

Golden Gate,
distance.



Picturing Berkeley

A POSTCARD HISTORY

Burl Willes
Editor

CONTRIBUTORS

Anthony Bruce
Kenneth H. Cardwell
Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny
Ed Herny
Sarah Wikander
Burl Willes

BERKELEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

"Golden Gate and Bird's-Eye View of Berkeley, California."
N. J. Abbott & Son,
hand-colored.

The postcard publishers' favorite "bird's-eye" view was the panorama from the hills behind the University, looking over the campus, across Berkeley and the bay, and out through the Golden Gate. Invariably, the "triumvirate" of early campus buildings—South Hall, Bacon Hall with its rotunda, and North Hall—was the focus of the postcard. In later views, as in this card, California Hall, the first of the white granite campus buildings to be completed under the Hearst Plan, shared the spotlight with the other three. In fact, California Hall, sitting behind North Hall, is a good benchmark for dating early bird's-eye view cards.

Berkeley, the home of the University of California... lies on a sloping plain and on picturesque hill-sides—a site matchless for beauty of prospect.... When all the State was open for choice, this spot was selected, on account of its many points of superiority, as an ideal college seat... The place thus chosen lay facing the... Golden Gate.

There is a superb outlook from Berkeley over the bay and city of San Francisco, over the neighboring plains and the mountains beyond the bay, over the ocean through the Golden Gate. The glory of this scene is never two days alike, and even one magnificent sunset would be worth a long trip to observe.

—Berkeley, California, A City of Homes, 1905

BERKELEY'S LOCATION, DIRECTLY OPPOSITE THE GOLDEN GATE, HAS GIVEN THE CITY A DISTINCT GEOGRAPHIC advantage in terms of beauty. It was not an exaggeration in the early 1900s, nor is it now, to call the city "Beautiful Berkeley."

When the Trustees of the College of California chose this location for their new campus in 1860, it was not only the verdant creekside location that attracted them, but also the exquisite views of bay, mountain, and distant ocean, as well as the ever-changing spectacle of nature that the views provided.

From no other place in the Bay Area are there views directly through the Golden Gate to the Pacific Ocean beyond, and in no other place do the forces of nature provide a constantly varying panorama of spectacular visual events. The wide

vista of water and sky are continually affected by the tides, wind, and fog and present a different face at different times of the day and in different seasons. Brilliant sunsets merge into the ocean depths or silently settle in silver streaks behind an incoming fog. On days of sparkling clarity, when winds have blown away haze and mist, along the far horizon the Farallon Islands appear in silhouette. The pageant seizes the imagination of the beholder to this day.

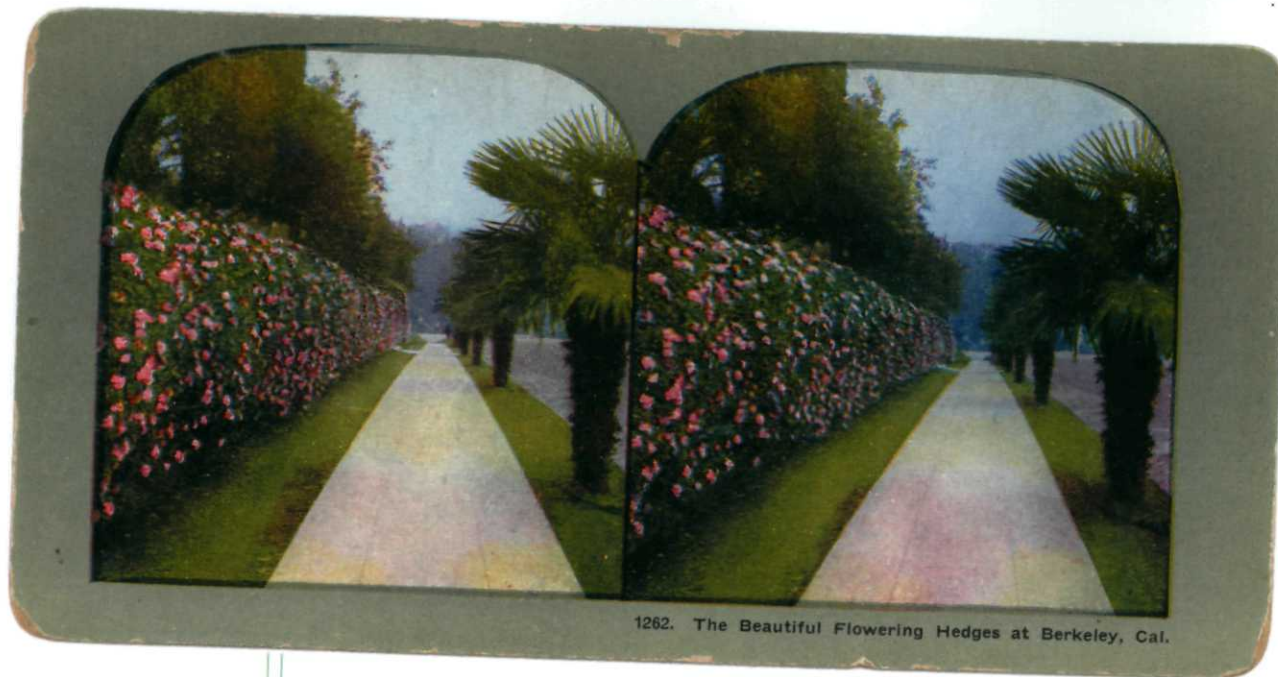
From the time of the earliest settlement, painters—and then photographers—attempted to capture the quality of this unique and intriguing vista. And, naturally, when postcards were first being published of Berkeley, bird's-eye views of the Golden Gate from the hills overlooking the University of California were of special interest to postcard publishers. In fact, many of the earliest Berkeley postcards featured panoramic views. At the same time, postcards depicting buildings would often also include bits of natural landscape features, such as the Berkeley hills, Grizzly Peak, rock outcroppings, or ancient oaks.

Promoting Berkeley meant promoting its natural beauty, and the Chamber of Commerce commissioned many of the photographs that postcard publishers later used for their images.

The University grounds themselves were extolled early and often for their natural beauty. During the postcard heyday, although not officially a "park," the campus was the largest

The City Beautiful

2



park-like site on the east side of the bay, and people had long been accustomed to using it almost as a "public pleasure ground." The features that were especially beloved by residents and visitors alike were the two meandering forks of Strawberry Creek and the grove of oaks near the west entrance to the campus. A writer in the 1880s wrote that the natural areas, "dotted with fine specimens of live-oak, have, though untouched, a finished park-like appearance, and are gay with wild poppies, buttercups, primroses, and blue lilies through winter and spring."

The fact that Berkeley was blessed with one of the world's most spectacular natural settings did not prevent Berkeleyans from enhancing what was there. In the early days, farmers planted stands of eucalyptus trees as windbreaks and for

boundary demarcation. These later grew to forest the bare hills and provided a rich backdrop for the buildings of both Town and Gown. In 1865, Frederick Law Olmsted was asked by the Trustees of the College of California to plan a residential subdivision for the new college town. His gently curving Piedmont Avenue with its "parked" median and "overbowing" trees was the result, and it survives to this day. By 1900, steep hillside streets north of the campus began to be improved with terracing, and retaining walls were planted with ivy geranium, left to spill over in artistic fashion. Soon after, developers used similar design principles to create subdivisions with contoured streets, lush plantings, and other civic amenities. Even a man-made reservoir could double as a placid lake with the sunset glow reflected in its still water. The citizens of Berkeley were proud of such civic improvements, and their eye-catching appeal is demonstrated by their appearance in the postcards of the day.

—Susan Dinkelspiel Cerny
Anthony Bruce

"The Beautiful Flowering Hedges at Berkeley, Cal."
Stereo view card,
No. 1262.

A description of Berkeley is printed on the reverse of this stereopticon card. It reads in part, "Embowered among beautiful trees, lies Berkeley, the seat of the Colleges of Letters and Sciences of the University of California. It was named in honor of Bishop Berkeley, who, sitting below Paradise Rock at Newport, R.I., composed the lyric containing the much quoted stanza:

Westward the course of
empire takes its way,
The first four acts
already past,
A fifth shall end the
drama of the day,
Time's noblest offspring
is the last."

The picture shows
Berkeley's Northside
neighborhood.



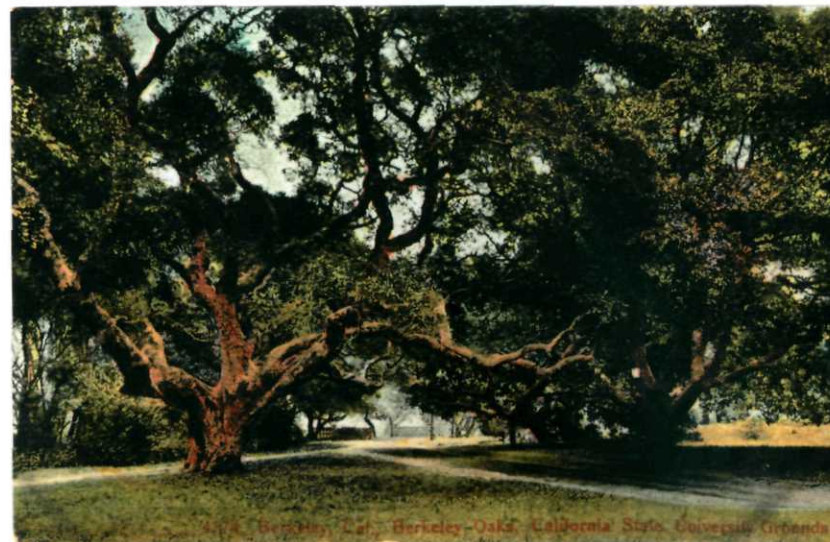
181 Berkeley, California, Oaks at University Grounds.



776 University of California, Berkeley, California — Ancient Indian burial ground.



349 GRIZZLY PEAK, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



4174 Berkeley, Cal., Berkeley Oaks, California State University Grounds.

"Berkeley, California, Oaks at University Grounds."

Charles Weidner, No. 181.

The grove of magnificent old live oaks at the confluence of the two forks of Strawberry Creek on the University campus was left untouched when other areas of the grounds were graded and planted. Visitors to the campus entering on foot from Center Street approached through this quiet and shady natural area, as they still do today.

"University of California, Berkeley, California—Ancient Indian burial ground."

Cardinell-Vincent Co., No. 776.

The location of this picture is a mystery. Most likely, it is the rocky, oak-dotted region far north of the campus, later developed as the Thousand Oaks neighborhood, which was referred to as the "burial grounds" in literature of the time.

"Grizzly Peak, University of California, Berkeley."

Edward H. Mitchell, No. 349.

Grizzly Peak, at 1,800 feet above sea level, is the most visible peak in the Berkeley Hills.

"Berkeley, Cal., Berkeley Oaks, California State University Grounds."

Paul C. Koeber Co., "The PCK Series" No. 4174.

Two oaks guard the path leading to a bridge over Strawberry Creek and to Douglas Tilden's Football Statue.

"Walk in University of California grounds, Berkeley, Cal."
Paul C. Koeber Co., No. 4171.

This peaceful late afternoon scene among the oaks shows a walkway south of the present Campanile. At the right, the ground falls away to Strawberry Creek and Faculty Glade.

"Berkeley, Cal., Le Conte Oak, California State University."
Paul C. Koeber Co., "The PCK Series" No. 4173.

The most revered of the campus oaks was the LeConte Oak, shown in the center. In 1898, it was named to honor two beloved members of the faculty, John LeConte, third University president, and his brother Professor Joseph LeConte. This "chieftain" tree of the grove succumbed to old age in 1939 and was replaced.

"The Oaks, University of California, Berkeley."
Edward H. Mitchell, No. 346.

"Berkeley Oaks, Berkeley, Cal."
Newman Post Card Co., No. W. 20.

These gnarled oaks flanked the curving private drive leading to the Frederick Russ House, off Claremont Avenue. The contours have been preserved in present-day Oak Vale Avenue.



4171. Walk in University of California grounds, Berkeley, Cal.



4173 Berkeley, Cal., Le Conte Oak, California State University.



346 THE OAKS, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



Berkeley Oaks, Berkeley, Cal.



"Stiles Hall, University of California, Berkeley."

Clinton Day, architect of Stiles Hall in 1893, designed many of the campus buildings constructed during the 1880s and 1890s, none of which remain. Stiles Hall, the University Y.M.C.A., stood on Allston Way just outside the Dana Street entrance to the campus.

"Rustic Bridge, University of California, Berkeley."

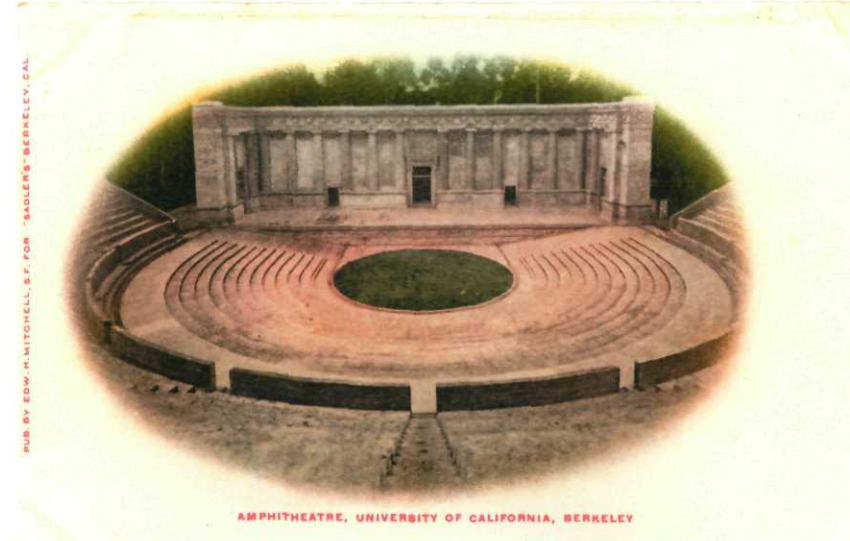
The "Rustic Bridge"—actually, there were several spanning Strawberry Creek, each resplendent in its own intricacy of design—was a very popular subject for postcard publishers.

"The Berkeley Oaks, University of California."

Eighteen of the Sadler's vignette postcards have been identified, including two views of the oaks. Perhaps there are others waiting to be discovered! See page 69 for the vertical "Strawberry Canyon" postcard in this series.

"Amphitheatre, University of California, Berkeley."

This is one of two different views of the Greek Theater published by Sadler's.





Water Falls, University Creek-Co. Ed. Canon. Berkeley, Cal.

Picturing the University of California



THE HISTORY OF POSTCARD DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA RUN A parallel course. Both began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and reached their “Golden Age” at the beginning of the twentieth. The picture postcard gives an interesting portrayal of the physical development of the University that supplements the written record.

On March 23, 1868, Governor Haight of the State of California gave final approval to the Charter, or Organic Act, a document drawn up to establish the University of California. The University was the result of an amalgamation of two academic institutions, the private College of California of Oakland, which had owned land for campus development since 1860, and a State technical school established in 1866–1867 as an “Agricultural, Mining and Mechanical Arts College” to take advantage of Federal land grant legislation. The merger proposed that the private college would donate its land, and that the State would sell its grant land for funds to build buildings.

The College of California site was a picturesque spot on Strawberry Creek in the quiet and peaceful countryside north of the town of Oakland. It had been selected “because of its abundant water supply, its mild climate, the absence of severe winds, the rolling landscape abundantly covered with oak,

sycamore and bay trees, the superb views to the Golden Gate and Sausalito mountains, the rather convenient but not pressing proximity of Oakland and San Francisco.” To the founding fathers the reasons for the site choice were obvious. They believed proper education should be carried out in a wholesome and idyllic setting discreetly away from the temptations and distractions of city life—a setting that combined natural beauty and the virtue of a non-urban atmosphere.

The University of California had modest ambitions: it wished to be nothing more than “a College of Mines, a College of Agriculture and an Academic College,” in that order, “with courses of instruction equal to those of Eastern Colleges.”

There have been several master plans for the University’s development—by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1866, by David Farquharson in 1873, by Emile Bénard for the Phoebe Hearst International Competition of 1899–1900, and by John Galen Howard in 1914.

Speaking generally, the physical development of the Berkeley campus that can be viewed on postcards falls into four broad categories:

- The **Romantic Phase**, the first decade when the rural character of the environment was preeminent, as envisioned by Olmsted.
- The **Picturesque Phase**, growing out of the Farquharson

“Water Falls, University Creek—Co. Ed. Canon. Berkeley, Cal.”
Paul C. Koeber Co.,
No. 4170.

Co-ed Canyon is now known as Faculty Glade.

plan that stressed the preservation of the natural features of the site.

- The **Classical Phase**, starting with the competition of 1899–1900 and the arrival of John Galen Howard from the East to supervise the realization of the winning Beaux-Arts plan for the University by Emile Bénard of Paris.
- The **Campus Places** that in all phases were developed by the activities and events of students, faculty, and the public.

THE ROMANTIC PHASE

In 1858, Professor Henry Durant, president of the private College of California in Oakland, selected a tract of 160 acres, at the base of the East Bay foothills and directly opposite the Golden Gate, to build an expanded campus with a residential area surrounding it. The site was dedicated in 1860. The Board of Trustees named their new town and its College after George Berkeley, the 18th century Bishop of Cloyne, leader in the field of education in new areas of investigation and research. Five years later the Trustees commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect and planner from Boston, to prepare a plan for the college and for residential lands of the College Homestead Association that were to provide funds from property sales for campus building construction.

A loose, organic planning respecting the contours of land was a prevailing mode for newly developing summer places along the Hudson River and the Atlantic shore. Andrew Jackson Downing's books sang the praises of rusticity, picturesque cottages rose on all sides, and Olmsted himself, with his project for Central Park in New York City, had introduced the idea of romantic landscapes even within urban settings where they might not be thought immediately appropriate.

His plan for the College of California was in this romantic spirit. Park-like residential areas surrounded the proposed campus, for which nothing more definite was envisaged than two "considerable buildings," one of brick to house the library, records, and scientific collections, the other of wood for classes, faculty offices, and a general assembly hall. These buildings were to be placed on an artificial plateau facing the Golden Gate. A formal avenue and two broad walks led to the head of the dell and the entrance to the campus. The straight axis to the Golden Gate, besides the magnificent open vista it helped focus, underlined the concern of the Board for the tactical position of the Golden Gate in the defense of the bay. Since officer training was made mandatory by a clause of the land grant, it was considered wise to keep units on the ready at this crucial point of the Pacific Coast defense in case of attack.

Olmsted insisted that each building for the proposed campus in the years to come be designed independently for the express purpose for which it was destined, rather than in accordance with a grand master plan. His idea was that there should be mutually independent colleges or schools contained in each building, on the model of English campuses and their imitators of the East Coast. Olmsted's plan called for a large green for athletics, park areas for the prospective town around the campus, and parkways to the bay and to Oakland.

The distance of the campus site from centers of population discouraged the buying of residential lots, and the lack of funds in turn prevented the Board from starting construction of College buildings.

"Inspection Day, California University, Berkeley, Cal." Pacific Novelty Company, No. B.32.

Spectators dressed in their Sunday best take pleasure in watching the drilling of the University Cadets.

"Campus Scene, University of California, Berkeley." Geo. C. Salch Co., No. 5214.

The red brick campus of North and South halls began to change with the addition in 1905 of the white granite California Hall. Note the barren hills.

"State University, Berkeley, Cal." Pacific Novelty Company, No. B.48.

East Hall and the Botany Building (Clinton Day, Architect, 1898) at center, right, of wooden construction, introduced the Classic style to the campus.

"In the California University Grounds, Berkeley, Cal." Pacific Novelty Company, No. B.28.

Virginia creeper vines added a picturesque quality to the red brick buildings.



"Trail to the 'Big C'
University of California,
at Berkeley."
Edward H. Mitchell,
No. 3107.

Note the barren hillside.

"Eucalyptus Grove,
University of California."
M. Rieder, No. 2891.

*The grove sheltered a track
field from the west winds.*

"Strawberry Creek,
University of California."
M. Rieder, No. 2892.

*Two branches of the creek
flow through the campus.*



THE PICTURESQUE PHASE

In 1866, the legislature established a land grant technical college, and a year later it proposed to build on a site about two miles from the College of California tract. The Board of Trustees of the College of California then decided, in the best interests of education, to merge their private institution with the new state college. The two formed the University of California under the Charter of 1868 and established a Board of Regents charged with the management of all University properties. The Committee on Grounds and Buildings was put in charge of all construction. The Board of Regents was also charged to adopt a general plan for the new campus, which "shall set aside separate buildings for separate uses, and yet group all such buildings upon a general plan, so that a larger and central building hereafter erected may bring the whole into harmony as parts of one design."

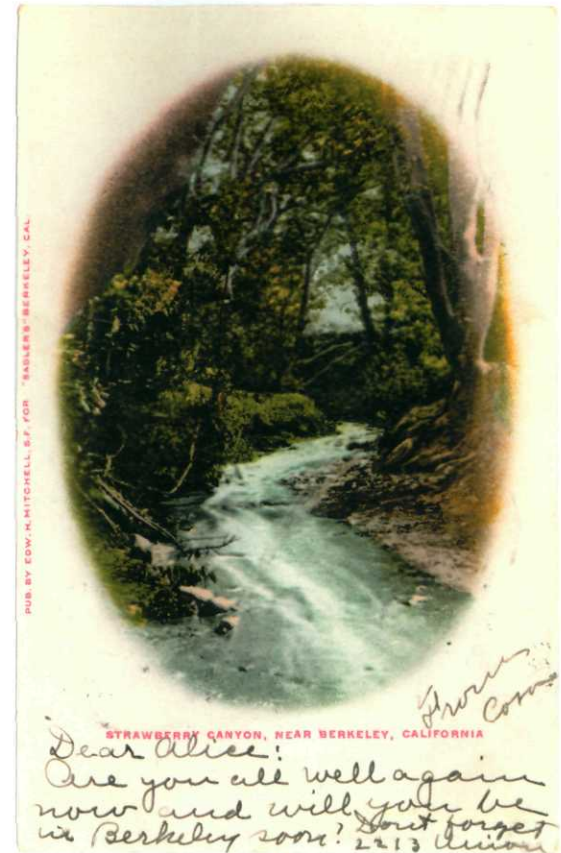
By 1870, the Regents had adopted plans for six "spacious and elegant buildings," to be known as the College of Agriculture, the College of Mechanic Arts, the College of Civil Engineering, the College of Mines, the College of Letters, and a focal structure to be known as the Hall of California. David Farquharson was selected as architect for the first two of these buildings, North Hall and South Hall, both completed in time for the University's opening in September 1873. They were located part way up the sloping site, approximately where Olmsted envisaged the placing of his "considerable buildings," overlooking the Golden Gate. And eight years later Bacon Hall, which housed the Library, was completed as the focal structure flanked by the two Halls. Of these only South Hall now survives. But the axial balance they formed prevailed in the following decades. The major cross-point today, once marked by Bacon, North, and South halls, is the axial crossing of

Campanile Way and the Campanile Esplanade. By the end of the century two more major buildings, the Civil Engineering and Mechanics buildings, joined this nucleus, while over a dozen lesser structures, mostly of frame construction, were scattered without much thought on the more level portions of the campus site. The central branch of Strawberry Creek, running through the middle of the campus site, was drained off to gain level ground for a running track and botanical garden.

"University of California, Berkeley, Cal."

E. P. Charlton & Co.

North Hall, Bacon Hall, and South Hall, arranged according to the modified Farquharson Plan of 1869, balance around the axis established by Olmsted. The flagpole stands where one day Sather Tower was to be erected.



"Strawberry Canyon, Near Berkeley, California."
Edward H. Mitchell for
"Sadler's."

Two branches of Strawberry Creek meet in the western portion of the campus and flow to San Francisco Bay.

**"University of California
and San Francisco Bay."
H. G. Z. & Co.**

*The Picturesque campus
buildings of the Farquharson
Plan, balanced around an
axis pointing to the Golden
Gate, are encompassed by
the greenery of the north
and south forks of
Strawberry Creek.*

PUBLISHED BY H. G. Z. & CO.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND SAN FRANCISCO BAY.