

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	MAY 2 1978
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	JUL 12 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

RECEIVED

**1 NAME**

MAR 27 1978

HISTORIC

Toverii Tuppa

OHP

AND/OR COMMON

Finnish Hall

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1819 10th Street

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Berkeley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

— VICINITY OF

8th

STATE

California

CODE  
06

COUNTY  
Alameda

CODE  
001

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Finnish

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Cultural

NAME

Mary C. Durant

STREET & NUMBER

1819 10th Street

CITY, TOWN

Berkeley

— VICINITY OF

STATE  
California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Alameda County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

1516 Oak Street

CITY, TOWN

Oakland

STATE  
California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Historic Resources Inventory

DATE

September 1977

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Resources Agency

Dept. of Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE  
California

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Finnish Hall -- a large, white, ship-lap building constructed primarily from fir and redwood timbers -- stands three stories in height and exterior appearance. The Hall is an unbroken, unadorned barn-shaped rectangle (about 50' wide, 80' deep, and 57' high) towering above the one-story, single-family dwellings which typify the surrounding West Berkeley residential neighborhood. There are three levels of tall rectangular windows with dentilled balconies constructed at the second and third floor levels above the entrance; the two top floors are together occupied by the large interior auditorium. Sections to either side of the central doorway project about 5' forward with story-high roof peaks pronouncing a tower effect. Square wooden columns stand at the top of the entryway stairs securing the first level balcony and dividing the entrance into three equal parts which compliment the basic three-part structural design of the entire front. The hip roof with protruding gables at each end of the ridge covers the vents from the auditorium ceiling. The roof line is completed by wide overhanging and scrolled eaves brackets formed from decoratively-cut wood. Five large second story windows provide natural lighting for the auditorium. The tall building has a simple brace frame with studs broken by supporting plates to add additional strength. The ceiling of the auditorium is supported by a truss and purlin arrangement with a series of eight knee braces on either side of the ceiling; the braces run ten feet apart and are used to carry the tremendous weight of the ceiling's fifty foot span.

The original design of the ground floor interior divided the building into an entry hall (a vestibule/baffle arrangement with broad, quarter-turn winder stairs reaching up to the auditorium), a large central club room, kitchen and dining room, sewing room, and caretaker's apartment. On the left of the main landing of the right stairway lies the Baby Room -- a small chamber of wooden panels (all interior woodwork is walnut-stained and varnished fir) and curtained door which served as ticket office, practice room, and sitting room for small children during Finnish cultural performances and community meetings. The spacious auditorium climbs to a three-story height with its cream-colored ceiling curving gently and disguising the pitch of the roof; while a series of five strut beams and exposed walnut-stained knee braces exaggerate the vertical strength of the building. The auditorium (45'X57') was designed to serve as a dance floor with a capacity of four hundred. Three-quarters inch raw maple hardwood was used originally; the floor was sanded and refinished in January 1978 so that it might retain its original usefulness as a dance floor. At the east end of the auditorium stands a deep, raked stage -- a thirty-two foot proscenium painted cream, but dominated by the heavy dark maroon velvetine curtains which command the entire auditorium's color scheme. (A new set of curtains were purchased in 1977 with assistance from the Finnish Cultural Association.) The stage area is well equipped, including footlights, overhead lights, trap doors, a prompter's seat, and a variety of handpainted stage sets. The area between the stage and the first floor contain two dressing rooms, storage space and a bathroom. A simple dog-leg stairway connects the dressing room area to the first floor. Downstairs, a counter divides the kitchen from the dining area. Above the counter is a heavy beam which -- along with its counterpart in the middle of the dining room -- spans the width of the room. Swinging wood panel

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
.PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> _LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _RELIGION	
.1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> _ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCIENCE	
.1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> _AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> _LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _SCULPTURE	
.1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> _MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> _SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
.1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> _ART	<input type="checkbox"/> _ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> _MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> _THEATER	
.1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> _EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> _TRANSPORTATION	
.1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> _COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> _INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> _POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> _OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> _INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1908-09 built

BUILDER/ARCHITECT August Trille

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

By the turn of the century, the western seacoast cities from Seattle to San Francisco had attracted the second largest group of Finnish immigrants in the nation. Many of the immigrants were sailors who had used the port towns for legal or illegal entry; still many others were farmers and skilled craftsmen who had fled their homes because of a harsh, unproductive environment and political strife. A particularly large Finnish community had settled in San Francisco and the surrounding area; one of the largest concentrations was to be found in Berkeley. In a 1977 interview Mrs. Alda Anderson, a seventy year old Finnish woman who had lived at 1715 9th Street, described the Finnish neighborhood boundaries as being north of University, east to Sacramento, and as far west as 6th Street. There were "scads" of Finnish people within these boundaries, said Mrs. Anderson.

The Finns established a closely-knit community which prided itself on maintaining the cultural traditions and values of the homeland. "The Finnish cultural heritage" writes Marion Hammond in a survey of Finnish settlement in Berkeley, "was part of the immigrants' survival equipment." Central in maintaining the cultural heritage was the traditional Finnish Hall -- a community meeting place which served as theatre, dining room, ballroom, and social center. Marion Hammond writes:

With extraordinary energy and creativity the immigrants erected an elaborate structure of organizations and institutions to provide for their cultural, social, and economic needs.... The Finn Hall became a standard feature of the Finnish immigrant settlements in which old world cultural traditions of music, theatre, literature, and oratory were sustained.

Berkeley's earliest Finnish settlers had relied upon regular excursions across the bay (the train stopped in the Finnish neighborhood at 9th and University) to take part in activities at the San Francisco Finnish Hall. When the San Francisco building burned down early in the century, the Berkeley settlers decided to build their own meeting place. On October 21, 1908 the Finnish Comrade Association applied for a building permit to construct a traditional meeting hall in the heart of Berkeley's large Finnish community at 1819 10th Street. August Trille, 2606 Dwight Way, Berkeley, was listed as the architect; the cost ran \$5,000.

From 1908-09 the Berkeley Finns worked at what has been rumoured to be the largest building in the nation built entirely from volunteer labor. The division of labor included every willing member of the community: typically, the men -- many of them carpenters by trade or avocation -- worked on the actual construction of the building, while the women raised the money necessary to pay for materials by working as domestics and through organizing fundraising dinners and dances

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Susanna Sheldrick Cohen, "Finnish Hall", a 1973 research paper for UC Berkeley Interviews with Finnish community members, 1977 and 1978  
A survey of Finnish settlement in Berkeley, by Marion Hammond 1978  
The Berkeley Gazette July 20, 1934  
The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Urban Conservation Survey 1977  
CALIFORNIA'S UNCOMMON MARKETS The Story of the Consumers Cooperatives 1935-1971  
by Robert Neptune Associated Cooperatives, Inc. 1971  
Finland - The Republic Farthest North Eugene Van Cleef Ohio State Press 1929

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/5th acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Oakland West, California

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:2400

UTM REFERENCES

A 10 562210 4191460

B         

ZONE EASTING

NORTHING

ZONE

EASTING

NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION between  
East side of Tenth Street, bordered by Hearst on the south and Delaware on the  
north, on Alameda County Tax Assessors Record Lot No. 57-2087-12.

J.F.T. 7/11/78

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Fred Setterberg / Program Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

East Bay Center for the Performing Arts

DATE

March 24, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

2369 Barrett Avenue

TELEPHONE

(415) 234-5624

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

California

94804

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Knou Miller

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 5/22/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/2/78

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

7-12-78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Urban Conservation Survey

1977 Local

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association  
2134 Grove  
Berkeley, California

Item Number 7

DESCRIPTION

doors connect the dining area to the club room. (In 1975 the club room was sanded and refinished so that it also is now suitable for formal dance instruction.) The library and sewing room were separated from the dining area and club room by a narrow hallway leading from the entrance vestibule. The simply constructed, four hundred square foot caretaker's apartment is located in the rear of the building, separated from the kitchen by another narrow hall space and a stairway leading to the former dressing rooms.

Texts on Finnish architecture and interviews with Finns active in the local community indicate that the design of the Hall did not derive from counterparts in Finland at the time of construction. Rather, the Hall has been described as capturing a variety of traditional Finnish, local, and classical styles (see "Finnish Hall", an art history research paper written by University of California at Berkeley student Susanna Sheldrick Cohen, October 1973, stored at Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association).

The entrance has a Bay Area folk flavor which combines some elements of gothic cottage ornament with neo-classic symmetry and solidity. Whatever else may be classified as style comes out of pure practicality and economy, as the Finnish community could afford no luxury other than a moderately impressive entrance.

The symmetry, the ornament, and simplicity of the building's exterior is held consistent in the interior design. Above all these qualities, the building has proven itself to be durable materially and adjustable to social use having served the Finns' social organization and a variety of other community groups throughout the years.

Also, see attached copy of Finnish Hall blueprints.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

within the community. A 1977 survey by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association described how Finnish cultural values and the spirit of cooperation left their mark even upon the physical appearance of the building.

The building itself has a strong feeling of community -- groundfloor rooms provide for almost every sort of need, and the main entrance is through a sort of vestibule/baffle arrangement which places the community at one more remove from the outside: an ethnic refuge in trying times.

The Hall became the cohesive factor within the thriving Finnish community. Among the activities taking place regularly at the Hall were plays, concerts, dinners, dances, sewing circles, reading clubs, and a chorus (which first began in 1902 and is still meeting and singing today).

Many of the Finns were also politically active in the trades union movement and in left politics. In 1934 the Hall was used to feed strikers during the western seacoast dockworkers' walk-out, and then throughout the San Francisco general strike which was precipitated by violence on the docks in July. The response to Finnish political activism was detailed in a July 20, 1934 article in The Berkeley Gazette headlined, "Vigilantes Raid 2 Halls, Throw Brick 'Warnings'".

Almost simultaneous with similar raids in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose civilian groups here swooped down and wrecked two headquarters of Communists and left warnings at the homes of alleged radicals..... Badly damaged were Comrades Hall, also known as the Finnish Workers Hall, 1819 10th Street....

At Finnish Hall on Tenth Street, a mob rushed into the building. A huge banner bearing the motto, "Workers of the World Unite," apparently inflamed them and considerable damage was done.

The police system of radio patrol was "paralyzed" by the scores of calls which literally flooded the police switchboard.

The Finns claimed that the "paralysis" was a case of selective enforcement. In September 1934 the Finnish Brotherhood Society sued the City of Berkeley for damages incurred during the raid. The incident also helped focus attention to the political rift which had been growing within the Finnish community. In 1935 politically moderate Finns moved to the new Finnish Brotherhood Hall constructed at 1970 Chestnut in Berkeley. The larger 10th Street Hall was referred to as "Red Finn Hall".

The Finnish immigrants also brought to Berkeley their strong tradition of cooperative buying. (There are more cooperatives per capita in Finland than any other nation in the world.) On April 16, 1938, the Finns opened Berkeley's (and probably California's) first cooperative gas station at the corner of Bancroft and San Pablo Avenues. The Berkeley Cooperative Union, Inc. began this enterprise with \$1,099 invested by over 100 members. Later during that year, the Finns

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joined with the fledgling cooperative grocery run at Shattuck Avenue by the Pacific Cooperative Services. This was the beginning of the Co-Op supermarket chain which now maintains more than fourteen grocery and related stores throughout the Bay Area. Robert Neptune's CALIFORNIA'S UNCOMMON MARKETS The Story of the Consumers Cooperatives 1935-1971 states that during the early stages of the cooperatives growth, the Finns "made a profound contribution to its survival."

As the years passed, the Finnish settlers began to mix frequently with the community at-large. First generation Finnish-Americans grew up and began to move away from the old neighborhood. As a result, the Hall became less frequently used. The BAHA survey explains that, "As the Finns integrated into Bay Area life, the refuge became less necessary... and in a sense the Co-Op and political and labor activities helped undermine the need for the Hall." Still, in spite of the declining numbers of Finnish people living in the old neighborhood and the resulting decreased use of the Hall, the Finns maintained ownership of Finnish Hall until 1972 when it was sold to Pacific Publishing/Rapid Press, Inc.

The Hall is currently rented in-part to East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, a non-profit community school providing a wide variety of dance, music, and drama instruction and performance.

Though no longer the legal owners, the Finns retain the right to use the Hall for their continuing community activities such as dances, dinners, chorus practice, and meetings. In 1977 a benefit entertainment show was held in the auditorium of the Hall; the benefit was attended by many of the older Finnish people who had once actively used the Hall. Money was raised for improvements and renovation of the building. Care and maintenance of Finnish Hall is currently guided by a committee of the current owners, tenants, and the former owners -- the Finns. This unique kind of building management -- born of a concern for the building which transcends proprietary rights -- is in order with the cooperative spirit in which Finnish Hall was first built.