



Berkeley Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

Berkeley Begins

Berkeley, California was named for Bishop George Berkeley and inspired by poetry – specifically his allusions to ancient Greece, the original “model” for the University of California as envisioned by its founders.

In 1866, the trustees of the College of California gathered on a hillside overlooking the San Francisco Bay. Before them was a rough-and-tumble town called Ocean View, 200,000 acres of bay laurel and live oak trees, and the coastal headlands that would soon become the University of California. “Westward the course of the empire takes its way,” recited one trustee thoughtfully, recalling a line from Bishop Berkeley’s “Verses on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America.” Moved by the moment, the trustees agreed to name their town-to-be after the good bishop.

The University of California was formally founded in 1869, in Oakland, and moved to its current Berkeley location in 1873. The town of Berkeley was incorporated in 1878, and Berkeley became an official city in 1909. And so Berkeley was, from the beginning, a college town, with all the amenities and spirit of innovation and exploration that influence a great place of learning.

Free Speech, Flower Power and the Sixties

Berkeley’s international renown gained traction in the 1960s as it became a flash point for the political and social issues that defined America in that decade of tumult. Calls for racial justice, civil rights, and personal freedoms galvanized the nation, and played out against the backdrop of dramatic and deepening U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

Specifically, the Free Speech Movement was born in Berkeley. In December 1964, UC Berkeley student Mario Savio rallied students to oppose censorship with a famous speech: *“There is a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part; you can’t even passively take part, and you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you’ve got to make it stop. And you’ve got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people*

who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all."

And so, Berkeley's enduring "radical" reputation was forged on the steps of UC Berkeley's Sproul Hall.

Fifty Years Forward, Revolutionary Change

Reputation can turn to stereotype, and 50 years later, Berkeley is still seen by many as a radical den of wild ideas, counter-culture customs and eccentric characters.

Times have changed. While chances are you may see more tie-dye and peace signs per capita in Berkeley, a closer look reveals a small yet dynamic city that is consummately Californian in setting, international in perspective, and filled with superb theaters, restaurants and shops.

Berkeley will surprise and delight those who still see it as a symbol of the Sixties. Free speech and flower power are forever in the city's "DNA," but Berkeley has evolved into a culinary and cultural destination with a "green" soul. The local, organic, and sustainable food revolution found its stride in Berkeley thanks to "radicals" like Alice Waters and Michael Pollan. The Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Freight & Salvage and Cal Performances continue to raise the creative bar by staging great performing arts presentations.

Yes, "counter-culture" is alive and well in this city across the bay from San Francisco, joined by a "revolutionary" culinary and cultural arts scene.

Welcome to Berkeley!