

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
In the heart of downtown Oakland

CITY, TOWN
Oakland

STATE
California

VICINITY OF
06

COUNTY
Alameda

CODE
001

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
City of Oakland

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Oakland

STATE
California

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Alameda County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Oakland

STATE
California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Expansive gardens, both public and private, surround Lake Merritt, a natural water park in the midst of the city. Three miles around, the lagoon is 160 acres in extent, and across its placid surface ply fleets of pleasure craft: sailboats, rowboats, and canoes. Lake Merritt's waters are salt; in fact, this is an arm of the bay, though cut off from it by a broad causeway and moveable dam. On the shores of Lake Merritt like Lakeside Park and Peralta Park. The lake is encircled by parkways and paved boulevards, which are flanked by attractive homes and public buildings; and around it reaches a "necklace of lights" giving a striking effect at night with the circlet of amber globes reflected in the shimmering waters.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INOUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The bill that created America's first official wildlife refuge was introduced into the 1869-1870 California legislature by Senator Edward Thompkins and became law March 18, 1870. Quinn's History of California stated that in 1852 Dr. Samuel Merritt of Oakland bought the land which was then a slough and helped form the body of water now known as Lake Merritt.

This wildfowl sanctuary, now in the heart of the business section of Oakland, is an outstanding example of attraction of migratory birds under somewhat adverse conditions. Thousands of waterfowl spend the winter here, attracted by the sanctuary, the food and the resting grounds provided for them. We have no present means of probing the events that prompted this pioneer conservation effort. It is interesting to note, however, that an examination of naturalists' magazines of that day failed to disclose a line devoted to this or any other refuge.

Lake Merritt, the oldest legally established wildlife refuge in the country, is now supported and maintained by the city of Oakland. It has attained fame as a wintering ground for wild ducks. The principal visitors are pintails and canvas backs, but many others drop in to partake of its bounteous fare and avail themselves of its protection. Baldpates and shovellers rank third and fourth in numbers but numerous other species occur, at least occasionally. To stand on the shore of this small body of water, entirely surrounded by the city, and watch the waterfowl come over the office and apartment buildings and tumble out of the sky, sometimes in ludicrous haste to reach the banquet spread for them, is certainly a novel experience.

Lake Merritt has become one of the most popular attractions in the bay district, it being not uncommon for hundreds of persons to gather and watch the behavior of the flocks of waterfowl that move in and out.

On January 17, 1929, E. W. Ehman caught a European widgeon in a banding trap operated on Lake Merritt. Probably it was the same bird noted in several previous years but it had never before entered the trap. Who among bird students would not like to know something of the journeying of the Old World straggler in the intervals between its appearances in its California winter home?

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ira Gabrielson, Wildlife Refuges
 Edward Graham - Land and Wildlife
 Charles Quinn - History of California
 Ruth Tesser - Historic Spots in California

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 160 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	56,49,6,0	4,18,49,0,0	B	1,0	56,62,2,0	4,18,46,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,6	56,55,4,0	4,18,35,2,0	D	1,0	56,49,0,0	4,18,35,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge is encircled by a paved sidewalk. Beginning at the intersection of Lake Shore Avenue and 12th Street, proceed northwest approximately 800', thence, in a curving northerly fashion along the sidewalk for approximately 4000'; thence, continuing on the sidewalk in a southerly direction approximately 2200'; thence, northeasterly for approximately 3000-; thence, southwesterly along the sidewalk 4500' to the point of origin.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Cecil McKithan, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey Division

DATE

10/18/77

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

523-5295

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

9/8/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE

Landmark consists of the lake only. The paved sidewalk is the most appropriate and pronounced boundary for this landmark.