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# PIEDMONT -OAKLAND

Published by Hills Publishing, Inc.  
at PIEDMONT PRESS, 131 41st St.  
Phone 658-2342 Mailing address:  
P.O. Box 11095 — 94611 Oakland

# Bulletin

Volume 70, No. 32, August 6, 1986

Published since 1916

Single Copies 25 cents

## Piedmont Avenue Branch Library... 75 Years of Community Service

By Ray Rainer

One need not be a long-time resident of the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood in order to develop an awareness and appreciation of the many excellent attributes and qualities the area offers its inhabitants.

Although by no means unaffected by growth, development, and periodic congestion, the neighborhood has managed, over the decades, to retain a sense of cohesiveness and stability few other areas in the city can claim. In fact, the stretch of Piedmont Avenue from MacArthur Boulevard to Pleasant Valley Avenue, has within it a number of blocks generating a "Main Street U.S.A." image — particularly on a warm weekend evening when foot-traffic often outnumbers the autos.

Our story this month will highlight a small-in-size, but large-in-importance neighborhood institution, that has been a part of the neighborhood, continuously enhancing and contributing to its educational enrichment for 75 years — The Piedmont Avenue Branch Library.

While the City of Oakland formally organized a library in 1868 known as the "Oakland Free Library," branches in outlying neighborhoods would not be established until much later and at a point when two developments would converge: a neighborhood had grown to sufficient size, population-wise, and secondly, within that population, there would need to be a group of individuals who would organize and vigorously press city officials that the time had come to build or set up a library in their neighborhood.

Oakland's earliest branch libraries thus were established in some of its oldest sections — West Oakland Branch, 1878; East Oakland Branch, 1878; and the 23rd Avenue Branch, 1890.

Shortly after the turn of the century, a burst of dramatic growth would begin on and adjacent to Piedmont Avenue that would signal the start of a humming residential and commercial center. Already well in place were several large nurseries supplying the needs of St. Mary's and Mountain View Cemeteries, organized in 1862 and 1863 respectively.

1902 saw the venerable Piedmont Grocery Company begin, and the following year the introduction of the one major feature that would en-

### Class of 1976

### Where Are You?

It's not too late to make reservations to attend the Piedmont High School Class of 1976 10th reunion on August 23. The gathering will take place at the Four Star Restaurant in San Francisco.

About three dozen classmates have still not been located. Among them are Kelly Bolton, Tom Eustis, Bruce Gaertner, Scott Harriman, Sean Kelleher, Liz Murray, Suzanne Rosling, Charlie Sherwin, Keith Stewart, Jeri Wilner, Muff Robertson, and the Hoskins (all four).

Those who can help locate the above, or wish further information, may call Cathy Hughes at 929-7852 or Susan Tornlof at 655-7026.



A nice photo showing the Piedmont Avenue Branch Library, 160 41st Street. This 1939 shot reflects two features no longer present — the neatly trimmed plantings, and the arched-canopied entrance at extreme right. Opened on March 7, 1932, this structure was the first branch building constructed in Oakland solely for library purposes. The new branch would replace two former adjoining stores at 3943-45 Piedmont Avenue that had served as the original branch beginning.



C. M. C.