

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

D1-15

Ser. No. _____
HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 3 SHL _____ Loc X
UTM: A 10/566430/4182660 B _____
C _____ D _____

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: None
2. Historic name: BAMFORD, Dr. William, House
3. Street or rural address: 1235-9 East 15th Street
City Oakland Zip 94606 County Alameda
4. Parcel number: 20-141-3
5. Present Owner: Jack B. & Merna O. Holmes Address: P.O. Box 5063
City Oakland Zip 94605 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Residence Original use: Same

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Simplified Gothic Revival
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

This structure is an irregular, one-and-one-half story rectangular house on a low base with an attached one-story side addition both clad in clapboards. The original house has a gable roof with a central cross-gable in front and a boxed cornice. A four-bay porch across the front has split columns at each end; the left middle column has been replaced with a plain post. Original windows are 6/6 light, double-hung sash set in trabeated frames; the window in the cross gable has 15 lights. The flat-roofed side addition has the same windows; both doors have been altered.

A decorative Gothic style fringe may have originally been attached to the roof eaves.

A rough picket fence encloses the front yard.



8. Construction date:
Estimated 1860 Factual _____
9. Architect Unknown
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 60' Depth 100'
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
1981

27-3A/4

1235-39 East 15th Street

13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair X Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___
14. Alterations: Some porch columns replaced; some windows and doors modified.
- Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up X
Residential X Industrial ___ Commercial ___ Other: ___
16. Threats to site: None known ___ Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: deterioration; remodeling
17. Is the structure: On its original site? ___ Moved? Yes Unknown? ___
18. Related features: None

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

The Dr. William Bamford House is significant as a locally rare example of a Gothic Revival cottage, for its apparently early age (1850's or 1860's), and for its association with Bamford, the neighborhood's first physician. The house is also at least indirectly associated with Robert Louis Stevenson's 1880 stay within the neighborhood.

The style of the house suggests that it was built in the 1850's or 1860's. Local historian Jane Voiles believed that it was one of the oldest houses in the Clinton neighborhood, which began to develop in the early 1850's. It apparently was originally located closer to the Estuary ¹, and was probably moved to its present location shortly after the Bamfords purchased the property in September, 1870.

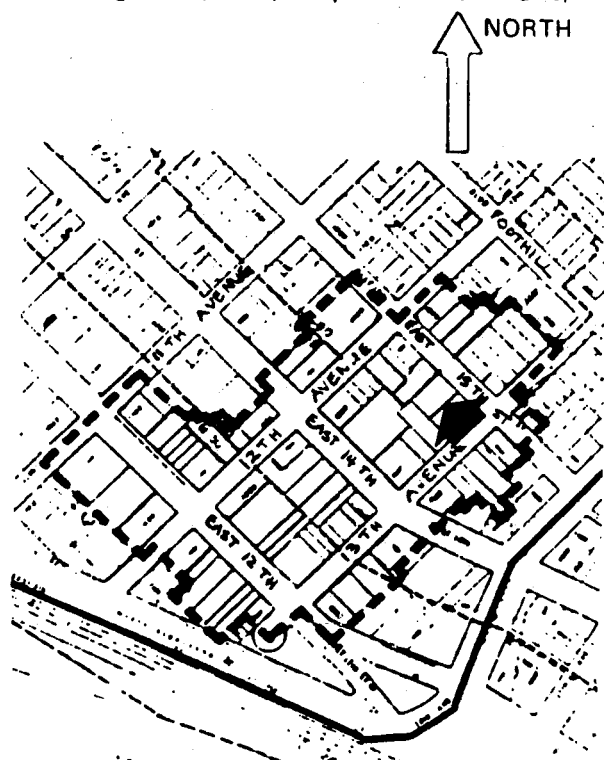
The purchase price of \$800 in gold coin is comparable to the values of other similar vacant parcels in the area at the time, suggesting that the Bamford's property was vacant at the time of purchase. The Bamfords are first shown residing here in the 1871-72 City directory. (See Continuation page 3)

- ¹A.R. Issler, p. 127.
20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture 2 Arts & Leisure 3
Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement 1
Government ___ Military ___
Religion ___ Social/Education ___
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
1. Sanborn Insurance Maps.
2. City Tax Block Books.
3. City Directories.
4. Alameda Co. Recorder's Records.
5. City Tax Assessment Records.
22. Date form prepared May 31, 1981
By (name) Staff and consultants
Organization Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey
Address: City Planning Dept., City Hall
City Oakland, CA Zip 94612
Phone: (415) 273-3941

21. Cont'd.

6. "The Bamford House," by C. Douthat.
7. A.R. Issler, Happier For His Presence, Stanford U. Press, 1949.
8. Halley, History of Alameda Co., 1876, p. 544.

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



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19. Bamford came to Clinton² in 1867, having emigrated from Ireland via Sonoma County (1856)³. The Bamfords appear to have resided several blocks away at the corner of Humbert and Walker (East 20th Street and 13th Avenue) prior to purchasing the subject property. Bamford attended Robert Louis Stevenson, who was suffering from a tubercular hemorrhage, during the latter's early 1880 stay at Fannie Osbourne's house at the northeast corner of East 18th Street and 11th Avenue. The one-story wing on the Bamford House initially served as the doctor's waiting room and office and had a separate entrance from the street.⁴

By the time of Stevenson's stay, Bamford had relocated his office to East 12th Street. Stevenson appears to have made frequent visits to the office, the two men becoming good friends. Stevenson may also have made a few visits to Bamford's house.⁵ The Bamford family occupied the house until 1946, when Bamford's daughter, Mary, died.

This property is one of the few extant residences dating from the earliest settlement of the Clinton/Brooklyn area. Although moved, the present setback and siting are typical of the early land use pattern here, prior to more intensive development which began in the 1870's.

Bamford was the first physician in Clinton, serving as head of the City Board of Health at one time. Mary, his daughter, an author and librarian, contributed poems and stories to the Overland Monthly in the late 1800s. Bamford's association with Stevenson during the latter's serious illness is of particular historical interest.

The house contributes to a possible Clinton/Brooklyn historic district.

²Annexed to Oakland, 1872.

³Issler, Op.cit., p. 112.

⁴Ibid., p. 127.

⁵Ibid.