Oakland's first inhabitants, the Ohlone, arrived around 1,200 B.C. They were hunters who lived in harmony with nature. On March 27, 1772, Spanish explorers entered Oakland and reported the natural geography as possibly the most perfect on earth with abundant greenery and animal life.

In 1776, Spain established a presidio and mission on the west side of the Bay in what is now known as Fremont. In 1820, the Spanish crown granted Luis Maria Peralta 44,800 acres which included most of what is now Alameda County. Oakland, under Mexican rule, was legally owned by Don Luis Peralta's four sons. The Gold Rush saw a wave of non-native, non-Hispanic settlers arrive in Oakland.

In 1852, Oakland was chartered as a city and construction of shipping wharves began. In 1869, Oakland was selected as the terminus of the new transcontinental railroad, providing a vital link to the East. The city experienced a significant growth in the number of African American residents including many who worked as sleeping car porters on the railroad.

The devastating earthquake of 1906 resulted in many thousands of people and hundreds of businesses relocating from San Francisco. Between 1900 and 1910, Oakland's population more than doubled. The Chinese community welcomed an estimated 2,000 refugees who settled in Chinatown, tripling the neighborhood's population.

World War II brought tremendous change to Oakland. Huge numbers of workers moved to the area to work in local shipyards. As a result, Oakland's population grew by almost one third between 1940 and 1950 with the African American population increasing five-fold.

Under the Urban Indian Relocation Program from the late 1950s into the '70s, Oakland saw large numbers of Native Americans move to the city.

In developing this brochure, research assistance was provided by the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, Community and Economic Development Agency.

In 2010, Oakland voters elected her the 49th Mayor of Oakland. She is Oakland's first woman and first Chinese American mayor and one of the first Asian American women mayors of a major U.S. city. In her role as the City of Oakland's top executive, her deep city roots and thorough knowledge of Oakland's assets will help her administration overcome our city's challenges.

A resident of Oakland for 32 years, Jean and her husband Floyd Huen, M.D. have two grown children, William and Lailan. Both attended Oakland Public Schools and graduated from Skyline High School.

Joining Mayor Quan (second from left) are, from left to right, son William, daughter Lailan and husband Floyd Huen, M.D.

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Opened in 1993, the Pacific Renaissance Plaza (9th St. between Franklin & Webster) is a mixed-use complex with 200 units of housing, including 90 units of affordable housing, perched atop two floors of banks, shops, restaurants, offices and nonprofits. Many of the nonprofits were launched by contemporaries of Mayor Quan and her husband, Dr. Floyd Huen, who were founders of Asian American studies at UC Berkeley in the early 1970s. The Oakland Asian Cultural Center, home to the Chinatown-Oakland History Project and the Asian Branch Library are housed in the building as is the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce. Built on land set aside in the 1960s for redevelopment, the Plaza and its courtyard are used for community festivals and events throughout the year.

Across from the Pacific Renaissance Plaza at 379-9th St. is the Loong Kong Tien Yee Family Association. Family Associations were the mechanisms for arriving immigrants to find housing and jobs as well as other assistance. Individuals with common surnames or residents from the same area banded together as clans to perpetuate honoring ancestor customs. Formed in San Francisco in the 1870s, this association is one of the oldest. The Oakland Branch helped assist the estimated 2,000 refugees arriving from San Francisco’s destitute Chinatown after the 1906 earthquake. Among them were Mayor Quan’s great-grandfather and his three sons.

A 2010 recipient of a National Blue Ribbon Award for outstanding educational achievement, the school serves 622 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. A high percentage of the student body comes from non-English speaking households with 80% being of Chinese American heritage. The school’s staff also reflects Oakland’s diversity with 73% being of Asian descent. The nearby Lincoln Square Park is one of the original town squares laid out in 1853.

Originally known as the Women’s City Club, the Oakland Elementary School (225 11th St.) has been in continuous use for 138 years. A 2010 recipient of a National Blue Ribbon Award for outstanding academic achievement, the school serves 622 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. A high percentage of the student body comes from non-English speaking households with 80% being of Chinese American heritage. The school’s staff also reflects Oakland’s diversity with 73% being of Asian descent. The nearby Lincoln Square Park is one of the original town squares laid out in 1853.

Opened in 1937 at 1357 Webster St., a prominent building designed by noted architect Julia Morgan is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Raised in Oakland, Morgan designed the building with a glazed terra cotta and brick veneer façade. It housed the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) when it opened in 1915 and featured Oakland’s first indoor swimming pool. Restored and retrofitted after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the top two floors have been converted into dormitory space for California College of the Arts’ students and the lower floors are now home to the Envision Academy charter school.

Oakland’s second oldest public school, Lincoln Elementary School (225 11th St.) has been in continuous use for 138 years. A 2010 recipient of a National Blue Ribbon Award for outstanding academic achievement, the school serves 622 students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. A high percentage of the student body comes from non-English speaking households with 80% being of Chinese American heritage. The school’s staff also reflects Oakland’s diversity with 73% being of Asian descent. The nearby Lincoln Square Park is one of the original town squares laid out in 1853.

OAKLAND’S SECOND OLDEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

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The exotic theater is the site of the City of Oakland’s 2011 Inauguration Ceremony during which Jean Quan will be sworn in as Oakland’s 49th Mayor and make history as the first woman and first Asian American to be elected to this post.

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Across from the Pacific Renaissance Plaza at 379-9th St. is the Loong Kong Tien Yee Family Association. Family Associations were the mechanisms for arriving immigrants to find housing and jobs as well as other assistance. Individuals with common surnames or residents from the same area banded together as clans to perpetuate honoring ancestor customs. Formed in San Francisco in the 1870s, this association is one of the oldest. The Oakland Branch helped assist the estimated 2,000 refugees arriving from San Francisco’s destitute Chinatown after the 1906 earthquake. Among them were Mayor Quan’s great-grandfather and his three sons.

As you walk down 14th St., the Oakland Theatre (1425 19th St.) is a mixed-use complex with 200 units of housing, including 90 units of affordable housing, perched atop two floors of banks, shops, restaurants, offices and nonprofits. Many of the nonprofits were launched by contemporaries of Mayor Quan and her husband, Dr. Floyd Huen, who were founders of Asian American studies at UC Berkeley in the early 1970s. The Oakland Asian Cultural Center, home to the Chinatown-Oakland History Project and the Asian Branch Library are housed in the building as is the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce. Built on land set aside in the 1960s for redevelopment, the Plaza and its courtyard are used for community festivals and events throughout the year.

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