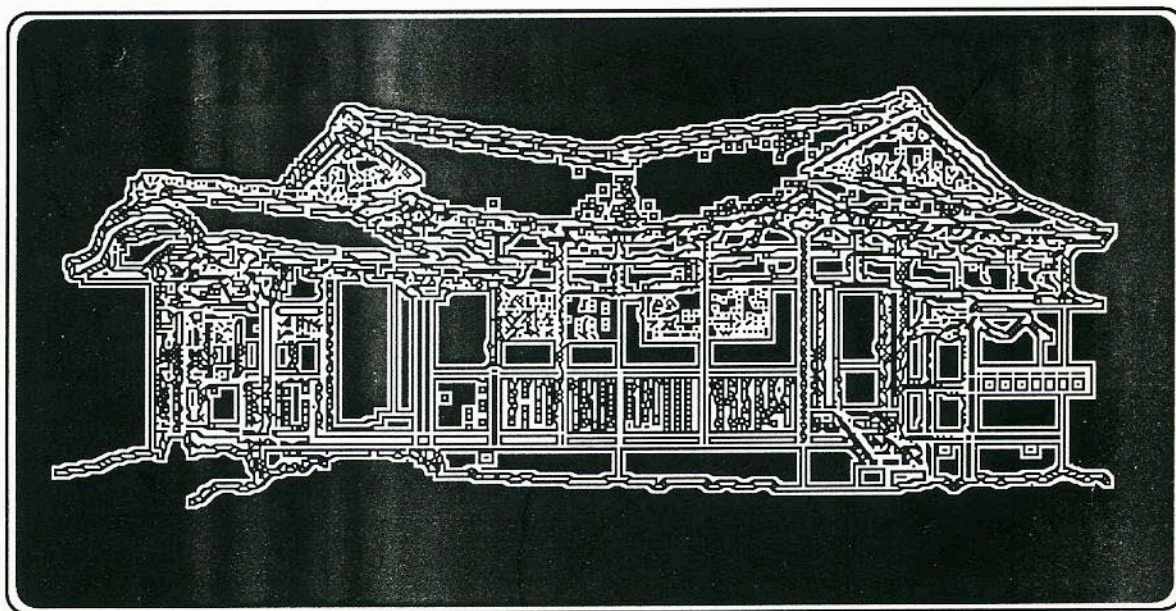
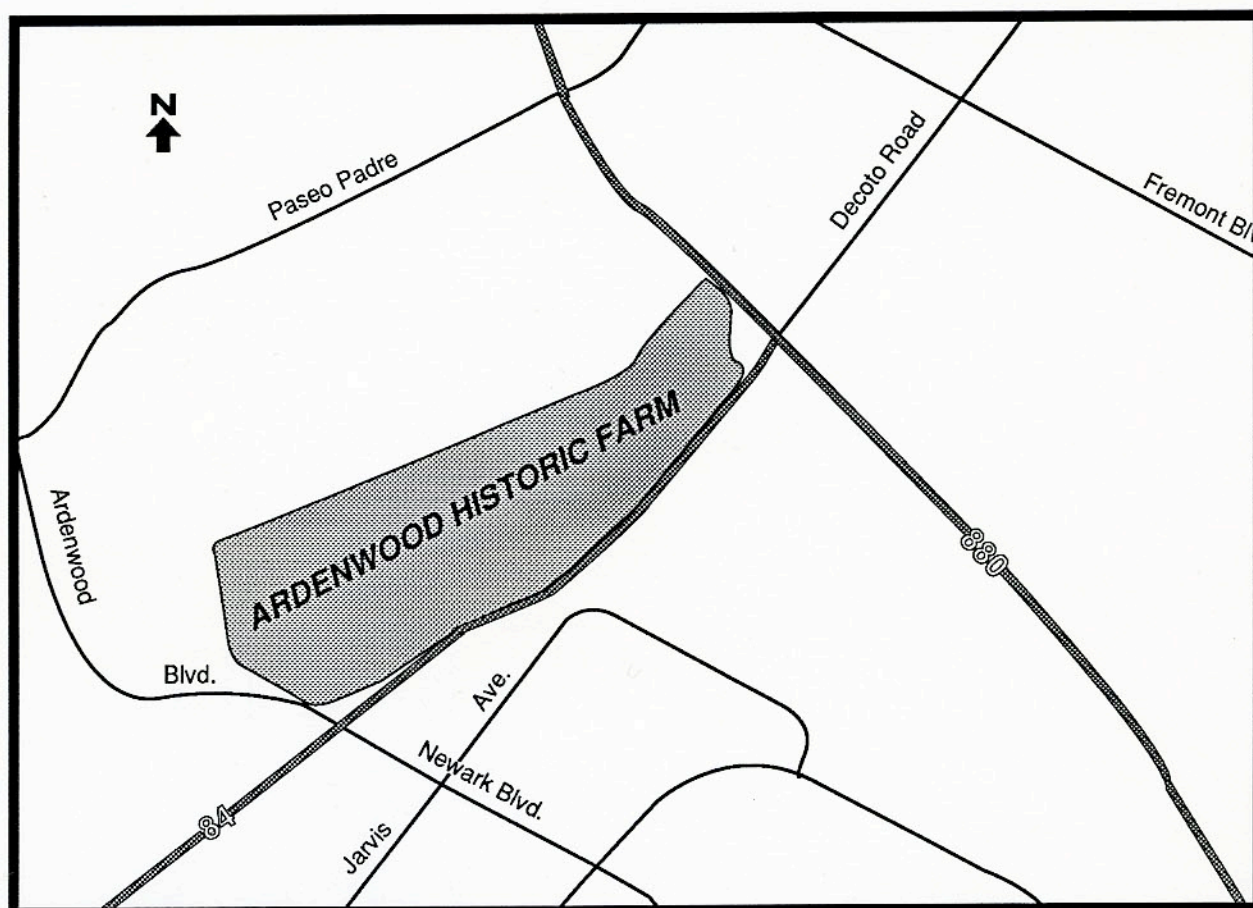


PRELIMINARY REPORT  
OF THE  
**EXCAVATION OF THE  
"TEAHOUSE RUINS"**

ARDENWOOD HISTORIC FARM  
FREMONT, CALIFORNIA



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**Figure 2** Location of Ardenwood Historic Farm within the City of Fremont.

the Patterson mansion, which stands near the center of the Ardenwood complex; the ruins lie some 257 meters and at a bearing of  $15^{\circ}$  from the northeast corner of the barn (see Figure 3). The "Teahouse Ruins" are surrounded on north, east and south by an orchard of English walnuts grafted on to sturdy California root stock; to the west of the ruins is a dirt road which leads from the center of the complex to the ruins of William Patterson house at the northeast corner of the preserve.

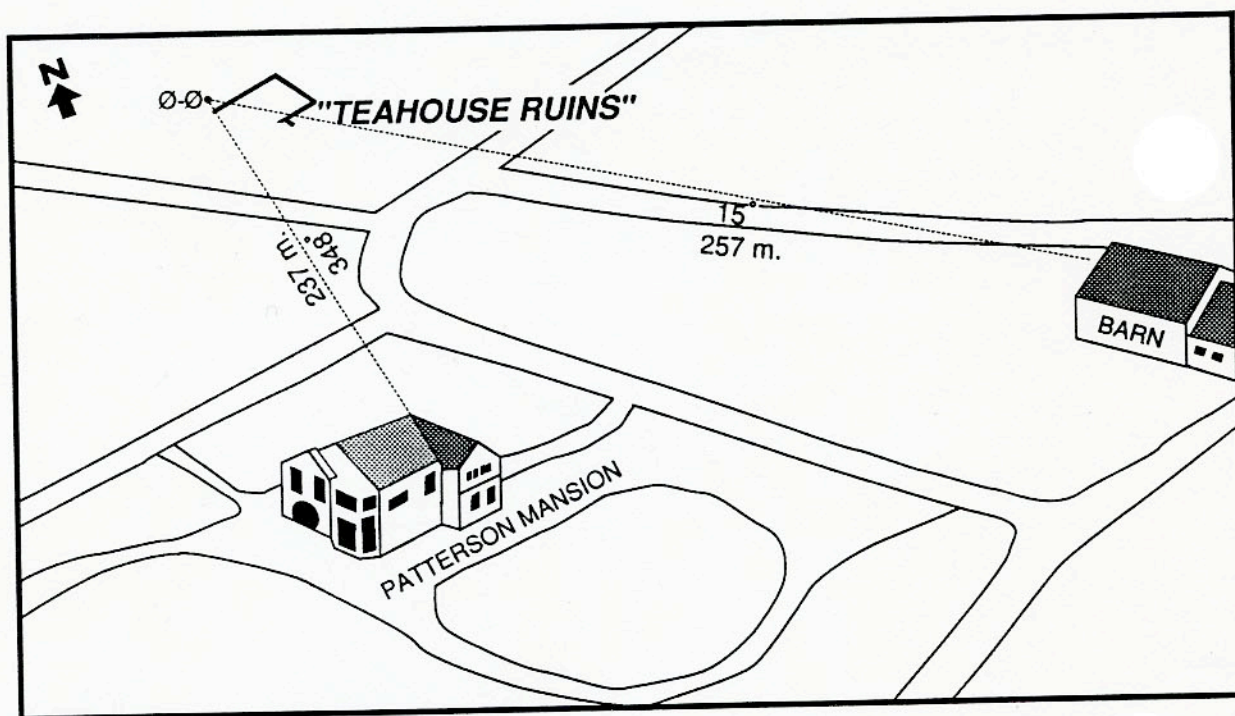
Ardenwood Farm is situated on mostly level land, less than four miles from the Bay margin and at an elevation of 15 to 25 feet above sea level. Located on a portion of the flood plain of Alameda Creek which runs to the east and north of the farm, the Patterson Ranch occupied some of the richest alluvial

soil in the San Francisco Bay Area, a fact which was instrumental in the success of George W. Patterson's agricultural pursuits.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The story of the "Teahouse" dates not to the 1880s period highlighted by the present Ardenwood exhibits but rather to the terminal phase of the original Patterson tenure at Ardenwood, almost a generation after the heyday of the patriarch, George W. Patterson and the construction of the mansion. It is a story which, although more recent in time than that of the mansion, is much more poorly documented and obscured by folklore. The historical context in which the "Teahouse" story occurred is summarized as follows.





*Figure 3 Location of the "Teahouse Ruins" within the Ardenwood Historic Farm.*

At the age of 55 and after almost twenty-five years of successful farming George W. Patterson decided in 1877 to take a bride, Clara Hawley, a woman thirty-one years his junior who he had known since her girlhood. This union lasted for 18 years until George's death in 1895, and produced two boys, Henry and William. In 1900 at the age of 47 Clara Hawley Patterson took a second husband, the Rev. William H. Layson. Their honeymoon together in Egypt, Palestine and Europe initiated in Clara an interest in world travel and an appreciation of exotic art, especially that of the Orient. In 1909, while travelling abroad, Clara Patterson Layson was widowed for a second time.

According to local tradition Clara visited the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915 and along with thousands of other visitors found herself strongly attracted to the magnificent Japanese Exhibit. In 1916, fol-

lowing the close of the Exposition, she purchased a "Teahouse" from the Japanese Exhibit. She then had it disassembled into several parts and transported via barge to the Patterson Farm. Julia Morgan, the architect of Hearst Castle and a prominent Bay Area designer of custom homes, was engaged to convert the "Teahouse" into a residence for Clara, since her son, Henry, and growing family had recently moved into the main house. According to local tradition construction on the new "Teahouse" residence was only partially complete when on May 29, 1917 Clara Hawley Patterson Layson died. Work ceased at that point and the structure lay empty until December 8, 1941 when a mysterious fire burned the "Teahouse" to the ground. The cause of the fire was presumed to be arson, a symbolic and frustrated act of retribution against the Japanese Empire which had just bombed Pearl Harbor the day before. From the time of its destruction until sometime prior to East Bay



Regional Park's tenure at Ardenwood the "Teahouse" foundation cavity is reported to have been used as a dumping ground for trash from the farm. In 1982 or 1983 an overly ambitious tractor driver while disking the Teahouse Field is said to have consolidated some of the lateral foundation wings into the center of the foundation. This "consolidation" resulted in the loss of a great deal of architectural information as well as the deposition of large quantities of concrete rubble within the main foundation cavity.

## RESEARCH GOALS AND METHODS

Since the material remains associated with the "Teahouse" had never been studied in a systematic fashion and oral tradition referring to the site was sometimes contradictory, the following research goals were devised:

A) To determine the nature of the original structure that was exhibited in San Francisco by reference to historical documents.

B) To determine the exact dimensions of the original structure by mapping all surface remains and subsurface remains that might be recovered during excavation. This determination would include an investigation into the possibility that the "Teahouse" had been reconstructed over a full basement (Robert Fischer, personal communication 1988)

C) To determine the techniques that were used in the construction of the original structure in San Francisco and its reconstruction in Fremont by means of the recovery of preserved hardware.

D) To determine the ways in which the

structure was utilized from the time of its re-erection at Ardenwood in 1917 until its destruction in 1941; artifacts associated with the structure were expected to be helpful toward this end.

E) To provide the Ardenwood Historic Farm staff and visitors during the excavation an interpretative exhibit of project goals and results of work-in-progress.

F) To evaluate the significance of the "Teahouse Ruins" to the interpretative program at Ardenwood Historic Farm and to make recommendations as to its preservation and potential for further research.

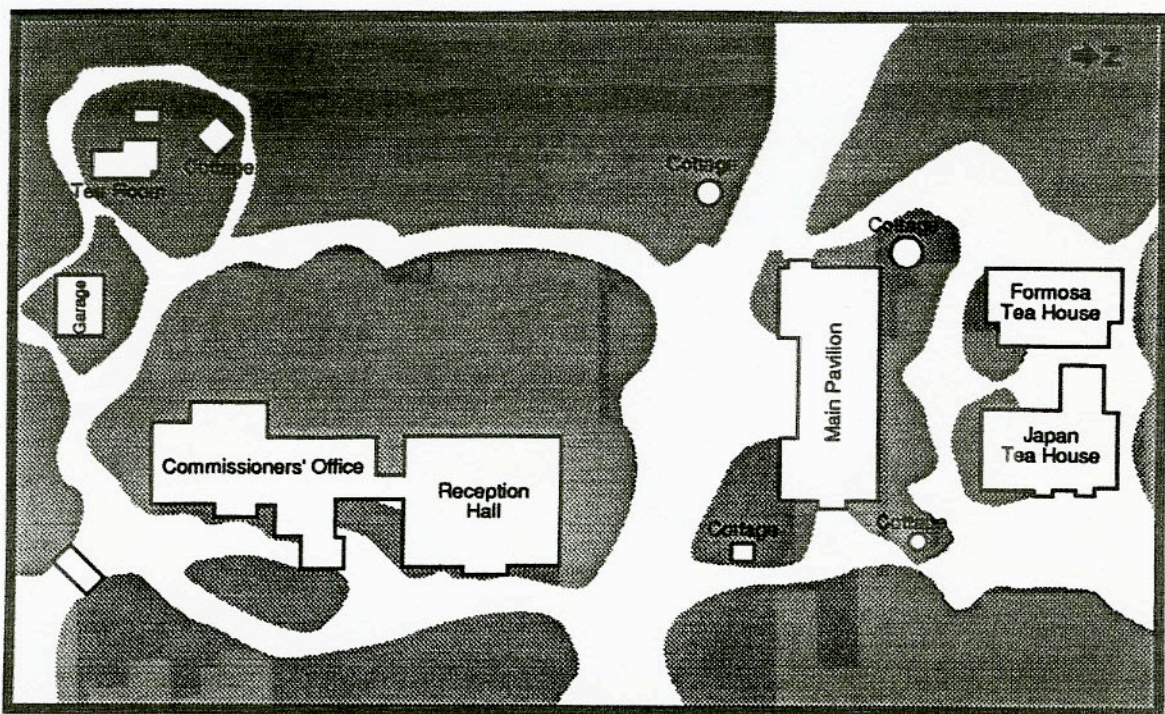
## HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Archival research concerning the nature of the original 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition structure and its acquisition by Clara Patterson Layson was conducted at a number of Bay Area research facilities:

1) Mission Peak Historical Society, Fremont, 2) Oakland Public Library, 3) California Historical Society Library, San Francisco, and 4) Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. This research yielded the reconstruction which follows.

**1915** -- As part of the Panama Pacific International Exposition the Japanese Imperial Government mounted an elaborate exhibit of Japanese architecture and culture. The Japanese Exhibit covered more than three acres and was composed of gardens, pools, streamlets and over 5000 plants imported from Japan. Thirteen separate buildings were constructed including a reception hall, an exhibit pavilion, an administrative office, two large





**Figure 4 Plan of the Japanese Exhibit at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition**

public tea houses and several rustic cottages and tea rooms (Todd 1921: 210) (Figure 4). The Japanese Exhibit, located near the southern entrance of the Palace of Fine Arts, was one of the most ambitious creations at the Exposition and it is probable that Clara Patterson Layson would have been attracted to it when attending the festivities. Whether she had any idea about acquiring one of the buildings at that time is unknown.

One of the most impressive structures constructed for the Japanese Exhibition was the office and reception hall of the Imperial Commission to the Exposition. This double structure was composed of a single story, multi-room, 4185 sq. feet office connected through a roofed walkway to a two story reception hall (Plate 1). This edifice, referred to as the 'Golden Pavilion', duplicated "in a large degree the kinkaku-ji

in the Rokuon-ji temple, built at Kyoto in 1397. The entire material for this building was shipped from Japan and set up by Japanese carpenters." (Todd 1921: 211)

**1916** - On Sunday, December 5, 1915 the Panama Pacific International Exposition was officially closed. Over the next several months the entire 635-acre site had to be cleared and the land restored to the owners that had leased it to the Exposition. The only original building to remain on the fair site was the Palace of Fine Arts; the hundreds of other structures were donated to public institutions that could take them (e.g., the Memorial Auditorium to the city of San Francisco), sold for bargain prices to private individuals (e.g., the Holt Industrial Pavilion to Professor Arthur Pope of U.C., Berkeley), and when all else failed the majority were demolished (Knight 1982).

The first attempts to dispose of the Japa-



nese Commissioners' Office are recorded in late 1915, around the time when the Exposition was closing. On December 9, 1915 Benjamin Wheeler, President of the University of California, Berkeley accepted the donation of the "office building of the Japanese exhibit" along with "the building containing the Nikko Shrine" (Letter A, Appendix 1).

A month later correspondence between the Japanese Commission and the University of California confirmed the donation of the Office to the University but recanted on the offer of the "Special Exhibit Hall" (presumably the same "building containing the Nikko Shrine") because it had already been donated to the City of San Francisco (Letter C, Appendix 1). The later structure subsequently was incorporated into the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park.

The only other disposition of a structure from the Japanese Exhibit that is known is that of the Central Tea Traders' Association Teahouse (Japan Tea House in Figure 4). After the fair it was purchased by E. D. Swift and barged down the Bay to be used as a residence in Belmont. After a checkered history as a speakeasy and then a legalized saloon, it was converted into Van's Restaurant, 815 Belmont Avenue, Belmont (Knight 1982).

After accepting the Japanese Commissioners' Office the University of California apparently found that it did not possess either the financial resources or the physical capacity to absorb the building into the Berkeley campus. However, the University had accepted the responsibility for the removal of the structure and was forced to contract a third party to effect the removal.

On April 8, 1916 Robert Sproul, the future president of the University of California, Berkely, informed the San Francisco Department of Public Works that the Regents of the University had authorized one J.K. Yoshida to wreck the Japanese Commissioners' Office and transport it from the Exposition grounds (Letter L, Appendix 1).

Mr. Yoshida, however, removed the building intact from the site and at some point during the spring of 1916 sold it to a Thayer D. Hall. Mr. Hall, in turn, sold the Japanese Commissioners' Office to Clara Patterson Layson and contracted with her to erect it "on lands at Arden" (Letter J, Appendix 1). It is unknown how soon after the purchase of the building it was transported across the bay and work begun on its re-erection at Ardenwood. Patterson family tradition states that the building was divided into two or three sections and brought by barge across the Bay to Patterson Landing sometime in 1916. Work probably began in late 1916 or early 1917. Photographs of various stages of the reconstruction of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at Ardenwood survive, one showing Clara Patterson Layson observing the work in progress (Plates 2 - 5).

**1917** -- Sometime after the purchase of the Japanese Commissioners' Office Clara Patterson Layson contracted the famous Bay Area architect Julia Morgan to draw up plans for the remodelling of the structure to be used as a residence. The remodelling plans, dated March 21, 1917 and revised March 23, 1917, survive in the archives of the Mission Peak Historical Society and indicate that had the remodelling ever been



completed Clara would have had a very commodious dwelling, indeed. The plans called for three bedrooms each with its own full bathroom, kitchen with abundant storage, living room with fireplace, formal dining room, sewing room and a subterranean garage. The master bedroom was to be adjacent to the sewing room and a semi-inclosed porch, and was to have possessed a button connected to a buzzer in a small room designated as "Room A", presumably the maid's quarters. In the basement there were to be a laundry and a furnace room with a wood lift which exited behind the fireplace. The presence of a basement in the Julia Morgan plans was, on the one hand, unexpected and on the other hand, confirmation of oral tradition that the "Teahouse" had been constructed over a basement.

Our historical research failed to establish whether the Julia Morgan plans were ever initiated. The only other relevant datum regarding this stage in the life of the "Teahouse" is that only two months after the plans were submitted Clara died at age 64. The *raison d'être* of a new residence for Gramma Patterson had disappeared.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

For reasons of visibility and convenience the primary site datum (Ø-Ø) was established on a slight rise of disturbed soil to the northwest of the foundation ruins. This point is marked by a section of 1/2 inch galvanized water pipe set in approximately 18 inches of concrete. The primary datum is located 88.3 m. and at a bearing of 341° from a permanent water main cap in the intersection of the "Teahouse Road" and the "Walnut Orchard Road" (see Figure 3). From the primary datum a

magnetic North-South meridian line was established by use of transit and rod. An East-West baseline was then drawn at right angles to the meridian and a 2 meter by 2 meter grid superimposed over the site. All excavation unit provenience information was referenced in a radial fashion to the primary datum. Thus, a hypothetical unit designated as N2W10 would have had a southeast corner stake located 2 meters north and 10 meters west of point Ø-Ø, the primary datum.

Initially five 2 x 2 m excavation units were laid out. Some of these were later extended and a sixth unit was added at the northeast corner of the foundation (see Figure 5 and Plate 6). Because of the large quantity of massive concrete rubble that lay within the foundation walls and the difficulty of its removal, the unit locations were chosen for convenience of unobstructed excavation rather than by random sampling or in accord with architectural features of particular interest. Fortunately, the selected units provided a good sample of all sections of the ruined structure; all but one were positioned in such a way as to intersect the foundation wall and hence expose it inside and out.

Excavation was carried out in 10 cm. arbitrary levels measured from the surface at the highest corner stake. Depending on the hardness of the soil, the density of cultural materials and the presence or absence of features, excavation was conducted with a combination of shovels, hand-picks, trowels and smaller hand tools. The soil from all units was dry-screened through 1/4 inch wire mesh and recovered artifactual and ecofactual materials bagged separately for each 10 cm. level. Each unit was excavated until sterile soil was reached (defined as 20 consecutive centimeters yielding no cultural materials and/or by an



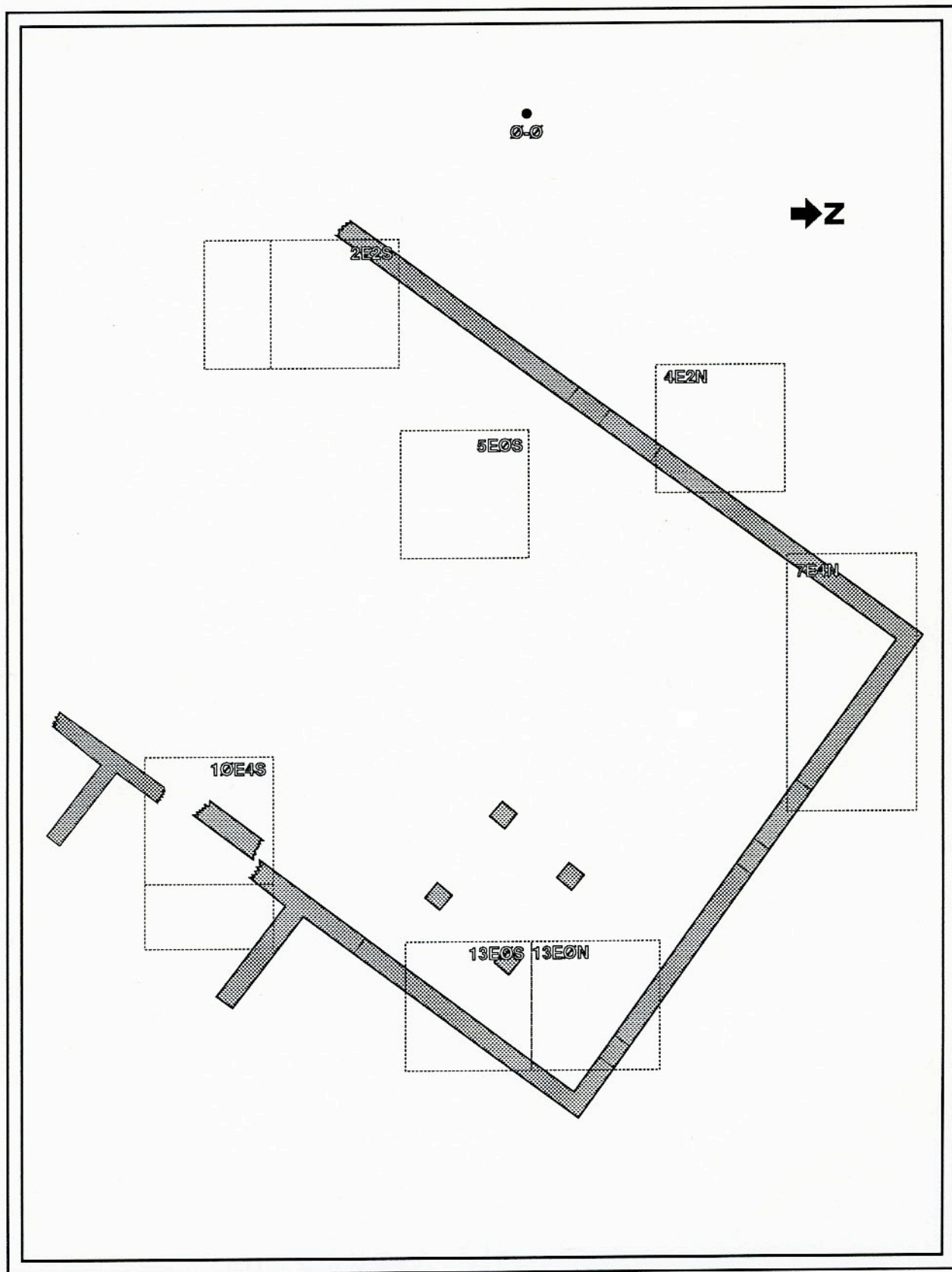


Figure 5 Excavation plan of the Japanese Commissioners' Office ruins at Ardenwood.





**Figure 6** Unit 2E2S upon completion of excavation

auger test in the floor of the unit) . All materials were returned to the Archaeology Laboratory at CSU, Hayward where they were washed and sorted into general categories within each provenience unit.

### ***Character of the Deposit***

One of the major discoveries of the excavation was finding that the subsurface deposit was almost completely lacking in stratigraphic integrity. At the onset of excavation it was hoped that below the level of modern dumping and foundation destruction we would find a stratum of architectural remains representing the 1941 fire and building collapse episode. Post-fire disturbance and recent bulldozing, however, appears to have mixed materials from the past seventy years.

### ***The Unit Contents***

**4E2N** -- This unit was located just to the outside of the northeast wall of the foundation and in the approximate area of the driveway ramp leading to the garage on Julia Morgan's remodel-

ling plans. The unit was excavated to a depth of 50 cm. where sterile soil was reached. It yielded relatively few cultural materials (rusted round nails, small bits of charcoal, chunks of melted glass) and no artifacts that could be associated with the original Japanese structure.

**2E2S** -- This 2 m.

x 2 m. unit and its

1 m. x 2 m. extension

was located just to the inside of the northwest corner of the remaining foundation. A few artifacts associated with the original Japanese structure were recovered here (a roof tile decorated with a cherry blossom motif and a ornamental brass plate), but in general this area of the foundation cavity was characterized by its abundance of post-1941 farm debris. The trash included numerous rusted nails, bits of rusted cans and buckets, porcelain door knobs, chunks of melted glass and glass bottles. The remains of one particular dumping episode were encountered in a lens between approximately 30 and 50 cm.; it contained several rusted can parts and soda bottles (*Dad's Root Beer, Mission Orange, Coca Cola*). The bottles were all of 1940s to 1950s vintage. Somewhat deeper than the bottle lens were found a number of rusted iron farm implement parts, including some simple shovel, pitch fork and horse shoe parts and others which appears to come from heavy machinery.



Mixed throughout the 2E2S deposit were bits of charcoal, molten glass and one defined ash lens between 30 and 50 cm. The burning which produced this evidence, however, appears not to have been exclusively the 1941 fire that destroyed the Japanese Commissioners' Office since several post-1941 bottles show thermal alteration. It is probable that the foundation cavity was used as a regular dump and an occasional incinerator for a period of 30+ years.

Sterile soil was encountered in Unit 2E2S at approximately 70 cm. below the top of the foundation. At this same depth (28 inches) the foundation wall was found to end; beneath it was found sterile hard packed clay, apparently the subsoil on which concrete had been poured (see Figure 6).

7E4N -- This unit, exposed the northeast corner of the foundation to a depth of 50 cm., but yielded few cultural remains and no artifacts related to the original Japanese structure. The only significant find was a large quantity of molten glass fragments. A number of these were fist-sized chunks of stratified plate glass. How plate glass was melted in

this fashion is difficult to understand but it may imply that stacks of window glass were stored under the house at the time of the 1941 fire.

5E0S -- This unit was the only one not positioned to overlap a foundation wall and hence it provides a sample of the deposit at the center of the foundation cavity. Aside from two solid brass hooks of possible Japanese origin, found near the surface, Unit 5E0S yielded no cultural remains associated with the Japanese Commissioners' Office. Instead, the deposit was characterized by artifacts similar to the farm trash encountered in Unit 2E2S discussed above. Charcoal and molten stratified glass were common in the upper levels along with a large portion of the skeleton of a domestic dog; the lower levels were dominated by an abundance of rusted car parts (door latch mechanism, wet cell battery remnants, the back wall of a truck cab and an automobile tire) (see Figure 7). Excavation of Unit 5E0S had to be



Figure 7 Unit 5E0S upon completion of excavation.



abandoned at 70 cm when concrete rubble and large car parts blocked further penetration of the deposit.

### 13EØS/

### 13EØN --

This 2 m. x 2 m. unit and its 2 m. x 2 m. northern extension were located at the southeast corner of the foundation

in the area where Julia Morgan's plans show a basement laundry and "wash trays". Initially, these plans led us to an incorrect interpretation of the artifacts found in Unit 13EØS and thence the function of the southeast corner of the foundation. One of the most prominent features protruding from the surface of this corner of the foundation cavity (in Unit 13EØN) is a large, box-shaped, rusted steel apparatus of some kind. Since it is found in almost precisely the same location as the "wash trays" in Julia Morgan's plans, and a rusted steel bucket and sink were found between 50 and 60 cm, nearby in Unit 13EØS, we first interpreted this area of the foundation cavity to be the "Laundry" and evidence for the existence of a basement. Subsequent excavation, however, demonstrated these to be specious associations and the "wash tray" to be a gas tank from a truck or tractor<sup>1</sup>. A number of other auto and/or tractor parts (spark plugs, rear view mirror, seat springs, etc.) corroborated



*Figure 8 Unit 10E4S upon completion of excavation.*

that this corner of the foundation had been used to dump farm machinery and other debris. Also contributing to destruction of the "laundry/ wash tray hypothesis" was the discovery that the foundation wall ends at 84 cm. (33 inches) below its upper surface, the surface on which the sill plate would have rested. Such a foundation precludes the existence of a basement in this area. Auger borings in the 84 cm. floor of Units 13EØS and 13EØN yielded only sterile soil.

A limited number of artifacts associated with the original structure were also encountered in these two units. These remains included two isolated black curved roof tiles as well as a large chunk of mortar, curved tiles and *yedo* tile (see Figure 11 below).

1ØE4S -- In terms of original Japanese artifacts, the richest area of the site proved to be the southwest corner of the foundation, cov-

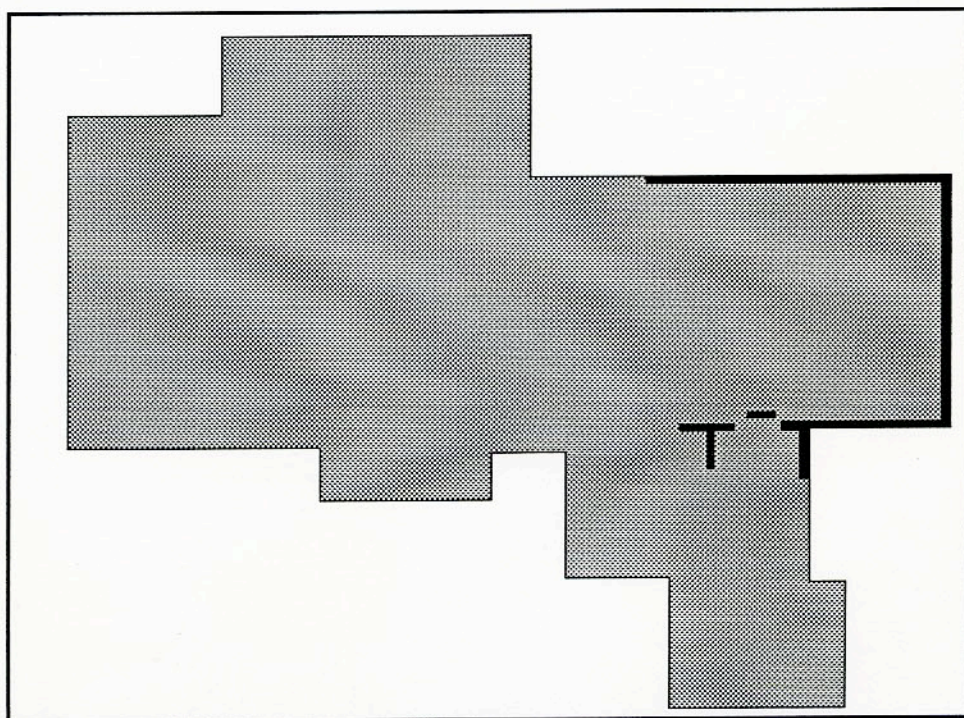


ered by Unit 10E4S, and its 1m. x 2 m. southern extension (Figure 8). Along with numerous nails, wood chunks, window glass and molten glass fragments, large quantities of dark grey to black, burnished, ceramic roof tiles as well as several decorative brass plates were encountered in this area. The tiles (discussed in detail below) are identical to those found occasionally in other units but their overwhelming abundance here along with large quantities of fine cement mortar suggests that Unit 10E4S was located in a section of the original structure which had been heavily tiled. As will be demonstrated below, these tiles and other foundation evidence strongly suggest this area of the structure as the canopied entrance way or "carriage porch".

### *The Structure*

Excavations conducted next to the foundation walls demonstrated their maximum depth to be 33 inches below grade. Although this dimension is rather robust by modern standards, it certainly does not constitute a basement. The existence of four *in situ* concrete pier blocks near the northeast corner of the foundation (see Figure 5) and approximately level with the top of the foundation also suggests that the floor was supported over a shallow crawl space. Julia Morgan's basement plans appear to have existed only on paper.

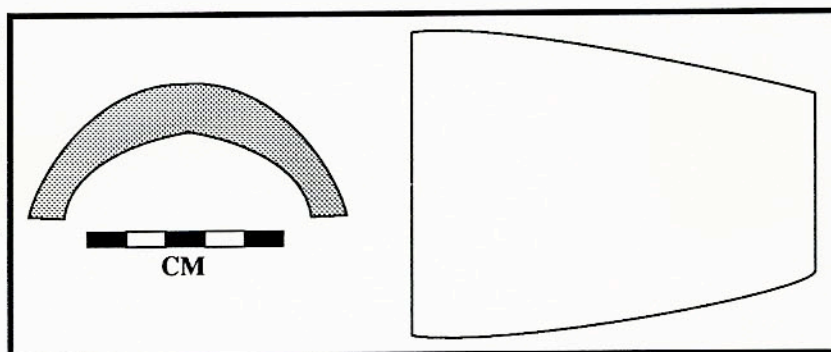
The exposed foundation conforms generally to the shape of a rectangular "U", the northwest leg measuring approximately 11.4 m. (37.4 ft.), the northeast 9.1 m. (30 ft.) and the southeast 10.2 m. (33.5 ft.). Extending perpendicularly from the southeast wall, like a pair of "T"s, are two partially destroyed foundation walls of the same depth and width as the main rectangle (see Figure 5). Superimposing the existing foundation plan over the floor plan of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at the Panama Pacific International Exposition (Figure 9) demonstrates an almost perfect fit with the northern portion of the original building in the area where it was joined to the Reception Hall and where the gracious entrance way once stood. If this reconstruction is indeed correct, we can estimate by extrapolation that the present foundation ruins occupy less than one fourth of the floor space of the original 4185 sq. ft. structure and that when re-erected at Ardenwood in 1916 it would have extended some 65 ft. further



**Figure 9** *The excavated Ardenwood foundation superimposed over the plan of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at the Panama Pacific International Exposition.*



to the southwest and the "Tea-house Road." The remains of the missing foundation wings can be seen today on the surface piled inside the foundation cavity ; other parts were encountered beneath the surface during excavation.



The above interpretation of preserved foundation sections is corroborated by the abundance

**Figure 10** *Cross-section and bird's eye view of black curved coping tile.*

of ceramic roof tiles within Unit 10E4S and its extension. This is the area of the projecting "T" walls in Figures 5 and 9, and the enclosed entrance way behind the open arched roof in Plates 1 through 5. The entrance vestibule and adjoining tiled canopy certainly represent the most impressive architectural element of the Japanese Commissioners' Office. Their stylistic origin dates ultimately to the Buddhist shrines and Imperial palaces of the period of the shogunate. The carriage porch, or *porte-cochere*, was one of more interesting architectural affectations of the Imperial dwellings and shrine entrances. The structure's purpose reflects its name, it was where guest entered the palace from their carriages. It was unique to the Imperial dwellings and the most ornate shrines. It is rarely seen anywhere else, although the design was often used over gates of both Imperial and *minka* (folk) use (Futagawa and Tsunenari 1969: 83). Such a gate can be seen today at the Japanese Teagarden in Golden Gate Park (see Figure 14). The ornately tiled roof of this gate and the Japanese Commissioners' office are typical of such Imperial entrance ways.

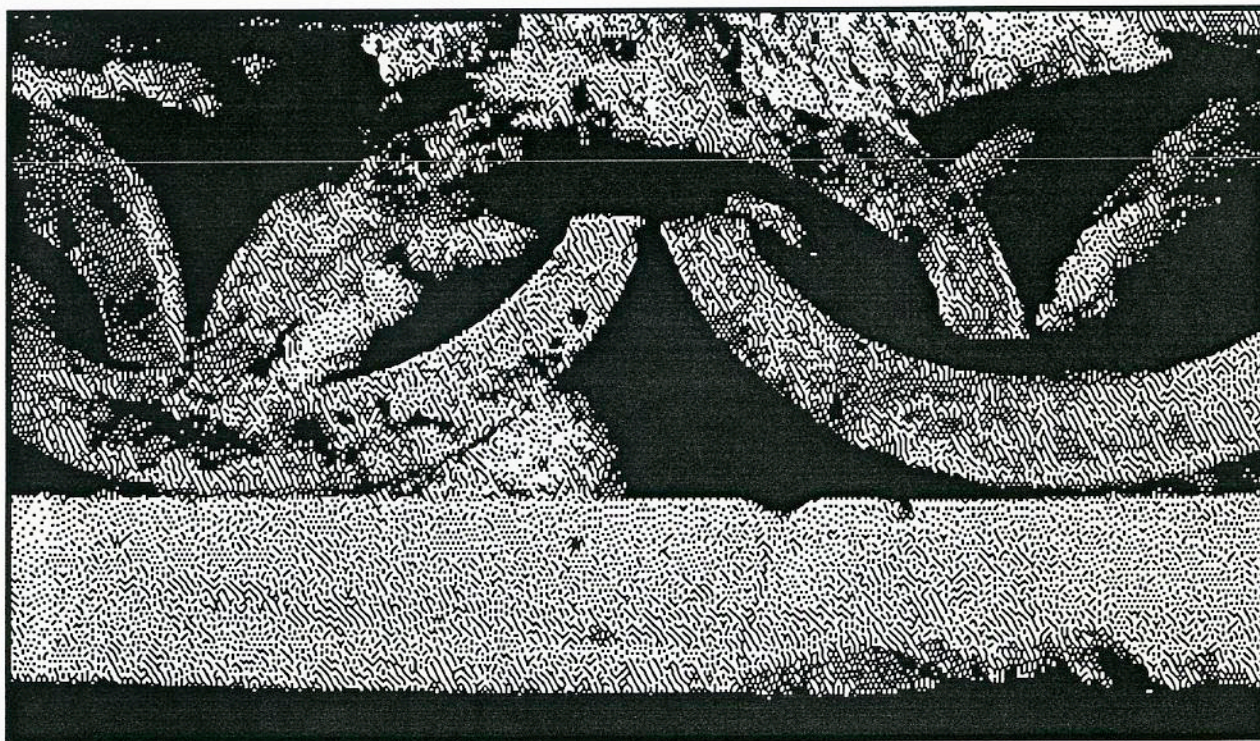
### **The Artifacts**

Due to the nature of the class , Anthropology 4250, "Field Archaeology", under which this excavation was conducted, it has been possible to analyze only a small portion of the

artifacts recovered from the site. Detailed analysis of the complete artifact inventory will be the topic of a subsequent report.<sup>2</sup> In the interim, however, it will be helpful to the understanding of the design of the Japanese Commissioners' Office, especially of the carriage porch entrance discussed above, to describe some of the more frequently occurring roof tile types:

- 1) Curved coping tiles -- By far the most common roof tile encountered in the excavation, especially in Unit 10E4S, was grey to black in color with a shape resembling a tapering section cut obliquely from a ceramic cylinder (Figure 10). Length-wise these tiles average 9.5 cm., with a width at the broad end of 7 cm. and a width at the narrow end of 4.5 cm. In cross section the tiles resemble domes of slightly less than one half of a circle, with a height of some 3.25 cm. at the broad end and a height of 1.25 cm. at the narrow end. From the narrow end to a point approximately one third of the distance toward the broad end both the interior and exterior surfaces are incised with shallow, parallel grooves approximately 2 mm. apart. The function of the incisions apparently was to facilitate the binding of cement mortar to the otherwise burnished

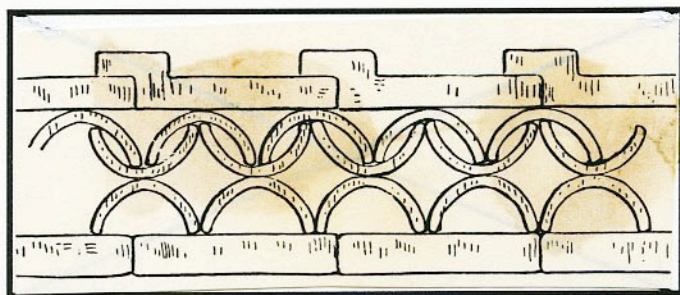




**Figure 11** Section of interlaced curved coping tiles mortared together and with a flat yedo tile. (larger than scale).

and slick surface of the tile. This interpretation is supported by a number curved tiles with mortar still adhering to their surface as well as a large chunk of intact tiles and mortar recovered from Unit 13EØS which demonstrates the manner in which these tiles were arranged (Figure 11). Unfortunately, none of the photographs of the Japanese Commissioners' Office, either at the Exposition or at Ardenwood, are of sufficient resolution to discern this

tile feature. Thus, it is unclear exactly how the curved tiles were used. The arrangement illustrated in Figure 11, however, corresponds to the ornamental coping of tiles seen along the highly decorative ridgepoles of traditional Japanese buildings (Figure 12). The treatment of the ridgepoles of the Japanese Commissioners' Office was probably similar.



**Figure 12** Ornamental coping of tiles on Japanese roofs

2) Mitsu-tomoyé cap tiles -- Certainly the most distinctive roof tiles recovered in the excavation were a number of black ceramic cylinders each with one highly decorated disc-shaped end. Since all the specimens were found at least partially fragmented, the length of the original cylinder must be estimated at between 15 and 20 cm. The ornamental end has a diameter of some 11.5 cm. and is decorated with a triple-lobed, swirling design, cast in low relief (Figure 13). This design,





Figure 13 *Mitsu-tomoyé cap tile*<sup>3</sup>

known as the triskelion in the Occident, is a symbol of worldwide archetypal significance. Similar three-legged designs are found in the art of cultures ranging from Hellenistic Greece to Celtic Ireland to the prehistoric tribes of southeastern North America. In Japan the design is referred to as the *mitsu-tomoyé*, or the triple comma shape, and ver-

sions of it or the single comma can be found in many Japanese family crests (Audsley 1884:16). The symbolism of the *mitsu-tomoyé* is multiplex. Some Japanese apparently perceived it as an extension, physically and symbolically, of the single *tomoyé* which is intended to represent a fetus at the beginning of life. Others saw in the whirling commas, an artistic metaphor for flowing water and a powerful apotropaic charm against fire. Because of this latter property it became a popular motif for roof tile design (Kiyataro 1974). Its magical ef-

ficacy in the face of twentieth century war and arson, however, proved to be limited.



Figure 14 *Mitsu-tomoyé tiles installed on the eaves of the entrance gate to the Japanese Tea Garden, Golden Gate Park.*



The placement of the *mitsu-tomoyé* tiles on the Japanese Commissioners' Office roof, although impossible to confirm with known photographs, was probably associated with the highly ornamented gable ends. Their size and elegance certainly would have allowed them to fit comfortably into the positions of the circular ornaments which can be discerned above the carriage porch entrance in Plates 1 through 5. The *mitsu-tomoyé* tiles seem not to have been placed on the Japanese Commissioners' Office roof in the manner in which they are still seen on the roof of the Hagiwara Gate of the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park. There the identical *mitsu-tomoyé* tiles linked by floral *yedo* tiles form a repetitive motif which overhangs the eaves (Figure 14).

3) Cherry blossom cap tiles -- The second most common roof tile in the Japanese Commissioners' Office excavation was a black disc-shaped tile averaging 6 cm in diameter and decorated with a stylized five-petal cherry blossom (Figure 15). Again the photographic resolution in Plates 1 - 5 does not allow us to pinpoint exactly how these tile elements were placed on the building's roof but it is likely that they were associated with the decorative ridgepole, probably at the end of the gables and perhaps flanking the *mitsu-tomoyé* tile discussed above.

The cherry blossom is, of course, of great symbolic significance to the Japanese. Its use in architectural ornamentation is quite common and stems from the period of the shogunate. The flower of the Japanese cherry tree blossoms quickly with a burst of color and then just as quickly dies and falls from the tree. In

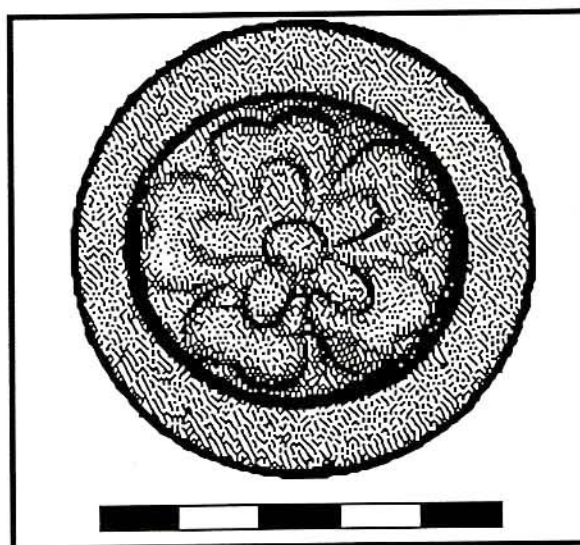


Figure 15 cherry blossom cap tile.

this manner the Japanese believed a warrior should live, with a great burst of intensity during war and then an early death, even if it meant taking one's own life. The shogunate, being a warrior class, adopted this symbol in many forms in their crests and thence it found its way into art and architecture (Seizo Oka, personal communication 1988).

4) "Japanese Empire" tile -- A unique specimen in the collection is a tile fragment that bears four incised Japanese characters which would have been translated as "Great Japanese Empire" when complete (Figure 16). Although fragmentary (approximately 11 cm. long by 8 cm wide by 1.5 cm. thick), it is clear that this tile would have been much larger and the original inscription may have included more characters. The tile is flat and may have served the same role as the border tile to the curved coping tiles illustrated in Figure 11.





**Figure 16** *Roof tile incised with characters translated as "Great Japanese Empire."*

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the severe limitations of time and energy imposed on a university class project such as this, all of the original research goals stated on page 4 have been achieved. A review of these goals will provide a convenient framework within which to summarize the results of the project and to discuss the potential for future research or action:

A) To determine the nature of the original structure that was exhibited in San Francisco by reference to historical documents. By means of historic photographs, letters of transmittal, a comparison of the Ardenwood foundation remains with plans from the Panama Pacific International Exposition and the discovery of concentrations of diagnostic roof tiles in the area of Unit 10E4S, we have conclusively

determined the "Teahouse Ruins" of Ardenwood to be the Japanese Commissioners' Office of the 1915 Exposition. Two teahouses did exist at the Exposition but the excavated remains at Ardenwood definitely do not represent either of them.<sup>4</sup> By referring to the Ardenwood ruins as the "Japanese Tea House" first the Patterson family and later the Ardenwood Historic Farm staff have perpetuated a misnomer that may have originated with Clara Patterson Layson herself. It is unknown how such an incorrect identification became so thoroughly entrenched in Ardenwood tradition but some educated speculation may be of value. Although oral tradition and Julia Morgan's remodelling drawings indicate that in the months before her death Clara Patterson Layson planned to live in the refurbished Japanese Commissioners' Office, such may not have been her intention from the beginning<sup>5</sup>. It is possible that the structure was purchased originally to entertain guests, and that even after its proposed function had shifted to a more domestic one, the exotic term "Japanese Tea House" continued to fire the Euro-American imagination and to stick to the tongue.

Regardless of where the truth may lie in this issue, historical accuracy demands that the designation "Japanese Tea House" be replaced with "Japanese Commissioners' Office." The grandeur of the structure's origin certainly is ample compensation for the loss of the superficially exotic word "teahouse". Old habits, however, may prove hard to break.

Our historical research efforts, though fruitful, only scratched the surface of the available resources. Additional photographic collections exist which might be examined for other and clearer views of the Japanese Commissioners' Office. Clara Patterson Layson's diary, located in the California Pioneers Society archives



in San Francisco, should be examined for references to the Panama Pacific International Exposition, the purchase of the Japanese Commissioners' Office, Julia Morgan, etc. Another avenue of investigation would be the examination of Julia Morgan's business records at the Julia Morgan Archive at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo for records of the work performed for Clara Patterson Layson.

A separate historic event related to the Japanese Commissioners' Office is also amenable to further research -- the exact date and origin of the fire that destroyed the structure. The most frequently repeated story states that the building was burned on December 8, 1941 in response to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor the day before. This "fact", though quite plausible, is based on inconsistent oral tradition; some versions say only that the house burned sometime in the 1940s. Examination of local newspapers from this period may provide additional information as to the date and cause of the fire. Interviews with remaining family members and farm employees may also yield information relevant to this question.

B) To determine the exact dimensions of the original structure by mapping all surface remains and subsurface remains that might be recovered during excavation. This determination would include an investigation into the possibility that the "Teahouse" had been reconstructed over a full basement (Robert Fischer, personal communication 1988) Excavation of 6 2 m. x 2 m. units demonstrated that only a portion of the original foundation remains semi-intact in the "Teahouse Field". The remaining foundation walls describe a rectangle measuring approximately 35 ft. by 40 ft. and missing the northwest wall. These foundation remains represent less than one quarter of the floor

space of the original structure as erected in San Francisco and reconstructed at Ardenwood.

The reconstructed structure at Ardenwood was built upon a concrete foundation which measured a maximum of thirty-three inches in depth, from sill plate to the bottom of the trench. Several in situ concrete pier blocks with upper surfaces level with the top of the foundation walls were discovered. The relative shallowness of the foundation walls and the matching pier blocks suggest that the Japanese Commissioners' Office was reassembled at Ardenwood over a crawl space using traditional foundation, sill plate, pier blocks and joist construction. No evidence of a basement was encountered.

C) To determine the techniques that were used in the construction of the original structure in San Francisco and its reconstruction in Fremont by means of the recovery of preserved hardware. Eventual analysis of the entire excavated sample from the Japanese Commissioners' Office may reveal a number of artifact categories useful to the understanding of the architecture of the structure. At this stage, however, the roof tiles associated with the original entrance way or carriage porch provide the only hard evidence for architectural detail of the Japanese Commissioners' Office; anything else that could be said about the structure would be based on extant photographs and comparison with general principles of Japanese architecture. If further archaeological and/or restoration work were to be conducted at the Japanese Commissioners Office site a great deal more research in that vein would be necessary. The CSUH Anthropology 4250 project barely opened the first chapter of that work.

D) To determine the ways in which the structure was utilized from the time of its re-



erection at Ardenwood in 1917 until its destruction in 1941; artifacts associated with the structure were expected to be helpful toward this end. The areas of the foundation cavity accessible to our excavation were characterized by badly disturbed deposits which appeared to contain materials dating from the period of original construction up to the present. No intact stratigraphy was found. After the fire which destroyed the building, the foundation cavity appears to have been used as a general dump for the debris of house and farm.

It is possible, albeit remote, that areas of intact and informative stratigraphy could be found beneath the large blocks of concrete rubble within the foundation cavity. Future excavation of these areas, however, would require the use of heavy equipment, an investment not easily justified at this time. In the meantime, we estimated that 80 to 90% of the excavated deposit was the result of post-fire dumping. We found no artifacts that could be unequivocally associated with the 1917 to 1941 period.

E) To provide the Ardenwood Historic Farm staff and visitors during the excavation an interpretative exhibit of project goals and results of work-in-progress. Throughout the period of excavation a small exhibit contained within a 18" W x 18"L x 36" D acrylic cube was displayed at the side of the "Teahouse Road" adjacent to the site. The exhibit consisted of a sample of artifacts taken from previous days of excavation, a photo of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at Ardenwood in 1916 and a series of labels documenting the nature of the project. Judging by their comments, the public appreciated the exhibit.

F) To evaluate the significance of the "Teahouse Ruins" to the interpretative program at Ardenwood Historic Farm and to make recom-

mendations as to its preservation and potential for further research. Despite the intriguing history and the exceptional architecture of the Japanese Commissioners' Office its significance to the established focus of the Ardenwood Historic Farm is questionable on a number of levels: 1) The time of its display in San Francisco and reconstruction at Ardenwood falls well outside the 1850 to 1880 period emphasized in the current interpretative program. The twentieth century had dawned and the Patterson dynasty was waning when the Japanese Commissioners' Office was acquired; with its destruction a generation later, came an entirely different historical epoch. 2) Culturally, the Japanese Commissioners' Office is only tenuously related to the Patterson family. Only in the sense of Clara Patterson Layson's interest in the cultures of the Orient and her desire to acquire one-of-a-kind art objects does it fit with Patterson family history. 3) If Julia Morgan's plans had ever been enacted or if Clara Patterson had ever lived in the house, the structure and its remains would possess a great deal more significance. As is, the ruins of the Japanese Commissioners' Office possess a bit of the quality of vapor, a late and incomplete footnote tacked on to the golden years of Ardenwood.

These difficulties notwithstanding the Japanese Commissioners' Office does possess important symbolic significance. Its exposition, destruction and resurrection reflect the broad patterns of history that intertwined the destinies of Japan and the United States over the past century. In 1915 when the structure was opened in San Francisco and twenty-eight little Japanese girls sang the national anthems of the two countries, Japan and the United States found themselves in full embrace. A generation later the burning of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at Ardenwood became a sym-



bol of the mutual antipathy with which the two nations regarded each other. And now in 1988, with a twist of irony that only history can confer, when Japanese electronics are as much a part of American reality as mom and apple pie, a Mitsubishi pickup, manufactured by the same company that built the Zero warplanes that attacked Pearl harbor, hauls students and equipment to the disinterment of Clara Patterson Layson's Japanese dream house. We can only hope that in this age of planetary interdependence the sine wave of history has reached a stable plateau of good relations.

Although only a brief chapter in the life of Ardenwood, the Japanese Commissioners' Office merits a permanent exhibit. Given the size of the original structure and the magnitude of its destruction, reconstruction of the entire building would seem infeasible. Instead we recommend that an exhibit featuring photos, artifacts, information and perhaps a scale model of the original Japanese Commissioners' Office be inclosed in and protected by a reconstruction of the arched entrance way or carriage porch. The informational content of the exhibit should chronicle the history of the structure from its exhibition in San Francisco through its archaeological resuscitation in 1988. In the event that reconstruction of the entrance way is attempted, further excavation to the southeast of Unit 10E4S would be necessary in order to increase the size of the roof tile sample and associated hardware.

Irrespective of the suggested reconstruction of the entrance way and erection of an exhibit, we recommend that any future earth moving activity within a distance of five meters from the foundation walls be monitored by a professional archaeologist.

*Acknowledgements;* The "Teahouse Ruins" project would have been impossible without the enthusiastic fieldwork of all the students enrolled in Anthropology 4250 as well as several volunteers who participated in the dig. Dr. Robert Fischer and Stuart Guedon were instrumental in the initiation of the project. Ian Freeman and Lori Harrington provided the aerial photograph featured in Plate 6. Barbara Causey, Scott Dano and Denise Parodi were invaluable in the creation of the on-site exhibit. The formulation of this report was greatly aided by the research and ideas of Shehnaz Atcha, Diane Bryant, David Coates, Stephanie Klein and especially the indefatigable researcher, Bob McKenzie.

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### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The identification of this and other pieces of machinery found in the excavation is highly tentative. Conclusive identification of these machinery items would require research well beyond the scope of the present project. The gas tank interpretation was suggested by George Patterson and is supported by the association of numerous other automobile and tractor parts in the area (spark plugs, rear view mirror, seat springs, etc.)

<sup>2</sup>During the period of analysis the artifacts are being curated at the Archaeology Laboratory, California State University, Hayward. Upon completion of analysis they will revert to the custody of Ardenwood Historic Farm.

<sup>3</sup>In the interest of time some of the illustrations for this preliminary report have been prepared by computer digitization. As a result some distortion has occurred in both in this figure and in Figure 15. In reality both of these cap tiles are absolutely round.

<sup>4</sup>One of these, the Central Tea Traders' Association Teahouse, was purchased and transported to Belmont (see page 6 of this report). The other, the Formosa Teahouse, is presumed to have been demolished on the site of the Exposition.

<sup>5</sup>Documents located in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley show that slightly before the acquisition of the Japanese Commissioners' Office, Julia Morgan was contracted by Mrs. Layson to draw up plans

for another house at Ardenwood, presumably as a residence. Further investigations of these plans may shed light on the evolution of Clara Patterson Layson's thoughts regarding her residence plans in 1915 - 1917 and the intended use of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at Ardenwood.

### LIST OF PLATES

PLATE 1 -- The entrance way of the Japanese Commissioners' Office (left) and attached Reception Hall (center) *in situ* at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. The photograph appears to date to sometime after the closure of the Exposition (winter 1916?) judging by the slightly overgrown vegetation and leafless trees. This photo may have been used by Thayer Hall as an advertisement for Clara Patterson Layson.

PLATE 2 -- A photo of early reconstruction of the entrance way of the Japanese Commissioners' Office at Ardenwood taken from the southeast (late 1916/early 1917?).

PLATE 3 -- A somewhat later photo of the entrance way of the Japanese Commissioners' Office under reconstruction at Ardenwood taken from the southeast (late 1916/early 1917?). Note the North Wood eucalyptus trees in the background and the small children in the foreground. The children may be those of Henry Patterson, who had married in 1913 and begun raising a family in the "Big House."

PLATE 4 -- The entrance way of the Japanese Commissioners' Office under reconstruction at Ardenwood taken from the south with Clara Patterson Layson in the foreground (late 1916/early 1917?).

PLATE 5 -- The entrance way of the Japanese Commissioners' Office under reconstruction at Ardenwood taken from the northeast (late 1916/early 1917?).

PLATE 6 -- Aerial photo of "Teahouse Ruins" under excavation on May 14, 1988. Note large quantities of foundation rubble not shown in Figure 5.





Plate 1





Plate 2





Plate 3





Plate 4





Plate 5





Plate 6