daughter, Frances Nelson, perhaps the most powerful businesswoman in the history of San Mateo County.

In 1977, Hahn began making known his plan for the \$60-million Mariners' Island Shopping Center. Citing statistics showing that the new center would boost the local economy and expand the tax base, he began to garner support. About the same time, Hillsdale announced plans for a \$43-million expansion. The Bohannon group did not reveal that they were closing a deal to bring a Nordstrom department store into the picture. San Mateo's City Hall did little to discourage either party; city officials hoped that both might succeed.

By this time, Hahn had become known as the second largest developer of shopping centers in the United States. Hillsdale would be in a fight for its life. The Bohannons joined a growing group of environmentalists,

downtown merchants and community activists in opposing the new center. In March 1978 the issue came before the City Council for approval. So great was the interest in the matter that the meeting was moved to the Performing Arts Center at San Mateo High. Some 700 people attended, most of whom opposed the plan. More than 30 speakers testified for and against. Those in favor were hissed and booed. Some were even shouted down. At one point David Bohannon got up and pleaded with the Council to kill the project. With his voice "rising and falling with emotion,"²⁷ he delivered a rousing speech, prompting many in the audience to stand up and cheer. Ignoring the clamor, the Council approved the plan.

This was hardly the end of the matter. Bohannon decided to help mount a referendum. Various groups united to place "Measure D" on the November 1978 ballot. The now \$72-million project was hotly debated. By October 23 a total of \$391,363—nearly \$10 for each of San Mateo's 40,112 registered voters—had been contributed to the campaigns, for and against, by just the two developers (\$274,539 by Bohannon and \$116,824 by Hahn). Even more was spent before election day. In the end, the people of San Mateo voted in favor of the free enterprise system. Hahn won again. Now the two developers would have to compete for tenants and eventually do battle in the marketplace.

Hillsdale soon found itself falling behind. While Hahn had most of his approvals in hand, Hillsdale was still in the planning stage. In February 1976, Hillsdale finally unveiled plans and targeted September to start construction.²⁸ This proved far too optimistic. Bohannon Development did not receive final approval from the City Council until November 3, 1980.²⁹ By this time the cost of remodeling and expansion had swelled to \$57.5 million. Hahn had a two-year head start, and would complete his center in the fall of 1981, quite possibly catching Hillsdale under construction during the crucial Christmas Season.

But Hahn must have been shaken by the magnitude of the Hillsdale expansion plan. It would increase the square footage to 1,300,000, most of it in a climate-controlled, enclosed mall, encouraging shoppers to come at night or during bad weather. Most ambitious were the proposed 120,000-square-foot Nordstrom and 83,500-square-foot Mervyn's. Parking was to be increased from 5,000 spaces to 5,800. Still, 50 to 60 conditions were levied upon Hillsdale by the city, including one hotly debated demand for 156 bicycle racks, capable of accommodating 1400 bicycles. Councilwoman Jane Baker worried that the parking spaces would be too small. Despite all the red tape, Hillsdale was going to happen.

In September 1981 the \$75-million Hahn shopping center, now known as Fashion Island, opened to the

Opposite: Donna Richardson (left), Mayor of San Mateo, and Frances Nelson, president of Bohannon Development Company, cut the ribbon to open the Hillsdale Mall in November, 1981.

Courtesy Bohannon Development Company

public. Its 856,934 square feet included four majors: J.C. Penney, Liberty House, Montgomery Ward and Bullock's (which featured a unique, teflon-coated, fabric roof), with some 60 smaller stores filling in the rest.

Hillsdale did not let Fashion Island stay in the limelight for long. Its own construction proceeded close to schedule. The old supermarket was torn down. Improvements in "Phase I" included the enclosure of the mall and the addition of an upper deck of shops. "Phase II" would be the opening of Nordstrom and Mervyn's.

The Phase I opening celebration was arranged for November 1981, in time for Christmas, and for head-to-head competition with Fashion Island. The preview party was attended by 500 guests, including the most important people in government and business on the Peninsula. Also on hand were David Bohannon, his wife Ophelia, and Frances Nelson, who had become "the driving force behind the massive updating."³⁰ Balloons in holiday colors and baskets of poinsettias were suspended throughout the interior. Benny Bufano's statues were set in landscaped areas. The party fare was sumptuous. San Mateo City Council members were quoted as "adoring" the improvement.

Work on Phase II resumed in January 1982. Both Nordstrom and Mervyn's were completed before Christmas, allowing Hillsdale to be at maximum strength in competing with Fashion Island during the busiest season of the year. Hillsdale had doubled its square footage in two years, leaping from 100 stores to 150, against Fashion Island's 113.

Just before the Christmas season of 1982, *San Mateo Times* reporter Ken McLaughlin interviewed Hillsdale and Fashion Island representatives about the upcoming duel for shoppers. He noted that Nancy Brekke, marketing director at Fashion Island, seemed "somewhat worried about the competition."³¹ The Hillsdale people exuded confidence.

Within less than a decade the Bohannon family and Hillsdale would prove itself twice: first in showing there really was not room for two regional shopping centers in San Mateo as Fashion Island failed, and second in going toe-to-toe in a retail war with a nationally known developer—and winning.



The Beresford Country Club, around 1915. The buildings, in the Tudor Revival style, are still in use as the Peninsula Golf and Country Club.

Courtesy San Mateo County Historical Museum

In 1893 the Burlingame Country Club had been founded, the first to be established west of the Mississippi, and instantly became one of the most exclusive social institutions in California. Among the people it excluded were those of the Jewish faith.

At the turn of the century, San Francisco had a sizable Jewish population that included some of the most important businessmen in the West. These people developed a thirst for the social status and recreational activities that a country club afforded. Since they could not join the Burlingame Club, they started a club of their own. In November 1911 a group of 29 men, meeting at the Mills Building in San Francisco, decided to buy a piece of property southwest of San Mateo and to incorporate the Beresford Country Club.

Among the original organizers were some of the most famous names of San Francisco. Included among them were M. J. Brandenstein (later Bransten), who with his brothers established M. J. B. Coffee; bankers and philanthropists Herbert and Mortimer Fleishhacker; Walter Haas, of the Levi Straus family; I. W. Hellman, who became president of Wells Fargo Bank in 1913; Jess W. Lilienthal, president of United Railway of San Francisco; Morris Meyerfield, who owned the Orpheum Theater Circuit; George Roos, of Roos Brothers Clothiers; and Sigmund Stern, for whom Stern Grove in San Francisco is named.

The 150-acre Beresford Club was located west and south of the orphanage. Today it is the Peninsula Golf and Country Club, off Alameda de las Pulgas. On July 4, 1912, a celebration initiated the club's activities. A

temporary clubhouse had been constructed, the golf course was completed and a membership of 200 had been recruited. It just so happened that the date of the event was the same day as the Burlingame Club's biggest party of the summer. The Beresford ceremony included a speech by Rabbi Martin A. Meyer of Temple Emanuel, patriotic band music, the raising of the American flag, and various vaudeville entertainments performed by Beresford members and friends. The climax of the program came when a caddy placed a large golf ball in front of the Club's president, William Fries. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that he burst it open with a swing of a golf club and two doves "carrying the club colors, blue and white, took wing." Then little candy boxes in the shape of golf balls were distributed among the crowd. Dinner was prepared on open air barbecues by Ben Diaz "and a staff of Mexicans imported for the occasion." Food and drink were served right on one of the fairways "in genuine Spanish fashion."

Exactly one year later, another celebration took place at Beresford when the large Tudor Revival clubhouse, which still stands today, was completed. Large parties could now take place year round. In the days before 1920, a special affair for the Club was the annual New Year's Eve dinner and dance. Members would board one of Jesse Lilienthal's specially chartered street cars in San Francisco for the ride to San Mateo. Because so many wished to attend the celebration, taxing the overnight accommodations at the clubhouse past their limit, many reserved rooms at the Peninsula Hotel to rest after the party.²⁰

South and east of the Beresford Club, across from today's Bay Meadows, at least one portion of land was retained for traditional uses. In January 1889, K. O. O'Grady bought the 274-acre Laurel Creek Stock Farm originated by John S. Colegrove. O'Grady raced and trained horses for such equestrian enthusiasts as Alvinza Hayward. A second generation of O'Grady's held on to the property for the care of thoroughbreds, trotters and saddle horses, a good many of which came from Bay Meadows during the 1930s and 1940s. The family finally sold out to the interests of David Bohannon in 1946.

for cold cuts, salads, oysters, crab, smoked salmon and, always, a baron of beef. Ruth Steiner recalled that children made great use of the club, swimming in the pool and learning to play tennis from professional Merv Griffin, Sr. The club's ballroom and luxurious appointments made it a fine place for blossoming romance—whether pre-marital or extra-marital.

Liz Mack remembered that during Prohibition, although the bar, which overlooked the pool, was "officially" closed: "We carried our own bottles [in] and they would set you up."¹¹

The Beresford Club's golf course was designed by the internationally famous Scotsman, Donald Ross. Of the approximately 400 golf courses Ross was responsible

for during his career, he crossed the Mississippi only once, to design the one at Beresford. Getting Ross to come to San Mateo was largely the work of Walter Stettheimer, president of the club in 1922. Ross deliberately set his costs to discourage Stettheimer. But the architect was surprised when Stettheimer accepted Ross' conditions, including the highest fee paid to any golf-course designer up to that time. Beresford members committed \$100,000 to rearrange and improve their course.

An important legacy bestowed upon the Beresford Club by Ross was his introduction of another Scotsman, Willie Nicoll, as golf professional. Nicoll later admitted that never having been to California before, he fully expected to encounter cowboys and Indians when he got off the train at San Mateo. But he quickly found his new home was far from primitive, and he enjoyed the club members and community of San Mateo immensely.

The feeling was mutual. Nicoll became an institution at Beresford. Men were taken with his classic, old-world approach to the game of golf, and women were charmed by his burr. Nicoll helped promote women's golf by developing some of the best players in the Bay Area, including Patty Berg, Dot Kielty and Helen Lengfeld. Between the 1920s and 1940s, he and Lengfeld organized a number of tournaments to focus women's attention on the game.

Not only was Nicoll popular at the club, but he was quite well known in town as well. He lived just two

blocks from the club, and had his hair cut at the local barber shop. A former caddy, Frank Gustafson, remembered that as young men during the Depression, he and his friends would hop the fence at the club and play a little golf when no one else was around. Nicoll always looked the other way.

During the 1920s, many San Mateo boys earned their first money as caddies at Beresford. In those days before the electric golf cart the club might use thirty caddies on a Saturday or Sunday. Among the boys who worked at the club were Bill O'Ferrel, who would become city clerk, and Claude Hirschey, who would become Mayor. Frank Gustafson says the crusty caddy master, a man named Wilson, advised the boys to watch the ball and not "drive the players nuts."¹²

Like the "horsy set," the Beresford Club had problems during the 1930s. The Great Depression adversely affected its members. The opening of another Jewish country club at Lake Merced in San Francisco in 1923 didn't help, either. By the beginning of the 1940s, the club's leadership had to make decisions that would forever alter its social make-up.

BACK TO NORMALCY

BETWEEN WORLD WAR I and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the San Mateo elite tried to ignore income taxes and the changing shape of society and resume their comfortable lives.

Then the Borel Family began to break up their estate. In 1926 they sold a large parcel south of Arroyo Mocho to the San Mateo Polo Club, which set up three playing fields and a grandstand. Many members were friends of the family anyway. Besides, the major portion of the land still belonged to the Borels. In 1927 both San Mateo and Hillsborough became interested in annexing the estate. Aylett Cotton advised the Borels in favor of San Mateo, reminding them that their sewer ran through San Mateo and that the Hillsborough Police and Fire Departments were too far away.

It was also during the 1920s that Louis Bovet, a

member of the family, built a beautiful English-style home on the Borel estate. In later years it became Chuck's Steak House. Today the Borel Bank and Trust building sits on the site.

During the 1920s the elite were able to regain some of their elegant life style. Blooded horses retained their stature among the elite sporting circles. Polo was played not only at the San Mateo Polo Club but on private fields at various estates in the San Mateo and Hillsborough area.

Interest in things equestrian probably reached its zenith in 1929 with the formation of the Gymkhanna Club on seventeen acres just east of the Beresford Country Club. The club's first president was the well-known Mrs. Nion Tucker. Its manager and instructor was Dr. H. Hordon. While it sponsored an annual horse show and race, the chief attractions of the Gymkhanna Club were the facilities catering to horses and their owners, and proximity to many trails throughout the nearby hills.¹⁰

By the early 1930s, things began to fall apart for the "horsy set." Fewer people could afford to maintain strings of polo ponies, or even to belong to polo clubs. Furthermore, the march of development south from the center of the city began to squeeze out stables and pastures. New suburban neighbors complained to the city council about flies.

In April 1931, notices were issued to stable owners in the south San Mateo area reminding them of San Mateo's sanitation ordinances. City Manager E. P. Wilsey now warned that if substantial progress toward compliance was not made within ten days of his communication, \$300 fines would be levied. Among those notified were members of the Peninsula's highest social circles, including George A. Pope, Jr., Will Tevis, Jr., and Lindsey Howard. The exclusive Gymkhanna Club was also notified.

Then ensued a standoff known as "the San Mateo Stable War," or "The Horse Fly War." The elite simply ignored these notices. Eventually, the City Council sat down with some of them, behind closed doors, with the press specifically excluded, and settled the matter by compromising on some of the ordinances—for a while. Eventually, the influx of housing projects in south San Mateo after World War II forced the equestrians out.

In the 1920s San Mateo became a paradise for golfers at the Beresford Club, which catered to prominent Jewish families of San Francisco and the Peninsula. Utilization was light enough so that playing times for women and children were not restricted, as was the case at other clubs.

Moreover, the course was in great shape, and members claimed that the food was the envy of San Francisco Bay Area clubdom. The Sunday buffet was particularly famous