

PUTTING THE "THERE" THERE: HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGIES OF WEST OAKLAND

SHPO Ref # FHWA900927X
(ALA-880 PM 31.9/34.8, ALA-80 PM 2.3/4.0; EA 04-190270
in the Cities of Oakland and Emeryville, Alameda County, California)

1889
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1902
SANBORN MAP

1912
SANBORN MAP

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Social Drugs
Heating/Lighting
Indefinite
Structural
Furnishings
Food Preparation Consumption
Toys
Writing
Accoutrements
Harmonica
1112

Prepared for the California Department of Transportation

Cover: The cover montage of images all concern the socially prominent Tilghman family who lived on Fifth Street in Oakland. Clockwise from top right is Charles F. Tilghman, Jr. publisher of the *Colored Directory of the Leading Cities of Northern California* (1916-1917) and Hettie Tilghman, President of the California Federated Colored Women's Clubs. The artifact layout is of the family's household refuse in about 1880 from Privies 933 and 1112. The latter is shown both in cross-section represented as a Harris Matrix in the central image; both archaeological features are shown in plan and in relation to the family's home depicted on successive Sanborn maps.

PUTTING THE "THERE" THERE: HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGIES OF WEST OAKLAND

I-880 CYPRESS FREEWAY REPLACEMENT PROJECT

SHPO Ref # FHWA900927X
(ALA-880 PM 31.9/34.8, ALA-80 PM 2.3/4.0; EA 04-190270
in the Cities of Oakland and Emeryville, Alameda County, California)

edited by

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prepared by

Anthropological Studies Center
Sonoma State University
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prepared for

California Department of Transportation
Contract 04A0538, Task Order 15

June 2004

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the State of California or the Federal Highway Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

CITY OF OAKLAND

City Council Proclamation

COMMENDING

WEST OAKLAND/CYPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

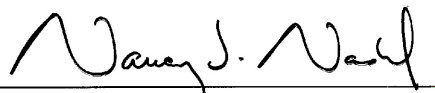
Whereas, the West Oakland/Cypress Archaeology Project has helped to preserve the history of 19th and 20th century West Oakland through archaeological investigations, an oral history program, vernacular architecture studies, and historical research; and

Whereas, the multi-cultural heritage of West Oakland has been brought to life through the West Oakland/Cypress Archaeology Project research into often ignored populations, including Chinese-Americans, African-Americans, and immigrant and working class populations; and

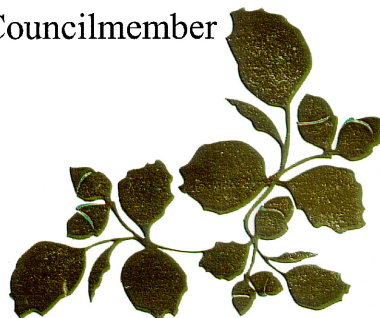
Whereas, the results of this important work have been made available to West Oakland residents in video, CD, print, on the World Wide Web and in public displays through partnerships with the University of California, Berkeley and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland; and

Whereas, "Putting the 'There' There: Historical Archaeologies of West Oakland", the West Oakland/Cypress Archaeology Project interpretive report and World Wide Web site, has received international recognition; now

Therefore, be it proclaimed on the 10th Day of July 2004, Councilmember Nancy J. Nadel on behalf of the City of Oakland commends Sonoma State University and the California Department of Transportation for their outstanding achievements in the preservation of West Oakland archaeology and the dissemination of its history.



Nancy J. Nadel
Oakland City Councilmember
District 3



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The I-880 Cypress Freeway Replacement, a project of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 4, involved the reconstruction of a 3.1-mile section of freeway in Oakland and Emeryville, California. As part of its plan to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Caltrans contracted with the Anthropological Studies Center at Sonoma State University (ASC) to examine the area of potential effects (APE). An archaeological sensitivity study reduced the portion of the APE that was likely to contain important remains from 48 to a relatively manageable 22 blocks, while the project research design worked to define the characteristics of potential historic properties.

Between 1994 and 1996, archaeologists tested the 22 archaeologically sensitive city blocks that would be affected by construction. Nearly 2,600 archaeological features were discovered, including 121 significant ones containing more than 400,000 artifacts and ecofacts dating between the 1850s and 1910. Because of the enormous quantity of data, two separate reports were planned on the investigations: the Block Technical Report (BTR) series—included on a compact disc at the back of this volume—and this, the interpretive report. The goal of the BTRs is to allow archaeologists easy access to all the Cypress data on features determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, while this report interprets these data.

The Cypress Archaeology Project database is unprecedented in the West. Over 120 discrete artifact assemblages were recovered and associated with specific households. A wide variety of groups is represented, from unskilled working-class households to upper-middle-class families, immigrants from numerous countries, and native-born whites and African Americans. Each BTR is organized by project block and archaeological feature. Complete historical associations are provided for every discrete archaeological assemblage, as are narrative and tabular descriptions of the remains, presented in a standardized format.

The purpose of this volume—the interpretive report—is to use some of the data contained in the BTRs to address themes identified in the project research design. Table 1.4 connects research questions posed in the research design (Praetzellis 1994) with resulting discussions included in this volume. The method has been collaborative, involving professionals in archaeology, history, folklore, oral history, and vernacular architecture. The use of a plain-English style and frequent illustrative sidebars and graphics is intended to make the volume appeal to a variety of readers, from professionals to interested community members. Each main essay, short essay, and sidebar is a stand-alone piece; while certain themes run through this report, it can be read in any order. An easily viewed portable document format (popularly known as PDF) version is posted at www.sonoma.edu/asc.

Part I presents the how, why, where, and who of the Cypress Archaeology Project, along with a brief narrative history of West Oakland. Part II contains chapters on the material conditions of life in West Oakland, the politics of the Victorian parlor, and household adaptive strategies. Part III focuses on the people of the neighborhood, with essays on the archaeology of gender; the material culture of the “aristocracy of labor”; the Overseas Chinese and laundry work; the archaeology and landscape of lodging; and a chapter devoted to the archaeology and near 150-year history of African Americans in West Oakland.

The final chapter contrasts the largely negative presentation of West Oakland by historical commentators with a view based on historical archaeology and makes some recommendations

for future work on archaeology projects. Appendixes include a project timeline; a list of other scholarly and interpretive products that have been created from Cypress Project data; a record of the historical associations of each archaeological feature; summaries and artifact layout photographs of 69 of the features studied; a much-edited version of the Field Director's diary; and statistical studies of faunal and glass remains. An attached compact disk contains the artifact catalog, revised faunal tables and faunal analysis methods, and the Block Technical Reports, of which the Cypress Archaeology Project team is particularly proud.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the end of such a mammoth undertaking, there are simply too many people to thank and we would be bound to forget someone if we made the attempt. Consequently, we will mention only three people.

JANET PAPE was the Caltrans archaeology manager for the Cypress Archaeology Project. It was she who initially identified the potential for historical archaeology in the project area, secured the funding, and contracted with ASC to conduct the studies. She consulted with SHPO and the ACHP, and worked with the press and various interested parties shepherding the public outreach. She worked in concert with the field director and coordinated daily with project engineers and construction contractors in scheduling, safety issues, and efficiency. Janet saw clearly the cultural value of the project research objectives and labored tirelessly to help us achieve success in attaining those goals.

THAD VAN BUEREN took over responsibility for the project during the report writing process and steadfastly worked to help us finish the job. His thoughtful review and helpful comments made this a better piece of work.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge longtime ASC staff archaeologist GRACE ZIESING who, despite having moved back East to be with family and taking a new job (with a prestigious CRM firm) stayed with the project to design the report and edit many of the chapters in this volume. For these and many, other kindness, we thank her and wish her happiness in her new life.

Mary and Adrian Praetzellis
Summer 2004

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BTRs AND CATALOGS, Historical Archaeology, I-880 Cypress Replacement Project (*on CD attached to back cover*)

- Cypress Block Technical Reports (7 volumes)
- Faunal Methods Revised
- Faunal Data and Artifact Catalogs by Block

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

Putting the "There" There: Historical Archaeologies of West Oakland is divided into four parts. Each part covers a major component of the interpretation of the archaeological and historical data developed by the Cypress Archaeological Project. Part I is an introduction to the project, where it took place, how it was envisioned, how the report addresses the project research design, as well as a narrative history of West Oakland.



THE LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE AND ITS AFTERMATH

ADRIAN PRAETZELLIS AND MARY PRAETZELLIS

5:04 P.M., 17 OCTOBER 1989

Just as the San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A's were taking the field to play the third game of the 1989 World Series, a 6.9 magnitude earthquake shook the San Francisco Bay Area. The quake destroyed a 1.25-mile section of the double-decker Cypress Freeway that funneled traffic through West Oakland to the Bay Bridge, sandwiching vehicles and their passengers between the collapsed roadways (Figure 1.1). Residents of the neighborhood were the first on the scene. With ropes and ladders they searched the debris and lowered survivors to safety, defying the very real possibility that they might be trapped themselves by an aftershock. Later, working with neighborhood activists, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) announced that it would rebuild the freeway on a different alignment to mend the split neighborhood that had been created by the original construction in the 1950s. Approval of the new route planted the seed of the Cypress Archaeological Project.

This is how archaeologists from Sonoma State University and Caltrans came to study 48 city blocks in advance of freeway construction between 1992 and 1998. They found more than 2,500 historic-era archaeological features, of which 121 (comprising 98 feature complexes) were determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The resulting half-million artifacts were analyzed, and the findings summarized in a recently published series of Block Technical Reports (BTRs) (Praetzellis 2001). The excavation at the sole prehistoric Native American site discovered in 1998 during project-related activities—CA-ALA-17—is reported elsewhere



Figure 1.1. A stretch of the Cypress Freeway after the devastating Loma Prieta Earthquake, 17 October 1989. (Source: H.G. Wilshire, U.S. Geological Survey)

(Jones n.d.). The present volume is the penultimate in a series that will document the results of the Cypress Archaeological Project. While the BTRs were intended to provide contextualized data for future use by archaeologists and historians, this volume tackles important research issues and begins the process of putting the data to work as part of Caltrans's mandate to ensure that "the results of archaeological documentation are reported and made available to the public" (48 CFR 44734).

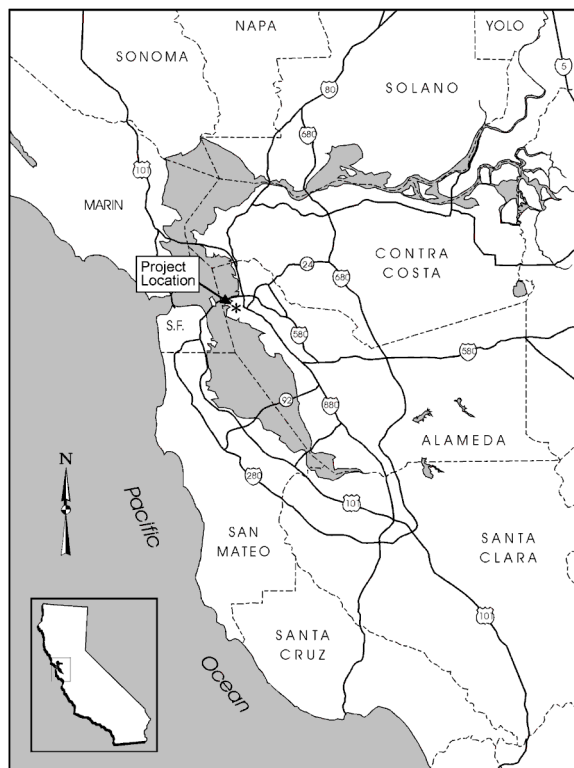


Figure 1.2. The Cypress Archæological Project, located in the western section of Oakland, California, across the bay from San Francisco.

THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT: WHERE AND WHAT

Officially known as the I-880 Cypress Replacement Project, the project area is located in West Oakland and Emeryville, California, near the east shore of San Francisco Bay (Figure 1.2). The construction project's main purpose was to restore capacity to the interstate and regional highway network, which was lost when the earthquake destroyed the link between 18th and 34th streets in Oakland. The new freeway alignment begins near Martin Luther King Way (formerly Grove Street) and Seventh Street and travels westward to Bay Street (curving around the rear of the post office at Wood Street) and then northward along the east edge of the Oakland Army Base to West Grand Avenue (Figure 1.3). The link was opened for traffic on 30 September 1998 at a cost of \$1 billion, making it the most expensive highway project in California history (Fernandez 1998).

The project area lies on the western margin of an alluvial plain that slopes west from the Berkeley hills. The plain has been extended by the placement of fill on marshland and in some shallow water areas. The ground surface elevation ranges from about 20 feet above mean sea level (amsl) near the I-580/I-980 Interchange to less than 10 feet amsl on much of the filled land. Thus, on city blocks between Martin Luther King Way southwest to just beyond Center Street, substantial footings had to be built to support the new freeway columns and the elevated structure; the footings were placed on deeply driven piles as large as 27 feet square. This situation, combined with proposed construction trenches often leaving little or no undisturbed soil around the lines of footings, triggered a series of legally mandated studies, as Caltrans officials recognized the potential destructive effect of the project on important archaeological remains from one of Oakland's most historic neighborhoods.

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

The use of federal funds and permits on the Cypress Replacement Project triggered the implementation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This law requires, among other things, that the responsible federal agency "take into account" the effects of its undertakings on archaeological sites that are or may be eligible to the NRHP. The area of potential effects (APE) was set by the lead federal agency, in this case the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and an archaeological sensitivity study was conducted to identify areas within the APE that were likely to contain historic-period resources. An area of historic archaeological interest was delineated between Martin Luther King Way, Fifth, and Sixth streets and roughly the intersection of Chase and Cedar streets (Mc Ilroy 1993). North of this point, the alignment



Figure 1.3. Aerial photograph of West Oakland, showing the new route of the freeway realignment.

immediately overlay landfill and was determined to have a low sensitivity for historic archaeological remains. Additional blocks within the area defined as sensitive were eliminated from study because they either lacked 19th-century construction, contained industries that would have produced contaminated soils, or would not be affected by construction. Research designs and treatment plans were prepared for Caltrans to address prehistoric and historical archaeology (Pape 1995; Praetzellis 1994; White 1995).

Archaeologists undertook a modified approach to Section 106 compliance because of the extreme time constraints of the construction schedule. The standard process treats potentially important sites in distinct stages: identification, evaluation, and data recovery. For the Cypress Project, these phases were collapsed into a single operation by applying the detailed research design and treatment plan during a combined identification/evaluation stage. Archaeologists evaluated the NRHP-eligibility potential of archaeological features as they were uncovered. Features that did not meet the criteria presented in the research design were abandoned as NRHP-ineligible. Conversely, each deposit that exhibited the specified characteristics was treated as potentially eligible, and excavated.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

*But what, might one ask, did it tell us about the past that we didn't know before?
This frames the question wrongly. The issue is not what new facts were revealed
but what new emphases were stressed.*

—Carmel Schrire, *Digging through Darkness* [1995:111].

A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

Contextual archaeology emphasizes the specific historical, social, and cultural context of behavior rather than the supposed universal influences sought by the practitioners of processual archaeology (Figure 1.4). This approach parallels the trend in the social sciences in general toward problems of "contextuality, the meaning of social life to those who enact it, and the explanation of exception and indeterminants rather than the regularities in phenomena observed" (Marcus and Fischer 1986:8). Structuralism, symbolism, critical theory, and "meaning" (Leone 1986) are stressed in interpretation. Contextualists also recognize the active role of both material culture and the archaeologist in the creation of the past.

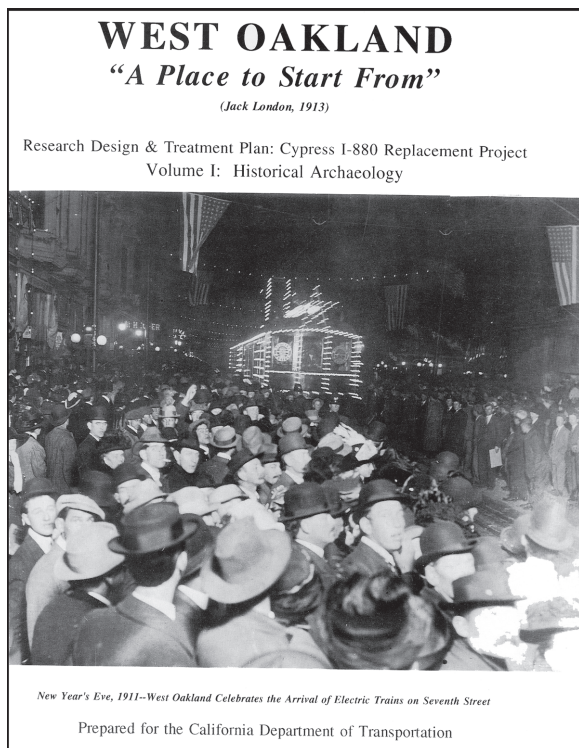


Figure 1.4. The telephone-book-size research design. This volume provided a comprehensive historical context for the archaeology project, posed relevant research questions, and outlined procedures that guided the archaeologists in the field.

An important element of the contextual approach is that the research issues it emphasizes are not as amenable to hypotheses testing as those of processual archaeology. Many archaeologists have found the processualist hypothetico-deductive model useful in achieving methodological rigor. Others, however, feel that the approach has solidified into a new canon that does not tolerate alternative ways of knowing; those bold enough to transgress these "laws of [positivist] discourse" may find that "the epistemological... police are waiting" (Shanks and Tilley 1992:23). Historians of science have been insisting for some time that rigor in archaeology does not require an exclusively hypothetico-deductive approach (Feyerabend 1988; Wylie 1992). Most notably, the insistence that archaeological data are important to the degree that they help scholars "answer questions" about the past is based on a naive and misleading model of historical archaeology as a set of techniques for discovering specific facts—missing tidbits of information—that can "fill in data gaps." While the analogy functions well when applied to the construction of chronologies, it reveals a naiveté about the process of historiography and potential contribution of historical archaeology under other paradigms.

James Deetz characterizes the nature of research in archaeology as follows:

In the nonexperimental sciences (if archaeology is indeed a science), precise certainty is rarely achieved. Rather, research takes the form of a gradual refinement of explanation, as more and more factors are incorporated into the construction of the past that one is attempting to create. In historical archaeology, this refinement is best accomplished by maintaining a balance between the documentary and the material evidence, being always mindful that, to be a productive exercise, the results should provide a more satisfactory explanation than would be forthcoming from either set of data alone [1988:367].

For the historical archaeologist and the social historian alike, questions serve to guide research, not to constrain it. They are not answered in the conventional meaning of the word, for “there is no final and definitive account of the past as it was” (Shanks and Hodder 1998:70). Archaeologists have themselves taken up the banner, finding it desirable to “seek alternative models of science that resolve the problems of positivism” while retaining “general scientific goals” (Whitley 1998:24). Contextual or interpretive archaeology is such an approach.

The differences between processual and post-processual models reflect quite dissimilar conceptualization of the meaning of artifacts. While processual archaeologists strive for predictability, post-processualists insist that this is a vain search—that the meaning of artifacts is dependent on the context of their use (Hodder 1986; for several California examples, see Praetzelis and Praetzelis 2001).

While processual archaeologies are concerned with development of general principles in relation to grand explanatory models, seeing individual cases as means to an end, post-processualists often work in very different territory: they examine at the smallest of scales, the (re)constructed experiences of families and even individuals within those elements of contemporary social life to which the researchers feels they have access. The Cypress research approach is based on something that historical archaeologists have known for years: some of our most effective work is done at the small scale, emphasizing the commonplace and bringing the lives of the disenfranchised into focus.

Furthermore, it is this very characteristic of the data—their placement in the realm of the small-scale, mundane, and personal—that puts us in a position to avoid a curious irony inherent in overreaching global interpretive models: through their insistence on finding coherence and pattern in human history, the large-scale normative analyses of processual archaeologists effectively mask and homogenize the diversity of human experience in the past (Johnson 1999:34). Historical archaeology, however, has access to “a space between often very powerful master narratives of cultural and social identity and much smaller, stranger and potentially subversive narratives of archaeological material” (Johnson 1999:34).

RESEARCH ISSUES

The Cypress Archaeological Project research design focused on three principal issues: modernization, Victorianism, and working-class culture.

While the great exhibitions of the 19th century were displaying the newly available products of the industrial revolution, the very process of industrialization was transforming Western society and culture. In 19th-century America, this process involved a change from a traditional, “face-to-face” society (Redfield 1955) to one that emphasized rationality in economic relationships,

specialization, and efficiency, and in which attainment of the goal of an improved future was to be measured by material progress (Brown 1976:29; Wallerstein 1983). Bender (1978) proposed that the modernization of 19th-century American urban dwellers was multilinear and complex: multilinear because various class and ethnic groups participated to varying degrees; and complex since individuals and families were simultaneously involved with both traditional and modern ways of life. Through the mechanism of family and social networks, national, religious, and ethnic ties remained strong and encouraged communal, traditional values and practices (Bender 1978:122; Haraven 1978). At the same time, industrial time discipline, the cash economy, and relationships with government institutions necessitated that individuals be able to function within the modern order (Rodgers 1978).

It has been suggested that a set of cultural values, practices, and aesthetics known as "Victorianism" (Howe 1976; Wiebe 1967) or "gentility" (Lawrence 2000) came to predominate among the Euroamerican cultural and political establishment of this modern society. Victorianism is said to have been a "homogenizing force" (Hardesty 1980) upon the cultures of immigrants and the native-born working class alike, which attempted to replace traditional mores with modern values and patterns of behavior suited to their roles in an industrial society. Archaeological research is in a unique position to assess both the relative pervasiveness of Victorianism as well as the degree of resistance to the values of the emerging industrial society in the form of the development of a distinctive working class and other cultures. This is because these archaeological remains are the material outcomes of household-level decision-making that was conditioned by powerful social and cultural forces. By theorizing the relationship between material culture and these mores, we can have access to the process of cultural change as it operated at levels from individual families to entire ethnic populations, and even to social units whose characteristics we have yet to define.

West Oakland was the home of many working-class immigrants. Thus its history and archaeology are a particularly suitable venue in which to examine an issue of great importance to social historians: the process by which people from traditional, pre-modern cultures—both immigrant and native-born—adapted to life in an industrial society (Gutman 1977).

RESEARCH THEMES AND QUESTIONS

From these historical issues and approaches, the archaeologists constructed research themes as well as several research questions associated with each theme. Each of the themes and its principal research question are presented in Table 1.1, below. The interested reader is referred to the research design (Praetzellis 1994) or any BTR on the attached CD for the complete list.

These questions, as well as their associated data requirements, were constructed to help evaluate the importance of each archaeological deposit as it was encountered in the field. It is important to note that questions generated in this way and for this purpose may not have definitive "answers" since the contextual approach stresses gaining general insights into important historical issues rather than providing "answers" to "questions." The struggles between labor and capital, and modernism and traditional culture, were played out on the streets of West Oakland and in its homes, lodgings, shops, and public houses. The method of historical archaeology is to weave together the data from the ground, from the archives, from maps and photographs, and from oral history consultants around the material remains left by the participants in this process. In this way, we aim to create a richer, more human history of West Oakland and the people who once lived there.

Table 1.1. Cypress Archaeology Project Research Themes and Questions

Theme	Principal Question
Consumer Behavior and Strategies	Does this resource enable us to describe the consumer practices and disposal behavior of a household or business with specific social, occupational, economic, and/or ethnic characteristics?
Ethnicity and Urban Subcultures	Does this resource reflect the rise or relative influence of Victorianism as a class-based ideology?
Industrialization and Technology	Does this resource contain evidence of undocumented or poorly documented industrial processes that could add significantly to our knowledge of the development of a specific industry?
Urban Geography	Does this resource help us to understand the characteristics of the natural environment and the landscape modifications made during the historic period?
Municipal Waste Disposal	Can this refuse dump aid in our understanding of neighborhood or citywide consumption and disposal patterns?
Interpretive Potential ¹	Does the resource have public interpretive potential?

¹This theme did not contribute to the NRHP eligibility of Cypress resources. It was included in the project research design to ensure that this value was not forgotten.

METHODS

IN THE FIELD

The project research design emphasized the use of data derived from caches of artifacts that could be associated with historically documented households. Since these collections could most often be found in hollow filled features, such as refuse pits and disused privies and wells, the initial task was to find these features. To this end, and before any test excavation was begun, surveyors laid out the 19th-century parcel lines—for privies and other hollow features were commonly placed along the rear of domestic lots. Although the archaeological testing phase emphasized areas to be affected by construction, the central portion of each block often received the most attention, as it was the most sensitive for the desired type of remains. A health and safety plan was also developed before fieldwork began. The plan described precautions to be taken to avoid exposure to contaminated soils and other potentially dangerous conditions.

The archaeological deposits were found to be covered by varying depths of fill soil, which was scraped away by a hydraulic backhoe/loader with a 36-inch, flat-edged bucket (Figure 1.5). The object was to expose previous ground surfaces (interfaces) in plan view so that the tops of features were exposed in the trench floor, not in its sides. As cultural features and stratification were identified, they were further exposed in plan by hand, photographed, and mapped in relation to a permanent datum.

The content and integrity of each feature was assessed by excavating a portion of it by hand. In the case of refuse-filled pits, for example, each feature was cross-sectioned. All excavation



Figure 1.5. Archaeologists search for features on the historical ground surface, as heavy machinery continues to remove the modern accumulation of soil in the background. They are working on Block 24, at 1817 Goss Street.

was done in a strictly stratigraphic manner, that is, according to the physical layers of deposition, and the strata used as the primary provenience for artifacts contained in them. Excavated soil was passed through 1/8- or 1/4-inch screen, as appropriate, to document all classes of artifacts. As a general rule, a minimum amount of excavation was performed to allow the Principal Investigator, Field Director, and Caltrans archaeologist to jointly evaluate the feature's research potential by applying the "AIMS-R" principles delineated in the treatment plan. The extensive pre-field historical research allowed most decisions to be made in the field regarding the research potential of each feature by associating archaeological deposits with specific households and businesses. Historians conducted additional research on remains that could not be associated with the households, industries, and businesses on the basis of information collected

during the archival research phase. Features that were determined to be nonsignificant were abandoned and, in most cases, the artifacts were returned to the hole from which they were excavated. Some materials were retained as teaching collections and distributed to various Bay Area educational institutions.

When the identification phase was completed for each block and the features evaluated for eligibility to the NRHP, the results were reported to the reviewing agencies—FHWA and the State Historic Preservation Office—in a letter report. Site trinomials were then obtained from the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System.

IN THE LAB

In historical archaeology, the "site" is often an artificial construct that consists of the totality of archaeological remains in a circumscribed location, regardless of their period of deposition or historical association. Defined in this way, the site is meaningless as an analytical unit. The products of each excavation site (in this case, the city block) were geared toward the interpretation of individual proveniences or a number of proveniences that had demonstrable historical associations. Hence, there were numerous analytical units within each "site" and even within each building lot.

Initially, artifacts were cataloged according to archaeological provenience and material. Although specialists divided materials into appropriate categories for presentation in their analyses, the catalog of historic-period artifacts was reorganized for interpretation and synthesis according to functional categories: activities, domestic, indefinite, industrial, personal, storage, structural, and unidentified use. After analysis, artifacts were stored according to material and provenience at the Archaeological Collections Facility at Sonoma State University, where they are available for future research.

WHAT OUR "AIMS-R"

The Cypress Project's condensed approach to Section 106 compliance required that archaeologists in the field decide which remains should be excavated and analyzed, and which should not. This was a heady responsibility. Archaeological remains, it was reasoned, have the

characteristics of historical association, integrity, materials, stratigraphy, and rarity. This observation led to the development of a set of general principles to guide the decision-making process:

ALL ELSE BEING EQUAL...

A ssociation	...the research potential of an archaeological deposit that has reliable and precise historical or chronological associations will be higher than one whose associations are less certain.
I ntegrity	...a feature that retains good integrity will have more research potential than one whose integrity has been compromised.
M aterials	...the research potential of a cache of materials from a domestic context will increase with the number of items and the variety of types present.
S tratigraphy	...remains that meet the other criteria and have vertically or horizontally discrete stratification retain importance. Remains from a feature with a complex stratigraphic sequence representative of different events over time may provide a chronological check on artifact diagnosis and the interpretation of the sequence of environmental or historical events.
R elative rarity	...remains from a group that is poorly represented in the sample universe will be more important, because of their rarity, than remains that relate to a well-represented entity.

From the initial letter of each of these principles, we derived the mnemonic **AIMS-R**.

ORAL HISTORY

The oral-history program was an essential research component. The "ghosts" of several 19th- and early-20th-century ethnic communities were successfully fleshed out through oral history and ethnographic fieldwork. Cultural and ethnic traditions are often expressed ephemerally and may leave little or no material trace. Thus, the questions asked by the project oral historians complemented and expanded the data recorded in the archaeological record: What did Irish railroad families eat at countless meals? Did they continue to step dance, play Irish music, and attend *ceilidhes*? Did the local Azorean-Portuguese community express identity through the public



Figure 1.6. The Chin family of West Oakland, ca. 1920. Oral history brings out the personal side of history. This picture of the family was provided by oral-history informant Florence [Chin] Wong.

performance of the Holy Ghost Festa? Did Slovenians and Italians meet for bocci ball matches or even baseball games? Was West Oakland indeed a “melting pot” prior to World War II?

Interviews were conducted with more than 40 individuals representing a variety of ethnicities and occupations, from Greek to Chinese and from Redcap porters to physicians (Figure 1.6). Some relevant taped interviews on file at the Oakland History Room were transcribed as part of the project. Together these interviews cover first-hand observations on community events and family histories dating back to before the turn of the 19th century.

HISTORY

Research with historical records and accounts, as well as the writings of historians, contributed to two crucial areas of the Cypress Archaeology Project:

- identifying the households whose artifacts were found, as well as reconstructing their demographic and social characteristics; and
- developing the context in which these families lived by providing both general perspective and local focus to the research themes that guided this work.

Project historians and historical researchers examined primary sources—such as the U.S. Census population schedules, water-tap records, tax rolls, real-estate records, and photographs—at City and County offices, as well as the Oakland History Room and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland. Some obscure sources, such as correspondence of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, had to be ordered from outside California. Much of this information has been assembled into the detailed Documentary Research Tables associated with each excavated archaeological collection (see BTRs on attached CD).

Historians have been writing about Oakland since its inception. These secondary, interpretive sources range from commercially sponsored 19th-century history/biographies, such as Wood’s 1883 *History of Alameda County*, to the work of Self (2003), who sought to reexamine the view of Oakland as a slum. This and works such as Groth’s (1994) history of residential hotels made great contributions to our understanding of life in historic Oakland. The issues raised by historians, as well as by historical archaeologists, guided the development of the volume’s overall problem orientation.

REPORTING WHAT WE FOUND

With thousands of discrete features and hundreds of thousands of artifacts, the problem arose of how to present this massive quantity of data and our interpretations of it. The conventional model was considered first. This would have involved the creation of a single technical report containing long, detailed narrative descriptions of the history and archaeology of the various project sites, followed by the reports of various specialists in ceramics, food bone, glassware, and so on. The resulting vision was of a multi-volume set of telephone-directory-sized tomes. It was rejected. Instead the project team designed a staged series of reports, each with its own goal and audience (Figure 1.7).

First were the Block Technical Reports (BTRs). The goal of these reports was to present the massive quantity of data in a standardized format that would be easy for other archaeologists to

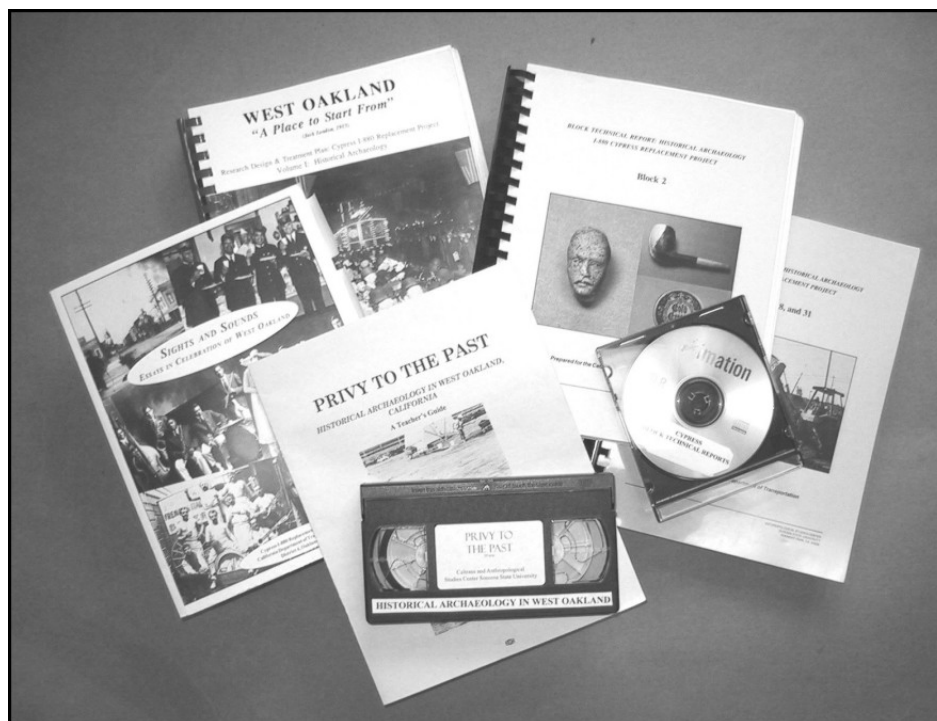


Figure 1.7. A few of the Cypress Project's products. In addition to the project research design, researchers wrote *Sights and Sounds*, a book of illustrated essays on West Oakland history and culture, and filmed *Privy to the Past*, a 28-minute video with teacher's guide that was given to hundreds of Bay Area schools and libraries. Seven Block Technical Reports, two of which are pictured here at the right, were burned onto a compact disk and distributed to scholars nationwide.

use. Behind the BTR concept was the principle that the artifacts were important for their context. Each BTR was organized by analytical unit (a feature or group of features), giving the history of the household that created it, as well as standardized tabulations of the content, and depiction and analysis of its structure. Thus, a researcher looking to study working-class African American families from the 1880s can easily locate suitable candidates in the BTRs. Furthermore, sufficient primary data are presented so that the scholar can re-assess our dating of the features and their associations. A limited number of paper copies of the 2,677-page BTRs were distributed to libraries and academic institutions. An additional 400 copies of the BTRs on compact disk were sent out at very low cost to institutions and individuals throughout North America and to archaeologists as far away as New Zealand, who are already using the information for comparisons with their own data.

Between the start of prefield research in 1992 and the completion of the BTRs in 2001, numerous additional products were created including museum exhibits, traveling displays, an interpretive monograph, and an educational video. "Holding the Fort: African American Historical Archaeology and Labor History in West Oakland" was a joint product of Caltrans, Sonoma State University, and the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO) (Figure 1.8). This traveling display, which focused on the history and archaeology of African Americans in West Oakland, was installed at 14 public venues from Oakland City Hall to the State Railroad Museum in Sacramento to the National Civil Rights Conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, before being presented to AAMLO. A smaller exhibit on the project itself and the process of archaeological investigations made its way to numerous county fairs and celebrations such as Earth Day. A

DIRECTOR'S CUT: THE VIEW FROM THE SITE

Jack Mc Ilroy, Cypress Archaeology Project Field Director

Seventh Street West Oakland – A Road through Ruins

If you took the seven-minute BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) ride today from downtown San Francisco to West Oakland, you would find that the excavation area occupies about three-quarters of a mile on either side of the West Oakland BART station, almost in the shadow of the elevated BART tracks.

For the first 28 weeks, we were able to work well in advance of construction on selected blocks. Afterwards, the crew were often excavating just ahead of heavy equipment, in some cases with constant pile-driving taking place within 100 meters. This was not the best working environment and safety was a constant concern. The training of supervisory staff in CAL/OSHA's 40-hour health and safety course for hazardous-waste workers, strict adherence to a site-safety plan, and frequent safety meetings saw the project completed free of major incidents.

Caltrans was concerned that the archaeologists did not delay the construction project. Delays would mean that contractors, forced onto down time, could charge the agency many thousands of dollars in liquidated damages. In the event, this never occurred. Construction priorities could change rapidly as the project advanced, and there was often uncertainty as to which block would be tackled next. Schedules were frequently altered and one lesson learned early on was the need for constant up-to-the-minute communication and flexibility.

Site Work

Our initial tools of choice were far from delicate. Each block was surface-scraped by heavy machinery to expose the remains of the historic ground surface. It was often very disturbed. Two types of machinery were favored: a Gradall that could move dirt fast but had mobility limitations, and a 710 John Deere backhoe with an extending boom, and a 3-foot bucket with a flat cutting edge. The skill of the backhoe operator was crucial in reducing the archaeologists' workload. A cutting edge instead of digging teeth resulted in a smooth scraped surface requiring less effort to clean. Features showed up well in contrast to the underlying yellow Merritt sand. The exception



West Oakland – The Cypress Project area from the air; BART tracks to the left of the freeway, Seventh Street on the right.

was in areas closer to the former marshy edges of the bay, where underlying sand tended to be dark gray to black. Generally 2 to 3 feet of overburden had to be removed, but in some cases closer to the bay, up to 5 feet of material had to be excavated to expose the remains.

As soon as a lot was cleared, the historic parcel lines were laid out based on the 1889 Sanborn map and then compared with surviving fence posts, of which there were usually many. While lots can change size and merge or be subdivided, there were usually enough original posts surviving to establish the 1889 lot boundaries with considerable accuracy. Correlation was good, except on Block 2, where there was a discrepancy of up to 3 feet; this was eventually resolved with further research. With most privies being close to rear lot lines, it was essential to identify lot boundaries accurately on the ground so that correct resident associations could be assigned. Caltrans surveyors plotted in the corners of the

1889 Sanborn lots on the ground prior to our beginning excavation; correlation with excavated fence posts showed they were usually able to set the corners within 6 inches of their original positions.

The primary historical resource types found and targeted were hollow/filled features: pits, privies, and wells. Deposits of sheet refuse were rare, possibly a result of the demolition and construction processes to which these blocks were subjected. Their integrity of association was also questionable. During demolition, heavy equipment can significantly alter sheet refuse and mix deposits; where lots are only 25 feet wide, it is easy for materials to be spread over several parcels, making association difficult. Pits, privies, and wells, however, are immobile. These resources were specifically targeted in the research design and in the field because their materials enable the archaeologists to address the research questions. In short, they give the most bang for the buck.

Color-coded flagging tape was used to identify features on the ground. Features that displayed older artifacts in their surface fills, that were undisturbed, and that were on lots with excellent associations were targeted for excavation first. Occasionally, as a control, a feature that did not look promising or that was on a lot with poorer association would also be excavated. Some features considered NRHP-ineligible after excavation of a half section were also fully excavated in case an abundance of materials clustered in an unexcavated corner. This was rarely the case and it did not affect any final determination of NRHP eligibility. Our initial project schedule called for two people to spend three days excavating an average privy—about 4 feet long by 3 feet wide, and between 3 to 4 feet deep. By the end of the project, this rate had been cut in half.

After all potentially significant features in the vicinity of a well were excavated, wells were pedestaled. The process involved a backhoe opening a wide trench 5 feet deep around the well, leaving the brickwork standing like a chimney. The well could then be cross-sectioned and excavated from the outside. This process was repeated until the bottom of the well was reached. With some wells extending 15 feet below ground, there was at times a 30-foot wide hole on the surface. While more expensive in terms of machinery costs, this process is safe and efficient. The well could be excavated rapidly and the

stratigraphic units accurately defined. Excavating wells from the inside is also more difficult due to the confined space.

After seven years of drought, the project ran through one of California's wettest winters. At times features had to be continually bailed out and trenches dug to divert rainwater. Light, portable rain shelters enabled work to proceed under these conditions.

It was also important to keep up with and improve the copious paperwork. The basic site recording system, the context sheet, was revised on two occasions. Field crew, who operated at the interface between research design and archaeological practice, were encouraged to offer suggestions on how to increase efficiency on all aspects of the recording system and excavation.

What We Found

This is what we found: of the 2,580 archaeological features uncovered, there were 2,375 pits, 27 wells, and 178 privies; 765 features were excavated. Approximately 3 percent of the pits, 44 percent of the privies, and 44 percent of the wells—150 features in all—appeared NRHP-eligible in the field. This number was reduced to 121 following analysis back at the ASC lab. The primary reason for ineligibility was an insufficient quantity of artifacts within the excavated feature. Those planning future inner-urban excavations will want to note these figures: based on the 240 Cypress lots, 9.9 pits, 0.74 privies and 0.1 wells were found per lot. Archaeological preservation tended to be best on asphalt parking lots that had been paved over in the 1960s.

The project demonstrated the survival of extensive archaeological materials on city blocks impacted by heavy construction. Pits, privies, and wells were often found close to the columns supporting elevated freeway lanes. Thus, it cannot be assumed that freeway construction inevitably destroys all archaeological features.

The importance of providing security on blocks immediately as they became available was highlighted on Block 1. The week before the archaeologists started work, bottle hunters used a power auger to drill over 330 holes through the asphalt covering the block in an attempt to locate bottle-rich privies. They found two and then dug 17 huge pits looking for others. The bottle hunters had access to the same historic plans as archaeologists; but since their measurements were



Digging a typical feature – Privy 7688 on Block 21 – there's not much room.

off by several feet, they missed most of the archaeological features. Despite the block being looted and disturbed by 28 columns supporting an elevated freeway, the area along the rear fence line remained relatively intact and archaeological preservation on Block 1 was among the best on the project.

While the standard three-phased approach to Section 106 compliance can put archaeologists in the position of delaying major development projects, condensing identification, evaluation, and data-recovery phases into a single operation proved successful: we feel that it set a benchmark for future urban projects. When the technical archaeological parameters and decision-making processes are explicitly set out before work begins, the project proponent, archaeologist, construction contractor, and most of all the archaeological resources all benefit from a consolidated approach. Using this approach, the average time spent on each 360 x 200 ft. city block was 18 working days.

A phased discard policy was operated on the Cypress Project, as specified in the research design. Almost all structural material was discarded on site. In spite of this, we still had nearly 120,000 artifacts to deal with from important features that were curated at the Archaeological Collections Facility, Sonoma State University.

Appendix E takes you on a stroll through some of the highlights and low points of the project. It is

compiled from the daily site log and is intended to convey an impression of what it was like to actually be on site during the excavation.

Interpretation

The contents of archaeological sites, be they pits, privies, wells, structures, strata, or artifacts, cannot speak for themselves. Archaeologists are required to interpret their findings. It is at this point that the data uncovered can be too easily subject to over-interpretation with only the most tenuous links existing between the two. There should be a clear and demonstrable link between data and conclusion. Like excavation skills, interpretive skills can take many years to develop. In interpreting the lives of long-dead citizens from their archaeological remains it is important to be aware that if material facts on the ground do not speak for themselves, our interpretations of those facts may do so even less. Conscientious archaeologists can take their cue from Sigmund Freud, and it is to be hoped we did so.

In face of the incompleteness of my analytic results, I had no choice but to follow the example of those discoverers whose good fortune it is to bring to the light of day after their long burial the priceless though mutilated relics of antiquity. I have restored what is missing, taking the best models known to me from other analyses; but, like a conscientious archaeologist, I have not omitted to mention in each case where the authentic parts end and my constructions begin [Bowdler 1996, citing Freud 1905, 8:41].

Archaeologist Gordon Childe, the unofficial father of European prehistory, may have summed things up even more concisely: "Archaeological data do not consciously misinform" (Kohl 1989:244). That is worth remembering when one reads any archaeological report.

Gertrude Stein said of Oakland that "There is no there, there," by which she meant the place had so changed that she couldn't find her childhood home. The famous quote, however, has been misinterpreted by Oakland's detractors to brand the city as a place with no soul, no center, and where little of consequence happened.

We disagree—we were there.

third photo exhibit showing the historical archaeologists at work and displaying the tools they use, also made its way around northern California. Lastly an exhibit titled “Barber Poles and Mugs: Black Barbering and Barbers in West Oakland” greeted visitors to the Oakland History Room at the main library for two months in 1997.

The first Cypress Project Interpretive Report is the 345-page *Sights and Sounds: Essays in Celebration of West Oakland*, a compendium of illustrated essays on topics ranging from African American unionism to 19th-century vernacular architecture to jazz and prostitution (Stewart and Praetzellis 1997). Although this research was done to support the archaeological studies, it is important in its own right for the perspective it gives to the vibrant history and culture of West Oakland.

On 20 July 1999 Caltrans held a successful public screening of “Privy to the Past: Historical Archaeology in West Oakland California,” an educational video on historical archaeology made on the Cypress Project. Suitable for high-school students and above, the video covers archaeology, local history, ethnic groups, and Cultural Resources Management (CRM). This short documentary provides an introduction to the field of historical archaeology—the study of the recent past using the familiar artifacts that people left behind. It included teaching notes and was widely distributed.

The final product of the Cypress Archaeology Project is still in the planning stage at the time of this writing. While the BTRs and, to a large extent, the present volume are directed toward a professional audience, the goal of the “public interpretive volume” will be to present some of the project’s findings in an informal style and a format that will allow for easy reproduction. The working title of this booklet is “Historical Archaeologies of Jack London’s Boyhood Haunts.” It will draw on the many connections between the writings of Jack London and the archaeological findings.

REPORT GOALS

This report is not intended to present the raw archaeological facts or the technically analyzed data. Rather, this is where we present the insights afforded us by the combination of archaeological remains and historical research into this place and time. Our presentation is organized into a series of essays that address some of the themes that structured life in industrializing America. Our premise is that material culture in all its forms both reflects and had a continuing influence on the lives of West Oaklanders. Thus the essays do not privilege written records, oral accounts, extant vernacular architecture, or archaeology. All are used freely in the pursuit of our goal.



Figure 1.8. Gertrude Blake, whose family were West Oakland pioneers. They have lived here since the 1870s. Here Mrs. Blake shows off her genealogical research at the opening of an exhibit about the Cypress Archaeology Project at the West Oakland Public Library.

We have intentionally made the content of this volume eclectic and its format visually diverse. Individual authors were given the freedom to take their interpretations in directions that they felt appropriate. Some studies rely heavily on quantitative, statistical data; others are qualitative, taking a symbolic approach. On occasion, authors approach the boundary of the archaeological imagination and contemporary practice: Chapters 3 and 6 include three imaginative narratives—fact-based stories that weave together archaeological remains and historical accounts into vignettes of daily life. While the data that inform each of these pieces are carefully footnoted, the narrative approach itself is controversial. Some readers may feel that the line between fictionalized accounts and documented events has been inappropriately blurred; others may agree with archaeological theorist Rosemary Joyce, who has written that “archaeological writing is storytelling” (2002:4).

We hope that this volume will help redirect the practice of historical archaeology in the CRM sector toward a more seamless melding of history and archaeology. Historical archaeology is commonly defined as the archaeology of the historic period, archaeology with a written record, or even the archaeology of capitalism. Historical archaeology as taught in academia is problem-driven and practiced by researchers seeking answers to specific questions from data extracted from sites that match their interests. It is research-based, and sites, which are often of monumental size or scope and have visible and known perimeters, are chosen for their applicability to the research issue at hand. Historians, by and large, approach their research themes from a different perspective that focuses on people, events, and processes that have shaped the living conditions of a defined place at a point in time. This type of research is often based on primary sources and the broad backdrop of events and processes as currently interpreted by historians.

Unlike academic archaeology, historical archaeology in the CRM context is location-based, a focus it shares with historical enquiry. CRM, however, is constrained to known impacts from



Figure 1.9. A beautiful tea set from the bottom of a well. This set is decorated with a transfer-printed design called India Tree, manufactured by the W.T. Copeland and Sons pottery of Staffordshire, England. It was found at the bottom of a well at 1768 Atlantic Street that was abandoned around 1905. The elegant tea set probably once belonged to John and Emma Weisheimer, a German house painter and his American-born wife. The Weisheimer’s apparently enjoyed serving tea, as three other teapots were also found in the well.

specific projects in specific places: the research area is an artificial construct determined by a client, and site boundaries often conform to project limits. To compound this potential handicap, research areas in the CRM context are often marginal—freeways and reservoirs are generally not proposed for upscale neighborhoods or prime venues. To justify the contribution of their work, historical archaeologists in the CRM world are sometimes asked to juxtapose the archaeological data with the archival data, to interpret the two data sets as if they are separate entities rather than separate sources of information about the same phenomena. This makes for devalued archaeology and weak history; historical archaeology without history is like words

without grammar. As both a method and an academic discipline, historical archaeology is a nexus for information and insights from documentary, oral, and material sources.

Our position is that the inherent locational focus of CRM-based archaeology need not be a handicap. People in the past made, purchased, used, reused, discarded, and abandoned the material objects contained in the strata that compose the archaeological record (Figure 1.9). Good history and good archaeology can situate these people at a point in time, often at a point in their life cycle. When this happens, remarkable snapshots of the past emerge that can be used to bring different voices and perspectives to our common history, as well as to bring that history to new audiences who are more receptive to visual images and small-scale analysis that speaks to everyday things they understand.

Thus, historical archaeology in CRM—precisely *because* it is location-based—offers a new way to approach local history. What we are suggesting and what we have tried to do on the Cypress Archaeology Project is to combine the archaeological and archival data as seamlessly as possible to approach topics of interest to social scientists and the local community. Our topics have a material-culture base, but are not driven exclusively by material culture. The subjects of our snapshots were greatly influenced by material culture, from houses to parlor bric-a-brac, but their lives were also influenced by a myriad of other factors.

DATASETS: HOW TO FIND AND USE THEM

The Cypress Project generated a wealth of information, but these data can be overwhelming and difficult to control. A number of aids are presented in this section to guide readers through this volume and the attached BTRs, so that they can readily use or reuse the data presented herein.

Addresses and Features

This volume discusses features at dozens of addresses on 17 city blocks, an area we have divided into three neighborhoods for analytical purposes. Figure 1.10 is a map indicating block numbers and neighborhoods that are referred to throughout the volume and used for statistical analyses in Appendixes F and G. Table 1.2 is a concordance by address that will enable the reader to quickly tie addresses to the blocks and neighborhoods used in this study. The BTRs are organized by blocks and addresses. Authors in this volume refer parenthetically to feature numbers when discussing findings. Working with Feature Associations (Appendix C) and Table 1.2, the reader can find the appropriate BTR, where all the data are presented in a standardized format. Parcel-specific historical data are presented on Documentary Research Tables and summarized in Parcel Overviews. Excavation data are presented in Matrix, Section, and Parcel Plan drawings. Artifacts and faunal remains are presented in various standardized tables and photographs.

Features and Analytical Categories

Some of our studies required that households be categorized for analysis into one of several occupational categories. Except for Chapter 7, which uses a craft-based system, our divisions are those commonly used by American social historians since Thernstrom (1973) and subsequently employed by Ethington in his 1994 work on San Francisco. What we call Wealthy Professional, or P+, on Table 1.3 is Ethington's High White-Collar; our Professional, or P, is his Low White-Collar; Skilled, Semiskilled, and Unskilled are the same in both classifications,

Table 1.2. Study Block Concordance by Address

NUMBERED STREETS		NAMED STREETS (<i>continued</i>)	
Fifth Street		Filbert Street	
654 Fifth	Block 1	810 Filbert	Block 5
658 Fifth	Block 1	812 Filbert	Block 5
662 Fifth	Block 1	813 Filbert	Block 6
666 Fifth	Block 1	815 Filbert	Block 6
668 Fifth	Block 1	817 Filbert	Block 6
712 Fifth	Block 2		
718 Fifth	Block 2	Goss Street	
762 Fifth	Block 3	1812/1814 Goss	Block 28
766 Fifth	Block 3	1817 Goss	Block 24
768 Fifth	Block 3	1862 Goss	Block 27
770 Fifth	Block 3	1865 Goss	Block 29
772 Fifth	Block 3	1871 Goss	Block 29
914 Fifth	Block 4		
Sixth Street		Linden Street	
663 Sixth	Block 1	816/818 Linden	Block 6
667 Sixth	Block 1	822 Linden	Block 6
669 Sixth	Block 1	824 Linden	Block 6
671 Sixth	Block 1	830 Linden	Block 6
679 Sixth	Block 1		
711 Sixth	Block 2	Magnolia Street	
713 Sixth	Block 2	820 Magnolia	Block 9
715/717 Sixth	Block 2		
721 Sixth	Block 2	Market Street	
719 Sixth	Block 2	812 Market	Block 3
765 Sixth	Block 3	817 Market	Block 4
		819 Market	Block 4
Seventh Street		Myrtle Street	
1801/1805 Seventh	Block 22	810/812 Myrtle	Block 4
1802 Seventh	Block 24	814/816 Myrtle	Block 4
1813 Seventh	Block 22	817 Myrtle	Block 5
1868/1874 Seventh	Block 29	818 Myrtle	Block 4
1880 Seventh	Block 29	822 Myrtle	Block 4
		824 Myrtle	Block 4
NAMED STREETS		828 Myrtle	Block 4
Atlantic Street		831 Myrtle	Block 5
1776 Atlantic	Block 21		
1768 Atlantic	Block 21	Pine Street	
1820 Atlantic	Block 20	812 Pine	Block 21
Brush Street		Short Street	
802 Brush	Block 2	1825 Short	Block 28
806 Brush	Block 2	1856 Short	Block 31
812 Brush	Block 2	1860 Short	Block 31
Castro Street		William Street	
809 Castro	Block 2	1708 William	Block 37
812 Castro	Block 1	1712 William	Block 37
		1726 William	Block 37
Cedar Street		1814 William	Block 20
881 Cedar	Block 27	1821 William	Block 20
883 Cedar	Block 27	1823/1825 William	Block 20
889 Cedar	Block 27	1827 William	Block 20
		Wood Street	
		793 Wood	Block 19

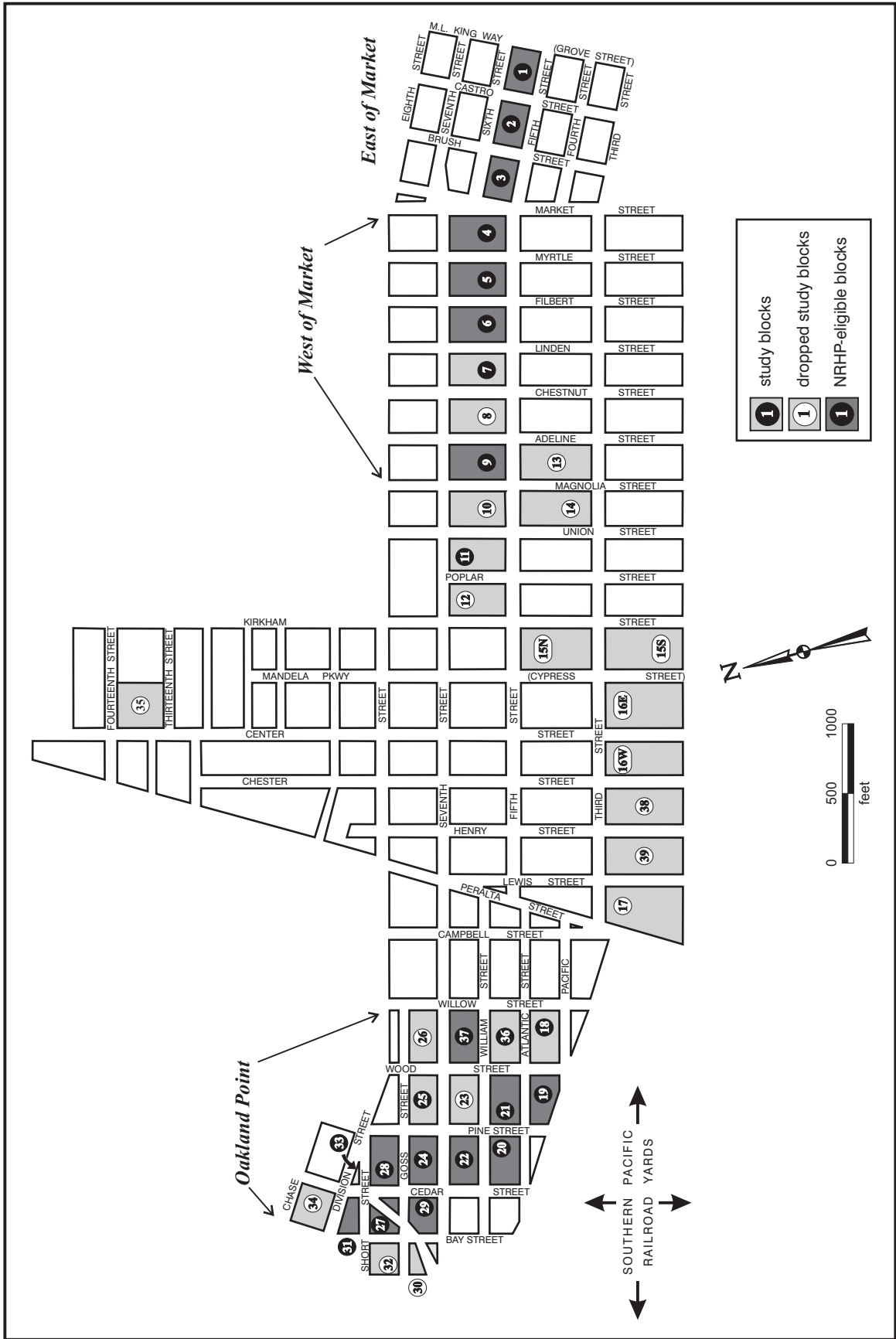


Figure 1.10. Cypress Archaeological Project Blocks

although no Semiskilled workers were identified in this study. Our classification is summarized as follows:

- Wealthy Professional (High White-Collar). Banker, real-estate developer, capitalist, brewery owner.
- Professional (Low White-Collar). Clerk, plumber (own business), barber (own business), merchant, druggist, bridge-builder, department foreman, butcher (own business).
- Skilled. Porter, contractor, conductor, peddler, music teacher, fireman, carpenter, machinist, fisherman, painter, hairdresser, barber, butcher, well-borer.
- Unskilled. Laborer, cleaner.

Table 1.3 shows the date, occupational classification, neighborhood, tenure, and dwelling type for the features used in the statistical analyses.

Dwelling type proved to be an important variable in our statistical analyses. These types were defined by Paul Groth and Marta Gutman (1997) and are summarized as follows:

- Informal Workers' Cottage (Figure 1.11). Small, open-lot dwelling with minimal side yards, one story or one story with basement. Usually wood-frame construction; two or three-room core (sometimes four); informal circulation, unspecialized rooms, and a back-porch toilet are common; additions often double or triple size of initial building. Frequently occupied by owners or leased from neighbor-owners, with high densities of people per room (extended families, boarders and roomers are common); across-town owners possible, but not common.



Figure 1.11. View of the Jackson/Netherland cottage, 714 Pine Street. This 1995 photograph shows the cottage just a few months before it was moved from its original location. The residence was recorded in detail as part of the Cypress Project (Groth and Gutman 1997:35-38) and is a classic example of an Informal workers' cottage. Note the BART train to the right. (Photo credit: Paul Groth)

Table 1.3. Archaeological Features and Categories Used for Statistical Analyses

Block	Feature	Date	Ethnicity/Origin	Occupation	Tenure	Neighborhood	Dwelling
1	951	1878 ca.	U.S.	P	T	E	I
1	955	1880	Scots/Irish	P	O	E	I
1	947	1880 ca.	Irish	S	T	E	I
1	954	1880 ca.	U.S.	S	T	E	A
1	985	1880 ca.	German	P+	O	E	P
1	993	1880 ca.	German	P	T	E	R/C
1	933, 1112	1880s early	African American	S	T	E	I
1	900	1885 ca.	U.S.	P+	O	E	A
1	953	1889 ca. - 1896 ca.	African American	S	T	E	I
1	968	1889 ca. - 902	Irish	P	O	E	A
1	928, 929	1908 ca.	Italian	P	O	E	I
2	1300	1876 - 1880	Irish	U	T	E	A
2	1376	1880s ca.			U	E	A
2	1404, 1452, 1461	1880s ca.	African American	P	O	E	P
2	1358, 1372	1880s early			U	E	I
2	1431	1880s	U.S.	S	U	E	I
2	1321B	1880s mid			U	E	I
2	1409	1880s mid	German	S	T	E	I
2	1387	1880s early			U	E	D
2	1454	1890 ca.	Irish	L	O	E	I
2	1317	1900 ca.	Irish	L	O	E	I
2	1354	1900 ca.	German	S	T	E	I
3	1703, 1704, 1705, 1706	1906 ca.	U.S.	S	T	E	I
3	1785	1874 ca.	U.S.	P+	O	E	NA
3	1747	1880 ca.	U.S.	S	T	E	I
3	1858	1882	Irish	U	T	E	I
3	1753	1884 ca.	U.S.	S	T	E	I
4	3382	1875 ca.	U.S.	P	T	W	I
4	3106, 3119	1880 ca.			U	W	A
4	3137	1880 ca.	U.S.	P	O	W	I
4	3196	1880 ca.	U.S.	S	T	W	P
4	3185	1880s	Irish	U	O	W	I
4	3139	1880s early		S	T	W	A
4	3178	1880s early	Canada	S	O	W	P
4	3346	1890 ca.	U.S.	P	O	W	P
4	3300, 3301	1890s ca.	U.S.	S	T	W	P
5	3830	1875 ca. - 1880	Irish	S	O	W	I

(continued on next page)

Table 1.3. Archaeological Features and Categories Used for Statistical Analyses (*continued*)

Block	Feature	Date	Ethnicity/Origin	Occupation	Tenure	Neighborhood	Dwelling
5	3800	1880 ca.	Irish	W	O	W	A
5	3802	1880s early	Scots	P	T	W	A
5	3828	1880s early	U.S.	P	O	W	P
6	4243	1877 ca.			U	W	I
6	4220	1880 ca.	Irish	U	O	W	I
6	4245	1880 ca.	Irish	S	O	W	I
6	4239	1880s early			U	W	I
6	4281	1880s early			U	W	I
6	4234	1887 ca.	Irish	S	O	W	D
6	4236, 4237	1890s early	U.S.	S	O	W	I
9	10102	1890 ca.	German	S	O	W	P
19	8445	1890s mid	U.S.	S	T	O	I
20	6270	1870s early			U	O	I
20	6282	1880s	U.S.	S	T	O	I
20	6239	1880s early	German/English	S	T	O	D
20	6260	1880s early	German	S	T	O	I
20	6300	1880s early			U	O	I
20	6292	1880s mid	U.S.	S	T	O	D
20	6325	1880s mid	Canada	P	O	O	A
21	7511	1890s early to mid	African American	S	T	O	A
21	7175	1900 ca.			U	O	I
21	7500	1905 ca.	German	S	O	O	I
22	5293	1875 ca.				O	C
22	5200	1900 ca.				O	H
22	5237	1908 ca.	Chinese		T	O	C
24	300	1893 ca.	Irish	W/P	O	O	S
24	559, 579	1900-1915				O	H
24	574	1909 ca.	U.S.	S	O	O	S
27	2784, 2877C	1880 ca.			U	O	I
27	2786, 2864, 2873, 2874	1880 ca.	U.S.	S	T	O	I
27	2822	1880 ca.	Irish	P/U	O	O	I
27	2809, 2812	1880s ca.	Irish	P/U	O	O	I
27	2719	1890s ca.	U.S.	S	T	O	I
27	2855	1900 ca.	U.S.	S	T	O	I
27	2870	1900 ca.	U.S.	S	O	O	I
28	2007	1900 ca.	English/U.S.	S	O/T	O	A
28	2404	1900 ca.	U.S.	U	T	O	I
29	4714	1870s early	Prussian	P	O	O	S

(continued on next page)

Table 1.3. Archaeological Features and Categories Used for Statistical Analyses (continued)

Block	Feature	Date	Ethnicity/Origin	Occupation	Tenure	Neighborhood	Dwelling
29	4724, 5112	1870s late	Irish	U	O	O	I
29	4600A	1870s-1880s				O	H
29	4648	1880s		U	T	O	I
29	4731, 5167, 5169	1880s mid-late			U	O	I
29	4600B	1890s				O	H
31	2504	1890s late	U.S.	U	T	O	I
13	2524	1890s	Portuguese		T	O	I
37	141	1878 ca.	Irish	S	T	O	I
37	100	1880 ca.	U.S.	S	T	O	A
37	101	1881 ca.	U.S.	S	T	O	A
37	156	1882 ca.	German	S	T	O	NA

Key

Occupation: P+ = Wealthy Professional, P = Professional, S = Skilled, SS=Semi-Skilled (lumped w/Skilled), U = Unskilled, W = Widow, L = Landlady.

Tenure: T = Tenant, O = Owner, U = Unknown

Neighborhood: E = East of Market, W = West of Market, O = Oakland Point

Dwelling: I = Informal Workers' Cottage, A = Almost-Polite House, P = Polite House, D = Duplex, H = Hotel, C = Commercial, R/C = Residence and store, S = Simple.

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE FOUND

The Cypress Archaeology Project may have been the largest urban archaeological excavation ever undertaken in the western United States.

The decision to reroute the freeway through this historic neighborhood had enormous consequences, not the least for urban archaeology in North America. The Cypress Project has created a database of archaeological assemblages from a wide variety of class and ethnic populations that is unequalled in the West.

BY THE NUMBERS...

- √ 78: weeks of archaeological fieldwork (April 1994 to May 1996)
- √ 22: city blocks tested
- √ 227-240: building lots excavated (depending on date of map consulted)
- √ 2,580: archaeological features discovered
- √ 121: NRHP-eligible features excavated
- √ 100: households represented by important features
- √ 427,967: artifacts and ecofacts found
- √ 1853-1911: date range of households represented
- 1850s: 1
- 1860s: 0
- 1870s: 16
- 1880s: 51
- 1890s: 15
- 1900s: 16
- 1910s: 1

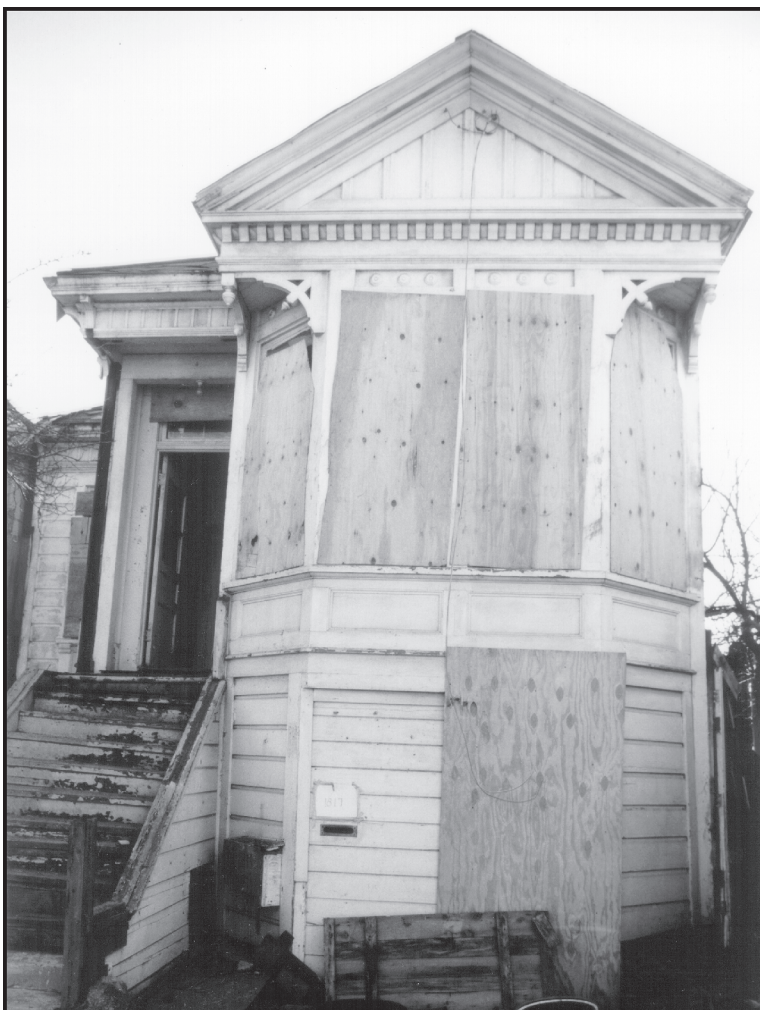


Figure 1.12. View of the Stephens/Wood house at 1817 Shorey Street. The residence was recorded in detail as part of the Cypress Project (Groth and Gutman 1997:53-60); it is a classic example of an Almost-polite house. The façade matches polite styles that could be found in much more expensive neighborhoods. In this picture, the windows are boarded up in preparation for moving the house in advance of freeway construction. (Photo credit: Paul Groth)

- Almost-Polite House (Figure 1.12). Small open-lot dwelling with small side yards, one story or one story with basement. Usually wood-frame construction; permanently specialized space, hierarchical organization of rooms (five to six minimum), specialized circulation. Minimally, but clearly, reflects spatial and social orders of much larger middle-income homes, with entry foyer, separate front rooms for entertaining (parlor, sitting room, and/or dining room); sleeping rooms screened from public view, with separate bedrooms for adults and children. Kitchen is made for the purpose, may be largest room of house; toilets generally inside dwelling or on back porch. Owner-occupiers, neighbor-owners, or across-town owners; high densities of people per room possible due to extended families, boarders or roomers. Built at one time, with attention paid to architectural style and decoration; additions are minor with respect to whole building.

- Polite Victorian House. Large open-lot dwelling (often two+ stories) with ample yards. Usually wood-frame construction, permanently specialized space, hierarchical organization of rooms (six or more), specialized circulation. Entry foyer, corridors, and stairs (two possible), formal front rooms for polite entertaining, with separate dining room and parlor being most important; sleeping rooms screened from public view (upstairs), with separate bedrooms for parents, boys, and girls. Kitchen is made for the purpose; toilets can be inside dwelling; accommodation usually provided for servants. Usually owners occupy, with low densities of people per room (although extended families are common and boarders possible). Built at one time, with great attention paid to architectural style and decoration.

To these we have added a few less-common types: Duplex (Informal workers' cottage divided into two residential units) and Simple (two-story residence larger than cottage but without "polite" aspects).

FINDING RESEARCH DESIGN TOPICS IN THIS VOLUME

The interpretive report on our investigations consists of several components:

- This volume, which contains essays about the social history of West Oakland, including consumerism, ethnicity and urban subcultures, the archaeology of class and gender, and lodging;
- Appendixes on compact disk, which describe the project timeline, outreach products, feature associations by block, feature "snapshots," a narrative excavation log, and statistical analyses of food bones and other materials;
- Block Technical Reports and artifact catalog on compact disk.

Table 1.4 guides the reader to topics of interest in *"Putting the 'There' There."* The research design defined six principal THEMES to which data developed by the Cypress Archaeology Project might contribute: Consumer behavior/strategies, Ethnicity/urban subcultures, Industrialization/technology, Urban geography, Waste disposal, and Public interpretation. Each theme was further subdivided in the research design into TOPICS, many of which are further addressed in Table 1.4 as FOCI. The results of field, lab, and analytical work were not applicable to some themes; these cases are so noted.

QUESTIONS ASKED, ANSWERED, AND POSED

Yentsch writes that, in applying the method of interpretive archaeology, "one begins with a set of questions, revises them through enquiry, and . . . the end becomes another beginning because the questions shift and change, responding to the data" (1994:321). In this view, archaeological analysis is complex, and explanations are constructed through both deduction and induction. The object is not to make exclusively archaeological discoveries of fact, but rather to weave data from a variety of sources into a multifaceted interpretation. Similarly, the documentary and archaeological records are not conceived of as having a hierarchical relationship. Each has its own strengths and flaws, and complements the other's perspective. Folklorist Henry Glassie puts it well, writing: "When documents accompany artifacts, it would be foolish to

Table 1.4. Research Foci and Where to Find them in this Volume

Theme	Topic	Foci
A. Consumer Behavior and Strategies	Consumer and disposal practices of well-documented households.	Heath and nutrition [Chaps. 3 and 6]. Symbolic dimension of consumer artifacts; domesticity and aesthetics [Chap. 4]. Use of imported foodstuffs and traditional technologies by Chinese [Chap. 8]. Assemblages linked with households documented in Block Technical Reports [CD in envelope].
	Commercial assemblages as indicators of the availability of consumer goods.	Data not forthcoming.
	Adaptive behavior in the acquisition/consumption of food and use of space.	Evidence of fishing, hunting, and home food production; food from the bay and mudflats; artifact repair and reuse; building up and building on [Chap. 5]. Women's use of back yards [Chap. 6]. Rooming houses as adaptation [Chap. 9]. Evidence of fishing and hunting [Chap. 5]. Non-conventional economics/barter; [Chap. 11]. Greek ethnic and gendered use of space [Chap. 5].
	Landscape alteration and water/waste management, in relation to household change.	Data not forthcoming.
B. Ethnicity and Urban Subcultures	Influence of and resistance to Victorianism and consumer culture. The rise of post-Victorian mores.	Material culture of Spiritualism [Chap. 3]. Use of artifacts to create an African American aesthetic [Chaps. 4 and 10]. Victorian values and "Polite" and "Almost-polite" houses [Chap. 6]. Diet and Victorian class-specific ideals [Chap. 7]. Changes in African American aesthetics and politics [Chap. 10].
	Dynamics of cultural pluralism and stratification. Women's lives. Influence of wealth and ethnicity on household material culture.	Relationship between food and wealth, neighborhood, gender, and ethnicity [Chap. 3]. Domestic ideology and the feminine ideal [Chaps. 4 and 6]. Exoticism and the relationship between whites, blacks, and Chinese [Chaps. 4 and 8]. Sewing and women's work in the home [Chaps. 5 and 6]. Women's work, income, and home life; domestic reform and children [Chap. 6]. Dietary preference, ethnicity, craft identity, and class [Chap. 7]. Rooming houses and opportunity for women; material culture of rooming houses and hotels [Chap. 9]. Music, "race work" and unionism [Chap. 10]. Emic social divisions [Chap 11]. Immigrant Jews, food, and cultural exchange [Chap. 3].

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Table 1.4. Research Foci and Where to Find them in this Volume (*continued*)

Theme	Topic	Foci
B. Ethnicity and Urban Subcultures (continued)	Material symbols and social boundaries.	Consumerism and plenty; material culture of hospitality [Chap. 3]. Household bric-a-brac and social ambition [Chap. 4] Tableware diversity and social class among Irish and African Americans [Chap 7]. Symbolic meanings of meat [Chaps. 3, 7, and 11]. Artifacts and resistance to racism [Chaps. 4, 10, and 11].
C. Industry and technology	Documenting industrial processes.	Material culture of Chinese laundry [Chap. 8].
	Management/worker relations.	Data not forthcoming.
	Industrialization, environment, and public health	Response to tuberculosis in Oakland [Chap. 3]. Declining use of wild/noncommercial foods [Chap. 5].
D. Urban Geography	Urban infrastructure.	Illicit refuse disposal [Chaps. 5 and 10]. Sewers and the end of the outhouse [Chap. 5].
	Relationship between environmental perception and public policy.	Landscape heterogeneity, "urban blight," and neighborhood vitality [Chaps. 8, 10, and 11].
	Residential/neighborhood differentiation.	Geography of rental housing [Chap. 9]. Multiethnic households and neighbors [Chap 10].
E. Municipal Waste Disposal	Citywide consumption and disposal.	Garbage disposal [Chap. 5], sewerage [Chap. 11].
	Implications for health and landfill design.	Sewerage and health [Chap 11].
F. Public Interpretation	Households of known ethnicity/occupation to provide neighborhood continuity through time.	Many examples, including Chinese-American Ah-Tye family [Chap. 8] and African American families [Chap. 10]. Public and professional interpretation [Appendix B]. Household associations and summary of each assemblage [Appendixes C and D, respectively].
	Artifacts for public display or school use.	Non-NRHP eligible assemblages distributed to schools. Public displays [Appendix B].

ignore them. But it would be no less a mistake to assume that they say the same thing and that the document is the more reliable source" (1999:46).

We have brought in various collaborators and asked them to address the research themes posed in the Cypress Archaeology Project research design from their particular theoretical perspective. We gave these authors the freedom to explore topics of interest to them using the data presented in the BTRs. Their individual findings may bolster or contradict those of others in the same volume. Even interpretations of feature associations and meaning may differ. This is to be expected and was a goal of the BTR format—to allow other researchers to interpret the data for themselves. This volume in no way exhausts the research potential of the Cypress material; some questions posed in the research design have yet to be explored; other new questions will be posed in the concluding chapter. We do not have all the questions and certainly no claim to all the answers. The BTRs are attached to this volume and are available through Caltrans and the ASC on a compact disk in hopes that readers will be inspired to use the data in their own work for comparative purposes or to build upon what we have started here.

This volume is divided into four parts. Each part contains main essays (structured as chapters), short essays, and sidebars. The short essays (some of which are actually quite long) connect thematically with the main essay and are focused on specific self-contained topics. Some cover relevant historical topics, others cover purely archaeological manifestations, and some range between both sources. Sidebars present the "minor illustrative material," generally archaeological in nature, in hopes to catch the general reader's interest in what was found. Each chapter, essay, and sidebar is a stand-alone piece; readers need not feel compelled to read from start to finish, but are encouraged to jump around the volume at will.

Part I contains two main essays. This, the first, presents an introduction to the Cypress Project—the project's how, why, when, where, and whom. It briefly describes our methods and research questions, while referring the reader to the research design and treatment plan for further information (Praetzellis 1994). It outlines the project history and the resulting related products and reports. It also discusses our vision of historical archaeology in the CRM context and our vision for this volume. Additional supporting data are included in the appendixes, including a feature-association list by block and selected feature snapshots, which provide a one-page graphical representation of findings. The second essay in Part I condenses the background chapter written for the project by Nancy Olmsted and Roger W. Olmsted (1994).

Part II tackles consumerism, the first main theme of the project research design, by exploring the consumption and disposal practices of project-area residents in three main essays. The first, "Consumerism, Living Conditions, and Material Well-Being," is a straightforward study of evidence from particular households relating to the material aspects of life that contribute to comfort and satisfaction: health and nutrition and consumer goods. It reaches some surprising conclusions regarding who was purchasing what and why. Short essays and sidebars cover a range of consumer goods—from clothes to cures to teapots—as well as the competing world-views of commercial capitalists and spiritualists. "Consuming Aspirations: Bric-A-Brac and the Politics of Victorian Materialism," the second main essay, shifts scale and views the constant negotiation of conflicting personal, collective, institutional, and state interests in the "politicalized" symbolism of bric-a-brac purchases by project-area households. Like most popular culture, bric-a-brac was a self-possessed reflection of American society that presented back to consumers their deeply held preconceptions of themselves and others. The essay suggests that households could choose goods that symbolically situated them in places other than those dictated by social

and political realities. The third essay, “Outside the Marketplace: Adaptive Strategies and Self-Reliance, Making It and Making Do,” tackles the flip side of consumerism. What did households acquire outside the marketplace through hunting and gathering, growing, sewing, repairing, adapting? What did they recycle, reuse, or discard? How did these strategies differ by category (bottles vs. buildings) and through time? This main essay and supporting essays also address research questions relating to urban geography, the natural environment, and landscape modifications.

Part III addresses ethnicity and urban subcultures, our second major theme, in five main essays. “‘Busy as Bees’: Women, Work, and Material Culture” examines the breadth of women’s work at home through the astonishing number and diversity of recovered artifacts associated with women’s work, as well as the meaning these artifacts held for specific households, taking into account the interests of domestic reformers in the neighborhood. This study looks at women’s work, including unpaid labor, as productive while recognizing the differentiation of women’s work along class, racial, and ethnic lines. “Aristocracies of Labor: Craft Unionism, Immigrants, and Working-Class Households” focuses on railroad occupations and categorizes project households along two axes, skill (i.e., craft organization) and origin (whether the head of household was native-born or immigrant). The essay studies basic standard of living as expressed in diet and examines how these groups of workers represented themselves using the discourse of Victorian material culture. “Chinese Oaklanders Overcoming the Odds” synthesizes research on Chinese laundries in the West and on the Chinese in Oakland, and highlights the important contributions of the Chinese to the settlement and development of the West. “The Landscapes of Lodging” examines room renting in West Oakland between 1880 and 1900, directing attention to the gender and material culture of room renters during a period of transition. “‘Black is Beautiful’: From Porter to Panther, Archaeologies of West Oakland’s African American Community” traces the African American community from initial settlement in the 1860s—when railroad porters and independent barbers settled in West Oakland—to the birth of the Black Panther Party, less than 100 years later.

Part IV consists of a single essay, “More than ‘Just a Place to Start From.’” Here we use information developed in earlier chapters and in the appendixes to examine and move past the characterization of West Oakland as a “slum” whose residents were the victims of irrational and self-destructive decisions. The volume concludes with an assessment of the Cypress Archaeology Project and suggestions to improve the conduct of urban historical archaeology.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF WEST OAKLAND

ADAPTED FROM OLMSTED AND OLMSTED (1994) BY ROBERT DOUGLASS

The history of West Oakland is a chronicle of a dynamic community and the landscape that evolved around it. By far the most important force that molded and drove that community was the changing technology of transportation serving the economic development of California and the West. Perched at the edge of the continent on the San Francisco Bay, one of the world's great natural harbors, West Oakland was destined from the start to become a key transportation nexus of the rapidly growing nation. Its location made it a natural interface between sea and land, East and West. The movement of people and goods continues to shape the human and geographical fabric of the area.

In its earliest period of development, the West Oakland region functioned as a suburban outpost of San Francisco. While the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 brought a mixed blessing to the Pacific Coast as a whole, the selection of West Oakland as its western terminus gave the growing settlement a strong economic backbone and placed it in a national context. Directly or indirectly, the Central Pacific Railroad provided a wide variety of jobs to generations of West Oaklanders, largely defining the community's polyglot and blue collar nature. Opportunities afforded by the railroad attracted an array of ethnic groups whose breadwinners filled the various niches within the corporate organization and local businesses. With the exception of some anti-Chinese sentiment, the American and immigrant subsets in the population mix seem to have gotten along fairly well. That general ethnic harmony became a point of pride and a valued part of West Oakland's collective identity.

As local interurban railroad lines and other industries became electrified around 1911, a fondly remembered "Golden Age" began in the community, fueled economically by wartime industries and lasting until the onset of the Depression at the end of the 1920s. Although World War II again brought defense industries to West Oakland, it drew a huge influx of mostly government workers, changing the traditional nature of the place. "Progressive" government planners decided that the small cottages and houses that had defined West Oakland's neighborhoods were not fit living spaces for modern laborers and their families, and replaced much of the old built environment with bleak housing projects.

With the decline of the railroad industry and the corresponding rise of the freeway system in the 1950s, West Oakland's character continued to change. The Cypress Freeway, connecting the Nimitz Freeway with the Bay Bridge, was built above West Oakland's streets, further marginalizing the community while setting the scene for the earthquake tragedy over two decades later. The Cypress structure became the boundary of continued urban-renewal projects of the 1950s and 1960s, ironically acting to protect original neighborhoods to the west. Relocation of the Cypress Freeway after the 1989 earthquake collapse resulted in the demolition of additional portions of existing original neighborhoods, primarily industrial/commercial buildings. Some 19th-century residences were moved to new locations. The mitigation mandated by the Section 106 process engendered the historical and archaeological research described in this report, recapturing otherwise lost details of life in West Oakland's past.

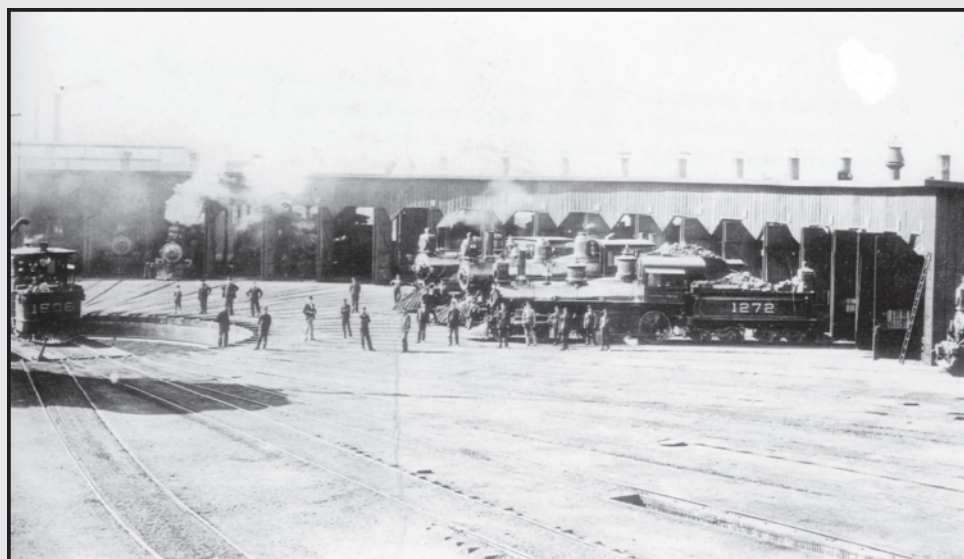
THE ROUNDHOUSE

adapted from Olmsted and Olmsted (1994) by Robert Douglass

The engine roundhouse was the central focus of the West Oakland railroad yards and shops and provided jobs to generations of area residents. Steam locomotives were fairly individualized, custom-built machines, with few standardized parts. They required, consequently, the attention of master mechanics and custom parts fabrication by skilled machinists to keep them running. A roundhouse allowed locomotives to be driven onto a turntable and rotated, so that they could be run out on radial tracks into multiple covered work bays for maintenance and repairs. Each bay incorporated a pit between the rails so that mechanics could access the running gear. Some roundhouses actually were circular, or "round." Many, like the Oakland Point engine roundhouse, consisted of a turntable with tracks radiating to an arc (rather than a complete circle) of roofed bays, forming a shape like a pie slice. The 1878 Thompson and West Historical Atlas Map shows only the original CPRR roundhouse (Thompson and West 1878). The 1911-1912

Sanborn insurance map shows three roundhouses: the original pie-shaped CPRR structure for servicing engines; a larger roundhouse a few hundred yards to the north, for the SPRR car shops; and a third roundhouse belonging to the Western Pacific Railroad to the south, near the foot of Adeline Street (Sanborn Map Company 1911-1912).

The decline of the railroads, as highway transport grew in the years after World War II, spelled the beginning of the end for the extensive West Oakland shops and yards. Most major railroads converted from steam power to new diesel locomotives with more mass-produced standardized parts between 1950 and 1956. Fewer shops, machinists, and mechanics were necessary to keep the trains running. By the late 1950s, the West Oakland yard operations had practically ceased. The obsolete engine roundhouse (and likely the car shop roundhouse, as well), no longer needed by the small crew of diesel mechanics, was torn down in 1960.



The original CPRR roundhouse at the West Oakland railroad yards and shops in the 1870s. (Photo courtesy of Bancroft Library)

PERALTA'S RANCHO SAN ANTONIO

The establishment of Spanish missions between 1770 and 1797 spelled the beginning of the end for the aboriginal way of life around San Francisco Bay. Native peoples were devastated by disease and other changes brought by contact with the mission system, and traditional lifeways were eliminated by 1810 (Levy 1978:486-496). In 1820 Lu s Mar a Peralta, commander of the guard at Mission San Jos  from 1798 to 1800, obtained a grant to 10 square leagues of land that included the West Oakland project area. Peralta's four sons occupied the vast holding, which was named the Rancho San Antonio. The land was formally divided among the sons in 1842, with Jos  Vicente Peralta ending up in possession of the West Oakland area (Hoover et al. 1990:9). None of the original Peralta adobe house sites are near the project area.

Squatters, including lumbermen and cattle thieves who supplied San Francisco meat markets, were active on Peralta lands before the Gold Rush (Bagwell 1982:16-19; Davis 1929:251-253). Three squatters with speculative designs on Vicente Peralta's land—Edson Adams, A. J. Moon, and lawyer Horace W. Carpentier—settled near the foot of present-day Broadway around 1850. They appear to have been challenging the validity of the rancho grant under the American administration. An armed posse led by Peralta and a deputy sheriff failed to eject the three, and their efforts may have actually resulted in a lease agreement with the offended owner (Bagwell 1982:27; Baker 1914:356). Other squatters flooded in: by 1852 around 50 were each claiming 160-acre parcels on the Rancho San Antonio. The shrewd Carpentier and his partners soon had their three 160-acre claims surveyed into a gridiron town site they called Oakland and began to sell lots. Carpentier, by now appointed enrolling clerk of the state legislature, succeeded in passing a bill incorporating the town. He was elected to the state assembly in 1853, and when the legislature officially recognized Oakland as a city the following year, he became its first mayor. Carpentier, aptly nicknamed the "General," reserved ownership of the entire Oakland waterfront, a commercial empire finally recovered by the city in 1911 after decades of legal wrangling.

The West Oakland project area is contained in lands that Vicente Peralta sold off to various parties in 1852 and 1853. Portions of Carpentier's waterfront property are likely to be within the project area. The Peralta grant, issued by the last Spanish governor of California, was finally confirmed under United States laws in 1856. Oakland's settlers banded together to resist any potential attempts to challenge ownership of their homesteads, but such challenges seem to have never materialized (Hoover et al. 1990:18).

GROWTH AND IDENTITY: RAILROADS COME TO WEST OAKLAND

Through the 1860s, West Oakland remained semi-rural, offering different possibilities to different people, with its identity still fluid and tentative. Substantial homes on estate-sized parcels reflected the vision of some residents who saw the place as a long-term setting for genteel suburban retreats. Others, such as those who planned the Bayview Tract between Peralta and Center south of Seventh, viewed West Oakland as ideal for real estate speculation, where smaller row-house sized lots could be sold for tidy profit. At Oakland Point, a neighborhood of typical 19th-century main-street urban aspect took shape. Railway builders completed the San Francisco

& Oakland Railroad (SF&ORR) along Seventh Street in 1863, connecting central Oakland with the bay and ferries to San Francisco, and opening West Oakland up to increased settlement. By 1867, 60 children attended the public school there, and land was estimated to be worth \$2,000.00 per acre (Halley 1876:177; *Oakland Daily News* 14 February 1867).

As the transcontinental railroad neared completion, Collis Huntington and his three Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) partners made a decision critical to the development of West Oakland. The Big Four were eager to assemble a monopolistic network of local California railroads to connect with the national line, and wanted to extend the western transcontinental rails from Sacramento to the San Francisco Bay as a part of that effort. Although a route through San Jose up the peninsula to San Francisco was almost chosen, they instead decided on the Oakland Point wharf of the SF&ORR as the western terminus of the CPRR. The crucial decision resulted not from public debate or strictly geographical reasons, but because of a sweetheart deal between Oakland founder and waterfront czar, Horace Carpentier and the railroad men. The CPRR, through its subsidiary Western Pacific, received 500 acres and two rights-of-way for its terminal facilities, while Carpentier's remaining Oakland assets skyrocketed in value (Scott 1959:48).

As a part of the plan, CPRR acquired the SF&ORR in 1869, assuming operation of the local trains and gaining the Seventh Street right-of-way (Figure 2.1). The shops and yards of the rail giant were constructed on a site just south of the Oakland Point wharf, and a freight line to bypass residential areas was built along First Street, angling out over the water from the yards to the wharf. CPRR rails linking a line from Sacramento through Niles Canyon to Oakland were completed in the fall of 1869. Improvements to extend the wharf to deep water went on between 1869 and 1871, with the resulting structure, named the Oakland Long Wharf, projecting more than two miles into the bay. In 1876 the company built a double-track line north along Cedar Street, connecting the wharf and yards to another Sacramento route via the Carquinez Straits. The rail and marine shipping facilities continued to expand through the 1870s, leading to the construction of a massive second wharf, or mole, just south of the Long Wharf, between 1879 and 1882. The Oakland Mole, as it came to be called, was built as a passenger-only facility and terminal far out over the bay, and was used by ferry travelers into the late 1950s.

The coming of the CPRR (which merged with the Southern Pacific Railroad [SPRR] in 1885) was the defining event in the development of the local community and landscape. The enormous hierarchy of jobs associated with company operations soon turned West Oakland, and especially the Oakland Point neighborhood, into a virtual railway workers' village, where

railroad craftsmen, operators, and administrators all worked and settled at the Point in great numbers. So did local business people whose hotels, markets, iron works, livery stables, photo studios, saloons, and "female boarding houses" in one way or other served the railroad and its employees or passengers. From 1869 to the 1930s, vast numbers of Point residents are listed in directories as working for the C.P.R.R. or (after 1885 the S.P. Co.)... [Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (OCHS) 1990(2):29].

The character of the place was determined by the nature of the work that the railroad required. The Point grew into a neighborhood comprising mostly small and modest working- and middle-class dwellings (see Groth and Gutman 1997), punctuated by shops, small businesses and industries, boardinghouses, and hotels. It was strung together by the rail lines leading out to the east and north and fixed to the nucleus of rail yards and wharves.

In Oakland, late-19th-century union activity was primarily within the building industry. Early craft unions, more social brotherhoods than labor-advocacy organizations, had formed

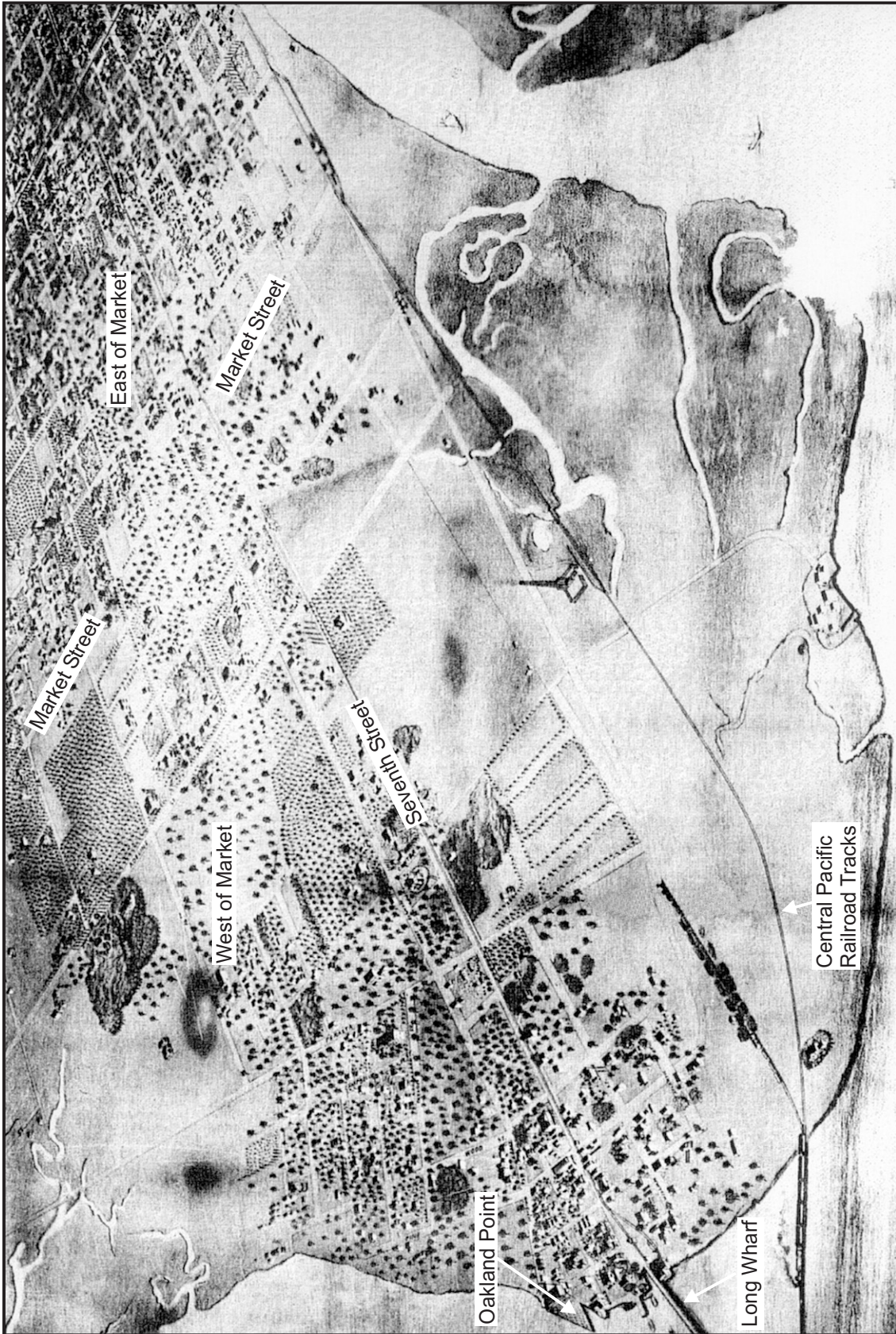


Figure 2.1. Snow & Roos Bird's-eye View of Oakland, 1870-1871, showing project area neighborhoods and landmarks. (Illustration courtesy of Bancroft Library)

A LONG WHARF WITH A MASSIVE MOLE

adapted from *Olmsted and Olmsted (1994)* by Robert Douglass

Bringing the transcontinental railroad to the San Francisco Bay required an efficient connection of freight and passengers with ferries and ships. When the CPRR acquired the existing Oakland Point pier in 1868, it was already more than a mile long. The railroad soon began constructing a series of improvements and extensions, and by 1871 multiple rail lines extended out over two miles of wharf into deep water. That year, the CPRR launched a freight ferry that could take 18 loaded rail cars at a time across to San Francisco. The new structure, known as the Oakland Long Wharf, allowed rail freight to be loaded directly onto and off of ocean-going vessels. A plan to connect the wharf to Yerba Buena Island was periodically mooted, but finally abandoned in 1873. Traffic soon outgrew the Long Wharf on account of expansion of the rail system in the 1870s. A massive wedge-shaped, rock-filled pier, or mole, was appended partway out along the wharf's south edge between 1879 and 1882. The Oakland Mole, as it became known, was built to handle all of the passenger business, leaving the entire Long Wharf available for freight. The huge wood-framed train terminal covered more than 4 acres,



The photograph shows the interior of the Oakland Mole passenger depot around 1931, in its bustling heyday. (Photo courtesy of San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park)

with a cavernous maw gaping open on the bay to admit docking ferries. The Oakland Mole was Oakland's main passenger depot all the way into the 1950s. Its importance faded with the decline of passenger railroads, and it was demolished in 1960.



In the 1878 woodcut shown here, passenger trains come and go from dock-end terminals, while deep-water square riggers take on or discharge cargo. In the foreground, a crew of Overseas Chinese laborers awaits transportation between jobs.

(Source: *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine* 11 May 1878)

around individual railroad trades as early as 1863. In 1893 Eugene Debs, a locomotive fireman from Indiana, founded an inclusive industrial labor union, the American Railway Union (ARU), aimed at all rail workers (Douglas 1992:207, 210-211). The first major strike in the Bay Area played out in West Oakland, when local ARU members struck on 28 June 1894 in sympathy with Chicago-based Pullman Palace Car Company sleeping car builders as part of a called nationwide strike. The action in West Oakland, unsupported by the craft brotherhoods, was a flexing of labor muscle against the hated SPRR rather than a demand for better wages or conditions. Debs had enjoined his membership against violence, but before the month-long strike was over, mob action (including an attempt to blow up a local train) brought in federal troops to suppress the strikers. The violence cost the ARU public support and worked in favor of the SPRR.

WEST OAKLANDERS, 1870-1910

A wide variety of people came to work in West Oakland, to match the variety of labor niches that the railroad organization required. The many-tiered nature of work at a large railroad and its attendant trades and industries afforded opportunities to a wide spectrum of people. They ranged from poor, newly arrived immigrants to comfortably middle-class, native-born Americans with established skills and trades. The concept of “melting pot” is much debated. Taken merely to describe a coming together of disparate ethnic groups, West Oakland’s version of the melting pot in the late 19th century included populations of Portuguese, Germans, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, Americans of African and of European extraction, and numerous others.

The Portuguese, many from the Azores and Hawaii, while well-represented in the maritime industries, also came to work for the railroad, primarily as laborers rather than tradesmen (OCHS 1990 [2]:48). By 1892 Oakland was considered the unofficial Portuguese capital of California. They were often characterized as upwardly mobile, working to save for eventual purchases of farms. Germans who came to West Oakland were frequently property owners who operated retail shops and other small businesses. Many were carpenters, although more often than not they worked at building houses rather than for the Central Pacific. They were the second-largest ethnic group in the project area in 1880. The largest group was the Irish, whose numbers within the project area continued to increase over the next 20 years (United States Bureau of the Census [U.S. Census] 1880). While Irish immigrants ran businesses such as the Charter Oak Hotel on Seventh Street (Block 23) and G. Culhane’s grocery and liquor store at Willow and Pacific (Block 18), they most often worked in the low-paying, labor-intensive jobs that came under the description of “laborer.”

Chinese shrimp fishermen apparently settled near the Point very early on, in the 1850s (Bagwell 1982:87). The coming of the railroad did not directly create jobs for Chinese immigrants in West Oakland: although Chinese labor crews were responsible for building much of the Central Pacific’s portion of the transcontinental line, local trade unionists barred them from employment in the shops and yards. In 1880, six live-in domestic employees worked within the eastern project area, and a Chinese laundry operated on Block 30 (U.S. Census 1880). In 1903–1904, Chinese entrepreneur Lew Hing relocated his large cannery from San Francisco to West Oakland. The factory, five blocks north of the project area, became seasonally one of the area’s largest employers of Chinese labor, as well as of Portuguese and Italian women (OCHS 1990 [2]:50). A small Japanese community also existed within the project area, on Block 2 or 3, in the 1880s and 1890s. This 20-member enclave was associated with the Japanese Society, which

THE ARU STRIKE OF 1894

adapted from *Olmsted and Olmsted (1994)* by Robert Douglass

The mid-1890s found the country gripped in a depression, causing increased labor union activity. The American Railway Union (ARU), which sought to organize all railway workers without regard to individual job or craft, called a nationwide strike on 28 June 1894 to support striking Pullman car builders in Chicago. Membership in Oakland had no specific local grievances beyond the traditional general distrust and resentment of labor for corporate management: the action was viewed by both sides as a symbolic test of power between capital and organized labor. It also pitted the older established individual craft unions against the ARU.

By 30 June, Oakland train traffic was brought to a halt. The strike gained momentum as more workers signed on with the ARU, and on 5 July strikers invaded the yards, taking possession and compelling those remaining at their jobs to halt work. Local trains attempting to leave the mole were stopped by large crowds that included hundreds of women and children, some of whom joined men in lying across the tracks to make their point. Others in the crowd removed non-ARU firemen and engineers, none too gently, from their engines. Railroad management now asked

for government help (*San Francisco Examiner* 5 July 1894).

ARU founder Eugene Debs called for avoiding violence, and beyond isolated rock-throwing and rough treatment of some by the mob, real violence had been thus far averted in Oakland. Things took an ominous turn in West Oakland when ARU men from Dunsmuir and Sacramento reportedly brought in boxcars of rifles and blasting powder (*Oakland Enquirer* 7 July 1894). Confrontations erupted between billy-clubbing police and strikers wielding fence pickets, and state and federal troops finally arrived in West Oakland around 10 July. Near Sacramento on 11 July, dynamite placed under a trestle derailed an Oakland-bound train, killing an engineer and four soldiers. After clashes between troops and strikers, momentum began to swing in the SPRR's favor, and Debs ordered a conditional halt to the strike on 13 July. Since the company would not meet their conditions, local strike leaders kept the strike going. An attempt was made to blow up a local train at Seventh and Kirkham streets, with little damage. The violent incidents and train service disruptions turned public opinion against the strikers, and the men began to go back to work. The last diehards gave in by 1 August (Leach 1917:270).



This engraving illustrates an incident early in the strike, when three men in a row had been induced to leave their jobs rather than to turn the semaphore switch at Seventh and Webster streets so that the local train could pass. Miss Tilson, a company station agent, faced the hostile crowd and turned the switch. She was jeered but not otherwise mistreated. (Source: *Oakland Enquirer* 3 July 1894)

boarded and educated new immigrants from Japan, and operated a restaurant (*Oakland Enquirer* 28 June 1894).

Over the years, Oakland's Chinese were subjected to the same hostility encountered elsewhere in the state (see Yang 1999:21-22). The Workingmen's Party, a movement to remove cheap Chinese labor from the American job market, had brief but substantial support in Oakland. This was evidenced by the election of the exclusionist party's candidate, W. R. Andrus, as mayor of Oakland in 1878 and 1879, and a countywide referendum on Chinese exclusion in 1879 that resulted in a 9,401-to-36 vote against further Chinese immigration (Wood 1883:279-280, 839).

In 1880, 48 percent of household heads within the project area were American-born. They came primarily from the Northeast and Midwest, with a smaller number from the South. Represented among those southerners were six African American households (U.S. Census 1880). A small black community may have existed in the vicinity of Blocks 22 and 23 in pre-railroad days, as early as the beginning of the 1860s (Hinkel and McCann 1939 [2]:418-420; OCHS 1990 [2]:50). Four of the six African American household heads in 1880 were the vanguard of what would become a West Oakland core group: railroad porters working for the Pullman Palace Car Company. Pullman built and operated the deluxe sleeping cars pulled by various railroads throughout a nationwide network, and the Oakland CPRR terminus naturally became a western hub for the car company as well. By 1900, 30 men living in the project area were employed in the service sector of the railroad industry as Pullman porters, cooks, and waiters. When this labor force organized into the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and the Dining Car and Cooks Union, Oakland became their West Coast headquarters. The economic foothold of opportunity afforded by railroad work in West Oakland soon led to African American men branching out into such other jobs as carpentry, painting, carpet-laying, barbering, hotel work, and bartending; and to African American women working as hairdressers, dressmakers, boardinghouse keepers, domestics, nurses, and midwives. At the turn of the century, most of the African Americans within the project area owned or rented homes on Blocks 1 through 10 (U.S. Census 1900).

Native-born Americans of European descent dominated professional trade and white-collar jobs in West Oakland, in addition to the economic niche of those describing themselves as "capitalists." Familiarity with the language, government, and economic system gave them an advantage over most new immigrants, with the possible exception of Germans, who were also fairly well-off as a group. In the 1880s households belonging to wealthier professional and managerial-level breadwinners were concentrated north of Seventh and east of Adeline, while residences along and south of Seventh, and around the railroad yards belonged to blue-collar immigrants. In the project area, the upwardly trending white Americans of the 1880s lived almost entirely in Blocks 1 through 10. Despite this general trend, an element of economic blurring existed in those wealthier neighborhoods, with a fair number of unskilled or semi-skilled immigrant laborer households mingled with the white-collar professional homes. By the early 1900s, those households supported by higher-scale jobs had all but disappeared, and West Oakland had become more uniformly immigrant and blue collar.

While the Point moved toward economic homogeneity, the multicultural nature of its population remained. Other ethnic groups, including Italians, French, Greeks, Slavs, and Mexicans, were also part of West Oakland's mix, growing in numbers in the 20th century. With a few exceptions, West Oakland's various groups seem to have coexisted harmoniously over the years. The notable exceptions were 19th-century anti-Chinese sentiment, which was epidemic to the whole state, and later, some almost-ritualized conflict between ethnic youth gangs.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND PROSPERITY: REACHING BEYOND THE RAILROAD

The 1906 earthquake left West Oakland virtually unscathed. By sparing the community, however, the quake affected it nonetheless. As peninsular San Francisco's primary transportation portal to the interior, West Oakland's wharves and railways assumed new importance. A flood of refugees went out from, and vast amounts of rescue and recovery materials went into, the quake-and-fire-ravaged city by way of the Point, setting an industrial and population growth spurt in motion. Many San Francisco businesses that had been wiped out by the quake and fire relocated to West Oakland or elsewhere in the East Bay, rather than rebuilding at their old locations. Increased labor needs of such industries seem to have resulted in a demographic shift: comparison of the 1900 and 1910 census data shows a decrease in single family households and a greater number of lodgers over the decade (U.S. Census 1900, 1910). There was no jump in residential construction, suggesting that existing homes were converted to accommodate boarding situations (OCHS 1990 [2]:38). Grain milling, canning, lumber planing, iron works, and miscellaneous light manufacturing were some of the types of industries moving into West Oakland at the time (Sanborn Map Company 1911-1912). Many of them moved into newly filled tidal lands near the railroad yards and elsewhere along the waterfront, surrounding rather than displacing the existing residential neighborhood.

Electrification of local railways came early to Oakland, which by 1892 had one of the most extensive networks in the nation (Bagwell 1982:68). That year, the Eighth Street horse car line into West Oakland was electrified. By 1902, "Borax" Smith's Key System had established electric train lines from outlying suburbs to a new ferry pier at the present Bay Bridge alignment. The quiet, clean electrics were much preferred by Oaklanders over the smoky, chugging steam engines still used by the SPRR on its local lines, and in 1908, the railroad giant began electrification of its locals. The Seventh Street rail line that formed the axis of West Oakland was converted by 1911, and the new Red Trains were immediately popular with local travelers. Local historian Vernon J. Sappers (1993) viewed the advent of the Red Trains as marking the start of a nearly two-decade-long "Golden Age" for West Oakland. The direct effect of the change was a great improvement to the quality of life along the Seventh Street corridor as the air and noise pollution of the old engines disappeared. Indirectly, the line actually increased train traffic on Seventh Street, and the improved access to new peripheral suburbs may have hastened the departure of some families from the Point. The line was extended almost to San Leandro in 1913. The electric locals opened up new outlying areas for development, and true suburban living became more attainable for more urban middle-class householders.

World War I ushered in a new level of economic activity in West Oakland, with the expansion of existing firms such as the Moore & Scott shipyard at the foot of Chestnut and Adeline streets, and with new industries coming to the area. With a growing fleet of ferries, the SPRR also operated their own shipyard at the Point. The influx of workers brought new prosperity to local consumer businesses. Commuter traffic to San Francisco grew as well. Seventh Street was not only the route for the Red Trains that ran every 20 minutes, but had become the main artery for growing automobile traffic to and from the auto ferries now run by the SPRR. Business along the corridor boomed, continuing through the 1920s.

RED TRAINS IN A GOLDEN AGE

adapted from Olmsted and Olmsted (1994) by Robert Douglass

Francis Marion “Borax” Smith had made a fortune mining borax in the deserts of southern California. He turned to East Bay real estate development in the 1890s, shrewdly realizing that an efficient transportation network would turn cheap rural land into valuable suburbs. Acquiring various local rail lines, he had consolidated them by 1902 into a single electrified system, known as the Key System, linked to cross-bay ferries at a pier adjacent to



This was the first electric train to run down Seventh Street, on 13 December 1911. The event was viewed by some as the start of a “Golden Age” for West Oakland, a period of prosperity that lasted until the Depression. Ironically, the efficient transportation provided by the Red Trains served to accelerate a middle-class exodus to more rural suburbs. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

the present Bay Bridge alignment, within shouting distance of the Oakland Long Wharf.

E. H. Harriman started out as a New York stockbroker, but decided instead to make his fortune in railroads. He began to take over poorly managed lines and make them successful. By 1901 Harriman had obtained the SPRR and controlled more railroads than any other single American. He reportedly harbored a personal dislike for Borax Smith, and was rankled when Key System trains came into the SPRR’s Oakland stronghold. The electrics — quieter, cleaner, and simply more modern than the old steam locals— were immensely popular with East Bay commuters. In 1908 Harriman began to electrify the SPRR’s locals, and like all of his projects, made a first-rate, state-of-the-art job of it. The Seventh Street line was completely rebuilt by 1911 to handle the heavy, independently powered cars, costing the company millions but gaining much local goodwill. The corporate giant had showed it cared about the community. Gone were the noisy, chugging steam locomotives casting their sooty pall along the route. The improvement in quality of life that the new Red Trains brought changed the character of the historic corridor through West Oakland, making large areas much more livable.

While the ethnic makeup of the Point during this “Golden Age” has not been the subject of detailed study, it appears that the same mixture found there in the first decade of the century continued to characterize the area. The war and subsequent legislation restricted European immigration to the United States during the period, and was probably reflected somewhat in West Oakland’s populace. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the children of prewar Irish and Euroamerican railway workers moved away to other neighborhoods (*West of Market Boys’ Journal* var.). An increase in African Americans from the South, gravitating to an established African American enclave, offset any declines. As the nation was poised on the brink of the economic collapse, West Oakland was a mature, ethnically mixed community of working- and middle-class residents, a pleasant place where people got along well.

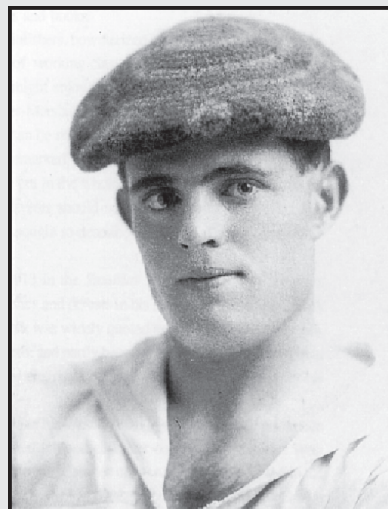
JACK LONDON:
OAKLAND'S RELUCTANT NATIVE SON

Mary Praetzellis

The Oakland Visitor's Bureau proudly proclaims Jack London Square as a "special spot at the water's edge where places for shopping, dining, and day dreaming are all waiting for you." Oakland exalts in the claim their city can make upon one of America's most famous authors—visitors can follow the "wolf paws" etched on a path to London's waterfront haunts. Ironically, Jack London had no such heartfelt ties to Oakland, although the city itself takes center stage in many of his best writings. Jack spent a painful adolescence in Oakland and fled the place and its memories at his first brush with success.

Jack London was born in San Francisco in 1876, the son of Flora Wellman, a runaway from a respectable Ohioan family and follower of spiritualist astrologer "Doctor" William Chaney, who is widely believed to have been Jack's father. When Jack was still an infant, Flora married John London, a widower with two young children. The family lived briefly in Oakland from 1879 through 1881 and then moved back to Oakland when Jack was 10, after the family lost their Livermore ranch to foreclosure. The family's fortunes continued on a steady decline from a position of middle-class respectability and land ownership to the precarious footing of the laboring class, John working by the hour as a night watchman and renting by the month. Flora contributed to the household's income by sewing, teaching piano, and taking in roomers. Jack also worked, delivering newspapers, setting up pins in the bowling alley, and sweeping out saloons on Sundays (Stasz 1988:16-26). Between 1886 and 1891, the family moved no less than eight times, and many of their residences stood within a few blocks of the Cypress Freeway Replacement Project corridor (Haughey and Johnson 1987:8-16). Between 1888 and 1890, they lived at 807 Pine Street on Block 20, immediately adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railyards.

In Oakland Jack London discovered three things that framed his future: a love of books and knowledge at the public library, an attraction to liquor and desire for camaraderie at the public-house, and a dedication to the socialist cause and the struggle of the workingman in the factories and on the streets. Jack London graduated from



Jack London at age 17.
(Photo courtesy of California
Department of Parks and
Recreation)

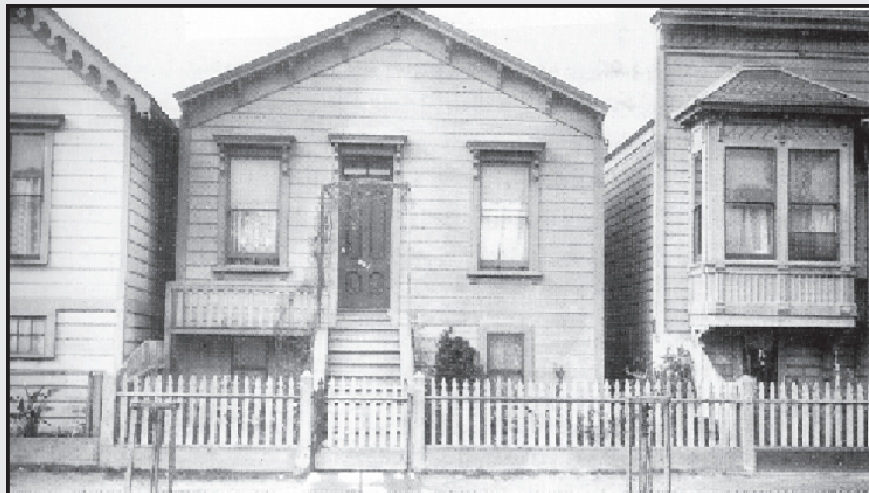
grammar school in 1891 and took a job at Hickmott's cannery to help out his family. Deciding not to be a "work-beast," Jack left the factory and began a series of adventures as an oyster pirate, hobo, miner, socialist, and seaman. He sailed to Japan on a schooner and crossed the Chillikoot Pass to try his luck in the Klondike gold rush. Upon his return in 1899, Jack focused on writing as he penned stories about what he had seen on his travels. Houghton Mifflin published *The Son of Sea Wolf*, a collection of Yukon stories, in 1900; it proved to be in their top five sellers that year. Jack and his family left the flatlands of West Oakland for the more fashionable foothills in 1901, and in 1905 Jack London moved to rural Sonoma County and developed his "Beauty Ranch," where he lived until his death in 1916 at age 40.

Jack London was an incredibly successful and prolific author. He wrote 1,000 words a day, often before lunch. To meet this goal, he wrote about things that he knew, and Oakland was one of those things. Oakland figures prominently in many of his best novels: *The Iron Heel* (1908), *Martin Eden* (1909), *John Barleycorn* (1913a), and *Valley of the Moon* (1913b), as well as in many essays and short stories.

In his novel *Valley of the Moon*, Jack London sited his figurative struggle between Capital and Labor in West Oakland—a very logical choice, as the streets and railyards of this city had seen many actual battles. From the front window of his family’s home on Pine Street, Jack had had a good view of the comings and goings at the Southern Pacific Railyards. It is from this cottage that Saxon, London’s heroine, witnessed a brutal confrontation between strikers and Pinkertons. The violence of the event caused the young woman to think deeply about the modern, urban way of life and to conclude that, in London’s words, “jobs are bones” (1913b:189) over which poor men fight; and that “the man-world was made by men, and a rotten job it was” (1913b:254). “Her eyes showed her only the smudge of San Francisco, the smudge of Oakland, where men were breaking heads and killing one another, where babies were dying, born and unborn, and where women were weeping with bruised breasts” (1913b:256). Even the clams that people gathered from the nearby marsh caused typhoid fever, “still another mark against Oakland, she reflected—Oakland, the man-trap, that poisoned those it did not starve” (London 1913b:286). Saxon’s sentiments are hardly material for an Oakland Visitor’s Bureau brochure.

In the midst of her despair, Saxon meets a boy—who surely represents Jack London himself—who casually speaks the words that would change her life: “Oakland,” he says, “is just a place to start from” (London 1913b:267). Saxon then begins her journey to the rural Valley of the Moon, a natural world where men didn’t fight over bones.

But Jack London did not only write about labor and capital, he provides everyday details on what his characters wore, what they ate, their surroundings, their pastimes. *Valley of the Moon*, for example, touches on housework, cosmetics, underwear, fishing, gangs, prostitution, roomers, and the interior and neighboring surroundings of the cottage at 807 Pine—where London lived as a boy. All of his observations are in detail and all are specific to West Oakland. *Martin Eden*, the rags-to-riches story of a young West Oakland man who becomes a successful author, provides a wealth of detail on laundry work, Portuguese immigrants, dental care, rooming, and more (London 1909). References to this material can be found throughout this volume, which acknowledges a debt to the observations of Jack London.



Jack London’s boyhood home at 807 Pine Street on one of the Cypress Archaeology Project blocks. (Photo courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation)

DEPRESSION AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The brutal economic realities of the 1930s left their mark on the people and landscape of West Oakland. A virtual standstill in the construction and capital-goods industries in the early 1930s hit shipyards, machine shops and metal works, and the building trades. Severe cutbacks by the SPRR kept the company solvent, unlike many American railroads during those hard times, but a large number of jobs were lost, and those workers who did stay on the company rolls often had very limited employment. Less affected were the Point's consumer goods manufacturers, such as the canneries and other food processors. Although employed, the unskilled labor at such firms would have suffered from the overall Depression-era reduction in wages. The construction of the Bay Bridge between 1933 and 1936 must surely have provided employment and increased business for some West Oakland residents, but its completion set in motion changes that would radically alter the character of the transportation-driven community.

As the western rail terminus for the SPRR system, West Oakland received its share of down-and-out Dust Bowl refugees, many of whom arrived penniless on the freight cars. Various "hobo jungles" or camps sprang up in the area, including "Pipe City," a village of inhabited large concrete sewer pipes along the tracks on the waterfront. The unemployed could eat at church or government soup kitchens, or buy a large bag of broken cookies for a nickel, at a factory near Fourth and Adeline Streets (Sappers 1993). This period may have contributed to a decline in the Point's traditional ethnic harmony: "One old-time German-American West Oaklander...blamed the Depression for the end of an era when 'West Oakland was everybody,' saying that 'Okies and Arkies brought Jim Crow in'" (OCHS 1990 [2]:53). Besides documenting a perceptible deterioration in black/white relations, the statement also displays a resentment of the then-newest arrivals, characterized as "Okies and Arkies" by some older residents.

By the late 1930s, West Oakland's built environment was showing the stress of the Depression. Financially strapped working- and middle-class householders were concerned with survival, and house upkeep was not as much of a priority as in better times. This lack of resources for maintenance, combined with the advancing age of most of the houses, contributed to a general degrading of the neighborhoods. While the Seventh Street commercial corridor still preserved a fairly prosperous appearance, residential areas began to grow seedy with neglect. The attention of social planners turned to West Oakland, and at the end of the decade, several blocks in the center of the community were condemned as a "slum" and their houses were bulldozed out of the way. Replacing the homes in 1941 was the barracks-like Peralta Village, one of California's first public-housing projects. In 1942 the once-grand McDermott Estate, the last large chunk of green space in West Oakland, was also razed for a housing project. Both were used for housing mostly newly arrived war-industries workers. The definition of portions of the community as slums did little to instill civic pride in the remaining homeowners.

World War II brought increased shipbuilding and the construction of the huge Oakland Army Base and the Naval Supply Center on filled tidelands. War-industry jobs did improve prosperity, but while bolstering West Oakland's economy to a degree, the new military installations were essentially stand-alone entities. Spatially separate, they did not integrate much with the community, nor substantially boost commerce on the Seventh Street business strip, which was suffering from the bridge-induced shutdown of the auto ferries and, in 1941, the discontinuance of the Red Trains. Many of those West Oaklanders who had done well during the war moved away afterward to a better life in the suburbs.

WORKERS' HOMES IN WEST OAKLAND

adapted from Olmsted and Olmsted (1994) by Robert Douglass

West Oakland neighborhoods were somewhat mixed economically, but ranged from working class to middle class in general character. Wealthier (middle-to upper-middle-class) residents, as a rule, tended to live farther away from the railroad yards and freight lines. Working-class housing was often smaller and inwardly focused, with fewer concessions to architectural fashion and social rules than middle-class housing. Yards were fenced and often used for practical purposes. As part of the Cypress Archaeology Project, two general types of workers' houses have been proposed: the Informal workers' cottage and the Almost-polite house (Groth and Gutman 1997). The first tends to have plain exteriors, well-utilized porches and yards, and minimally specialized rooms. The latter, grading more toward middle-class ideals, features decorated façades and organized interiors comprising single-purpose rooms.

The 1931 photograph reproduced here shows a row of working-class housing one block south of the project area's Block 5 at Third and Filbert streets. The buildings all appear on the 1889 Sanborn insurance map (Sanborn Map Company 1889). Although the second house contains two flats (note the double entry doors), and the third is a duplex (the two identical gabled fronts are actually wings of a single building), these homes all seem to fall within the range of the Informal workers' cottage style. The yards are all fenced, and a small utilitarian garage has been tacked on the second house with little regard for appearance. Since the houses date at least to the 1880s, they were likely to have originally had backyard outhouses, but by the time of the photograph, back-porch toilets were the norm. While the neighborhood looks clean and neat, it appears that most of the houses are in need of paint: this probably reflects the hard times of the growing Depression.



Typical West Oakland houses at Third and Filbert streets in 1931. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

SINCE THE WAR: CONTINUING CHANGE IN WEST OAKLAND

America was changing the way it traveled and moved goods. West Oakland's fortunes had been tied to transportation from the beginning. First the automobile ferries, then the construction of the Bay Bridge, then the demise of the interurban electrics, signaled the shift from rails to highways that would change the face of the community. The age of the railroads was in recession, and the dieselization of the main-line locomotives from 1950 to 1956, with its lower maintenance and increased use of standardized parts, made the SPRR's extensive Oakland yards largely obsolete. The facility was essentially shut down in the late 1950s, its roundhouse demolished, and employees reduced to a skeleton crew of diesel mechanics. The Oakland Mole lingered, deserted and ghostlike, until its 1960 demolition. Trains leaving Oakland dropped from 40 per day in the early 1950s to 3 at the end of the 1960s.

As the system of freeways grew around the Bay Area and the rest of the nation, the original Cypress Freeway was designed as an efficient connector between the Bay Bridge and the Nimitz Freeway. It was completed in 1957, resulting in the demolition of buildings on Blocks 1 through 11 and physically dividing West Oakland. At the same time, as the de facto western limit of area "slum clearance," it acted to partially protect the neighborhoods between it and the bay. Urban planners of the late 1960s and early 1970s, attempting to demonstrate inclusiveness toward a disadvantaged community, imposed a massive Post Office facility on the neighborhood and ran the new, elevated BART line up Seventh Street. The Post Office and its parking lots destroyed six blocks of Bayview Tract houses from the 1870s and 1880s, and the new BART station and its parking lot cleared several more blocks, while elevated BART tracks assaulted the remaining integrity of the historic Seventh Street corridor.

On the eve of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, West Oakland had suffered through years of economic decline. Unemployment averaged 21.5 percent, and with a median income of \$13,123.00, more than 35 percent of area residents lived below poverty level. It was a community of renters: only 15 percent of the district's 8,735 housing units were owner-occupied. The ethnic mix had come to include a majority of African Americans (77.3%), with Euroamericans (11%), Hispanics (5.7%), Asians and Pacific Islanders (3.5%), and Native Americans (0.3%) making up most of the rest (Caltrans 2002:3-4). Although the Port of Oakland continued to play a vital part in America's economy and required a large work force, relatively few Point residents worked there then or now. After the Cypress structure collapsed, activists insistent on avoiding past mistakes and eager to improve and revitalize the once-thriving community, succeeded in working with Caltrans to move the alignment of the rebuilt Cypress to the current project area.

As it always has been, West Oakland today remains a vibrant neighborhood. There are, to be sure, many problems still facing its people. Some positive changes are resulting from the quake tragedy, in the Point's identity and landscape. A renewed awareness of past and place are directing movement into the future, as residents become reacquainted with local history, property owners restore 19th-century houses, and developers build new housing with a fresh sense of historical perspective.

PART II: CONSUMERISM

Part II contains three chapters that address consumerism, the first major theme of the project research design. The chapters tackle the issue on a variety of scales and orientations from highly focused analysis of the parlor bric-a-brac of specific families to statistical studies that compare the consumer choices of various demographic groups.



An aerial, black and white photograph of a city grid, likely New York City, showing a river (the Hudson River) on the left side. The grid pattern of streets and buildings is clearly visible, extending towards the horizon.

CONSUMERISM, LIVING CONDITIONS, AND MATERIAL WELL-BEING

ADRIAN PRAETZELLIS

In general, life is better than it has ever been, and if you think that, in the past, there was some golden age of pleasure and plenty to which you would, if you were able, transport yourself, let me say one single word: Dentistry

P.J. O'Rourke

The story of 19th-century America is one of urbanization, industrialization, and the cultural changes that accompanied these processes. In 1850 a mere 15 percent of the U.S. population lived in towns; in 1900 the proportion had grown to 40 percent. At the same time, immigration was, quite literally, changing the face of the nation. By the late 19th century, the result was a nation of teeming urban centers populated in large number by people who were separated by only one generation from traditional rural cultures in both the United States and Europe.

These were the precursors to modern Americans, and their experiences have helped to shape contemporary American values and mores (Figure 3.1). By studying them we can better understand the present. The process by which these immigrants adapted to and were affected by life in industrialized America is one of the most important issues in American history. By the same token, the essential role of artifacts (both manufactured and incidental) is an important theme in the era's historical archaeology (Gutman 1977; Teague 1987). The process was, of course, very complex and some aspects of it are less amenable to a primarily archaeological study than others. The guiding tenet of this study, however, is that artifacts are material *culture*; as aspects of culture, they can only be understood within a behavioral and historic context. The Cypress collection is particularly well suited to this approach because the assemblages of which it is composed are derived from segments of the population of known demographic and ethnic character.

This chapter is a fairly straightforward study of the evidence relating to the material well-being of various West Oakland populations, as exemplified by particular clusters of households. We are using the term "well-being" to cover two of the material aspects of life that contribute to the feeling of comfort and satisfaction: consumer goods and health and nutrition. The skeptical reader should not infer that we consider these characteristics to be the sole determinants of either contentment or feelings of relative deprivation. They are, however, aspects of life that have fairly unambiguous material correlates; they are therefore quite accessible to archaeological analysis through which we can get at the material outcomes of 19th-century consumerism and the way social differences may or may not have been expressed and reinforced by various segments of the population. The short essays in this chapter touch on various aspects of consumer goods, including clothing, patent medicine, ceramics, the influence of spiritual teaching and advertising on consumer practices, and some of the consumer choices made by immigrant Jews. The main essay explores the topic of health and nutrition using statistical analyses of faunal remains.



Figure 3.1. "Uncle Sam's Thanksgiving Dinner" by Thomas Nast. In this scene Uncle Sam proudly hosts all the peoples of the world. The portraits of Lincoln and Grant suggest the newly ratified 14th Amendment, which granted equal rights to all citizens, while the image of the dinner table evokes America's abundance and the central role of food and eating in 19th-century culture. (Source: *Harper's Weekly* 20 November 1869, p.745)

CONSUMER GOODS

The 19th century saw the coming together of both a desire to acquire material possessions and the ability to do so on a massive scale. This was scarcely a coincidence, for the consumerism of the era was fueled by the availability of commodities and a system of social values that encouraged their purchase, what Karl Marx termed *commodity fetishism*. But the use of these concepts requires some explanation. By commodity, we mean something that is produced for the purpose of exchange. In modern times, this exchange is mediated by money. Commodities are made for their exchange value, rather than their use value—they are not created for what they can do but for what their maker can receive for them in exchange (Marx 1978 [1867]). Historical archaeologists retrieve commodities in the form of objects used for household decoration and display, as well as items of personal adornment. By consumerism, we mean that preoccupation with the acquisition of goods created and distributed en masse for that purpose. McKendrick (1982) sees the origins of consumerism in the 18th century, but it is in the 19th century where we see its florescence in the ready availability of a vast range of items heretofore available only to the wealthy.

Luxury items, however, should not be thought of in contrast to necessities, as if the latter have more veracity than the former. Appadurai points out that so-called luxuries are simply "goods whose principal use is rhetorical and social, goods that are incarnated signs" rather than having a utilitarian function (1986:38). The special status of these goods is socially assigned on the basis of (among other criteria) their cost, difficulty of acquisition, and the specialized knowledge necessary to employ them effectively (Appadurai 1986:32-38). The latter is of particular interest, in that fashion is seen as the mainspring of material change in a consumer society (Bell 1976). The significance

of these insights will emerge as we investigate the role of food, particularly meat, in our households' visions of themselves.

Although the individual experiences it as desire, consumer demand does not originate with the individual but from external forces such as advertising and social pressure; it is a change in the idiom (fashion) that causes a change in demand. Paul Shackel (1998) noted many examples of the discard of consumer artifacts en masse around the turn of the 18th century. Although archaeologists have explained these episodes individually by everything from demographic transitions to ideological change, Shackel believes that the overriding pattern of disposal is a function of the value given to constant replacement within a consumption-oriented society. This interpretation harks back to Veblen's (1899) study of the consumption patterns of 19th-century middle-class Americans, in which he demonstrated how social value was assigned to the constant acquisition and rapid relinquishment of luxury commodities. The tastemakers of the Victorian era were surely working overtime.

A topic of interest to archaeologists in recent years has been the investigation of the degree to which social identity has increasingly been defined by consumption patterns. Much of this work seeks to use the quantity and nature of consumer goods principally as indicators of social class and wealth: since more affluent people could have bought more expensive goods, the archaeological expression of wealth is in the presence of expensive artifacts. Although this logic is seemingly unassailable, LouAnn Wurst and Randy McGuire have roundly criticized the approach, for its emphasis on the individual as an autonomous agent. "The issue," they point out, "is not what people buy, but the social relations that enable and constrain what they buy" (Wurst and McGuire 1999:196). To this, we might add a critique of the commodity fetishism of archaeologists, who have been keener to study the *idiom*—the artifacts themselves—than the processes that created these objects and put them into the houses of our forebears.

Historical archaeology is not the history of artifacts. On their own these materials are unimportant, except as mementos. Their importance is in their ability to elucidate important themes in American history and culture change. From this perspective, the issue is not of mere academic interest but one through which we can obtain important insights into contemporary society. By documenting consumerism as a process created in a particular era out of identifiable social conditions, we emphasize that it is not a natural and timeless feature of human existence but a creation of our modern economic system and modern sensibilities. Nineteenth-century people were no more naïve or easily manipulated than we. The idiom has changed—laptop computers and SUVs have replaced the sumptuous wardrobe and tastefully decorated parlor—but the process is surely continuing at as rapid a pace now, with global implications for both the exploitation of workers from the industrializing world and the degradation of the global environment.

SELLING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT: THE CREATION OF A CONSUMER HOLIDAY

Annita Waghorn

Of all the American holidays, Christmas bears the greatest weight of custom, expectation, and ambivalence. Even secular and non-Christian Americans know, as if by instinct, what a proper Christmas should be: It's about family, gifts, food, indulgence, and charity. For many, the religious meaning of the holiday—the birth of humanity's savior, Jesus Christ—is little more than a sweet story. This is the modern Christmas and, like many traditions, part of its appeal is its deeply familiar and ageless feel. Yet these traditions are little more than a century old. The

roots of the modern Christmas lie in 19th-century efforts to domesticate a festival with strong pre-Christian origins and, coincidentally, to harness its emotional potential to fuel the American industrial and commercial machine.

Until the mid-1900s, mid-winter celebrations in America centered not on Christmas but on New Year's Day, when the winter solstice was celebrated (Schmidt 1995:109). And it was primarily a communal celebration marked by visiting between friends, drinking, public rowdiness, and a mild anarchy that expressed relief and anticipation as winter began its slow turn towards spring (Nissenbaum 1997:90). Christmas, one week earlier, was primarily a quiet religious event.

The 1820s saw the rise of two movements that would eventually coalesce to shape the modern Christmas rite. To combat the communal, lower-class associations of an alcohol-fueled New Year celebration, temperance reformers and their supporters sought to develop Christmas as an alternative holiday that focused instead on children, the family, and the home (Nissenbaum 1997:95). They did this by progressively distancing and contrasting the celebration of the two holidays, praising the home-centered Christmas while disparaging the rowdy public celebrations of New Year. Special food and decorations that transformed the home into a setting focused on Christmas were also promoted (Figure 3.2). At the same time, manufacturers and storeowners began to appreciate the commercial potential of religious celebrations such as Christmas and Easter. Creating new markets for goods, particularly those of a nonessential nature, became increasingly important during the 19th century, as the new efficiencies and machinery of American industry began to outstrip demand for basic products (Schmidt 1995:32). Christmas was fertile ground for the spirit of enterprise.

Although manufactured presents had been advertised since the early 1800s, before the mid-century gifts tended to be practical, handmade, and unwrapped tokens given to family not at Christmas, but on New Year's Day (Nissenbaum 1997:136; Waits 1993:16). Much effort towards the reinvention of Christmas was concentrated on shifting the custom of gift-giving from New Year's to Christmas. The promotion of Christmas as a family holiday with children at its center



Figure 3.2. A Christmas garland, ca. 1882. These glass beads would have been strung in a garland to decorate the William Long house at Christmas. A butcher from Germany, Long and his wife soon moved on to a finer home; they left additional evidence of good cheer at the holiday season, including fine tableware and 13 alcoholic beverage bottles (Privy 156).

eased the adoption of the festival as the most appropriate time for exchanging gifts, especially between family members. The expectations around gifts themselves also began to grow as the character of a gift was increasingly seen to be symbolic of the value placed by the giver on the relationship with the recipient (Waits 1993:34).

Even as consumer-oriented culture was picking up steam, Victorian Americans continued to feel a deep unease with purchasing gifts and so attaching a monetary value to relationships. The exchange of money necessary to

purchase a manufactured gift somehow tainted the item with the crass values of the market place. For this reason, and despite the steady growth in advertisements for manufactured Christmas presents after the 1820s, many people persisted in feeling that handmade items were best since they represented an investment of one's own time and labor, and were personalized for the recipient.

Storeowners and manufacturers were quick to recognize the roots of this resistance to the manufactured, purchased gift, and moved to "sanitize" prospective gifts of their marketplace associations. These ingenious techniques included the sale of semi-finished items, such as handkerchief squares or blank cards, that allowed the purchaser to contribute enough finishing work to qualify them as handmade gifts (Waits 1993:18, 21, 23, 27). Semi-finished gifts reflected the tension felt by many people in their transition from a pre-modern agricultural-based economy to the urbanized consumerist culture of the late 19th century (Waits 1993). Not surprisingly, the popularity of semi-finished items as gifts declined in the early 20th century, as Americans grew more comfortable with the consumer culture and the unmodulated link between money and personal relationships through purchased gifts.

Other tricks used to ease the transformation from goods to gifts involved selling items ready-wrapped and by claiming that items had been especially manufactured for Christmas giving. The most successful technique of all, however, was to use symbolic intermediaries to distance commercialism from the process of giving. The most successful of these is Santa Claus who, a descendent of the historical figures of Saint Nicholas and Kris Kringle, was adopted by 1880s advertisers as an appealing way to link the values of the personalized and the handmade to factory-produced items.

The domesticated commercial Christmas was in full swing by the 1880s and was readily embraced in growing cities like Oakland (Figure 3.3). December newspapers of the 1880s and 1890s contained pages of Christmas advertisements, and the holiday became a financial lynchpin of the Oakland commercial year: civic leaders in 1888 expressed satisfaction that poor weather would persuade many locals to patronize Oakland's stores rather than taking their valued Christmas business across the bay to San Francisco (*Oakland Enquirer* 22 December 1888).

Oakland storekeepers encouraged the practice of Christmas giving by presenting small tokens to their customers. Several items from the Cypress archaeological collection attest to these efforts to promote the commercial Christmas: a small plastic and metal button dating from pre-1906 and found in refuse left by the Bankhead family at 812 Market Street advertises the Oakland store of Salingers, with an image of a jolly Santa Claus. More evidence of the attempts to associate gifts, indulgences in food and drink, and the Christmas spirit was a glass alcohol flask from the privy of the Holderer family at 793 Wood Street, emblazoned with "Christmas '93" (Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.3. "Our Christmas Line." This Christmas-season advertisement for Jones' Bazar [sic] on Washington Street in Oakland alerted prospective shoppers to the availability of a full line of holiday toys and other gifts. (Advertisement from *Oakland Enquirer* 12 December 1891:3)



Figure 3.4. A celebratory flask. This brightly colored, glass alcohol flask was emblazoned with "Christmas '93" across its front. It was recovered from the privy of the family of Frederick Holderer, a sewing-machine salesman living at 793 Wood Street (Privy 8445).

One outcome of the commercialization of Christmas and Easter was to provide the young American nation with a set of unifying traditions. At a time when westward expansion and large-scale immigration was contributing to the development of distinct cultural regions within the country, the rituals of the commercialized holidays created shared secular traditions and experiences (Schmidt 1995:33). The drive to transform these holidays met with some resistance, for a theme of anti-consumerism ran through late 19th-century Victorian culture, although it has largely been obscured by the stereotype of Victorians as enthusiastic consumers. Drawing on republican-era suspicions of the corrupting influence of great wealth, anti-consumerists objected to the conspicuous display demanded by the developing culture (Barton 1989:61). As sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross thundered in 1909, it was a threat to the democratic basis for American society: "The rich are gangrened with pride, the poor with envy. Unless democracy mends the distribution of wealth, the mal-distribution of wealth will end democracy" (quoted in Barton 1989:58).

The late-Victorian Christmas, with its emphasis on an ever-lengthening shopping season and more numerous and expensive gifts, was a prime target for the anti-materialist movement. Many middle-class women, who were increasingly responsible for the family's Christmas preparations, betrayed their ambivalence towards the demands of the consumer Christmas in their diaries, writing of the exhaustion and sense of reluctant duty that had begun to taint the season (Schmidt 1995:154-157). The consumer Christmas, however, rolled inexorably onward. We modern Americans are its inheritors and willingly (or not) participate in the annual ritual of presents, gift-wrap, and general excess that hits the malls the day after the Thanksgiving turkey decorations come down.

THE SPECTER OF SPIRITUALISM IN OAKLAND

Michael Meyer

In 1848 when gold was discovered in California, the most powerful religious influence in the eastern United States was evangelicalism. This revivalistic Protestant movement encompassed the Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Methodist, and Presbyterian denominations, as well as a variety of small sects, and stood in opposition to Roman Catholicism, the predominant religion of Spanish California (Frankiel 1988:ix). That same year, on the eve of the Gold Rush, the Spiritualist movement in America was also beginning (Doyle 1926:11).

As Argonauts from around the world streamed into California, the Roman Catholic Church lost its hold on California and ties to established, East Coast evangelical institutions were broken as well. The California Gold Rush was unique, as poor men with limited capital were able to extract wealth from public lands and reinvent themselves. This model fit well with the Spiritualist belief in life after death and of spiritual growth and completion (Frankiel 1988:34-35).

Laurentine Hamilton, an Oakland Presbyterian minister, gave a series of sermons in 1868 that rejected the idea of eternal damnation. His church accused him of heresy. Yet for Spiritualists, this idea was at the core of their progressive ideology that had begun with abolition and embraced women's suffrage, health reform, marriage reform or "free love," children's rights, labor reform, dress reform, vegetarianism, temperance, utopianism, and, above all, religious reform (Braude 1989:3, 125-129; Kerr 1972:11).

As they lacked a conventional organizational structure, the Spiritualists kept few records and the total number of active participants is unknown. The first lectures on Spiritualism in San Francisco were presented in 1859 (Schlesinger 1896). Spiritualist newspapers were published in cities throughout the country; the *Carrier Dove* was originally published in Oakland and later in San Francisco. By 1890 three Spiritualist journals were published in California (*Carrier Dove* 1890:261). Two Spiritualist state conventions were held in Oakland during the 1880s, and meetings were held each Thursday evening at Curtis Hall on the city block bounded by Brush/Fifth/Sixth/Market streets (*Carrier Dove* 1886:302)—what would become Block 3 of the Cypress Archaeology Project.

Marshall Curtis moved to Oakland soon after he arrived in California from Massachusetts in 1853. City directories of the early 1870s listed him as a land agent or in real estate. By 1862 Curtis owned all of Block 3 and was probably the first private owner (*Oakland Enquirer* 28 June 1889). He later owned the opposite Sixth Street block frontage and was also partner in the Curtis Williams tract further north, where Curtis and Lydia (his wife) streets are located.

Curtis made his money through real estate, a favored investment of capitalists and speculators at the time. By 1878 he had changed his occupation listed in city directories to "proprietor of Liberty Hall" and "magnetic physician" (Oakland City Directories: v.d.). Marshall Curtis was one of the most prominent Spiritualists in the city. His listing as a "magnetic physician" was synonymous with Spiritualism (Armstrong 1991). Liberty Hall was located at 835 Brush Street, north of Block 3, and was listed in the directories from 1875 to 1879. Like many similar buildings throughout Oakland, it was available to rent for private functions. Curtis Hall, at 767 Sixth Street on Block 3, was similarly listed in 1887. According to the *Carrier Dove*:

'Father Curtis' has erected, near Market-street Station, a pleasant, commodious hall, the use of which is given free for all Spiritual services, and at which place Mr. Ravlin will hold meetings on Thursday of each week. These meetings, we understand, are to be of the nature of social reunions, and will prove exceedingly entertaining and pleasant [1886:302].

The meetings at Curtis Hall likely attracted Flora London, Jack London's mother. In such a small community, Flora was probably acquainted with Marshall Curtis, although her endeavors into the spiritual world were less benevolent. A biographical sketch speaks of her, own efforts as a medium:

The rearing of young Johnny London was left to his stepsisters and his stepfather, who was devoted to his adopted son. Flora increasingly spent her time thinking of schemes to raise the family above its working class status - and holding séances in which she served the medium for an 'Indian Chief' called 'Plume' who spoke from the 'Spirit World' [Herron 1985:184].

In 1887 the London family lived at 807 Pine Street, on Cypress Block 20; at another time they were much closer to Curtis Hall, at Seventh and Adeline, on or near Cypress Block 9.



Figure 3.5. The Market Street Station. Looking east from Filbert towards Market in 1911, the tracks veer left where the Market Street tract meets the Original tract at the Market Street Station. After suffering partial paralysis about 1879, Marshall Curtis spent the last decade of his life using crutches to make the one-block trek to the station. He was probably visiting with neighbors and former tenants, such as Horace Clark, who purchased his confectionary store from Mr. Curtis. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

To the Spiritualists, Marshall Curtis was known as "Father Curtis." His obituaries in the *Carrier Dove* and the *Oakland Enquirer* both gave testimony to his devotion. The very presence of Curtis Hall was significant considering that in 1890 the San Francisco Spiritualists were without a temple of their own although the meetings there were larger than those in East Coast cities (*Carrier Dove* 1890:261). Curtis's obituary in the *Oakland Enquirer* stated that "...about ten years ago he was partially paralyzed and has since been compelled to get about on crutches, but seldom went further than Market street station" (28 July 1889); he had previously owned much of the property at Market Street Station, a block from his home (Figure 3.5).

After Curtis died, his house lot at the corner of West and Sixth streets was sold to William J. Laymance, bookkeeper for a real-estate and auction firm with offices in San Francisco, as well as Oakland. The Laymance-Curtis connection extended beyond real estate, however, for Laymance also advertised in the *Carrier Dove* (1886:310).

After its owner's death, Curtis Hall became first the Swedish Mission Church and, for a short time, the Ebenezer Baptist church, with an African American congregation.

Privy 1785 on Cypress Block 3 was filled when Curtis was developing the site and building a new home for himself at the corner of Sixth and West (Market) streets in 1874. The archaeological remains provided few insights into the Spiritualist beliefs of Curtis and his family. The material representation of his beliefs is found on a much larger scale.

The construction of the transcontinental railroad terminus in Oakland some years before increased the value of the Curtis real-estate holdings. Curtis was one of the lucky landowners who saw their property values rise with construction of the Oakland and San Francisco Railroad, as well as the Central Pacific. Although he did not become exceedingly wealthy, Curtis was able to construct a new house and leave a sizable estate for his sons. Although it appears that Curtis was able to live off of his investments like a capitalist, he did not see himself in these terms.

By building Curtis Hall for the purpose of holding religious meetings, Curtis showed that he was, first and foremost, a Spiritualist, with that group's ambivalence toward the era's materialism. Julia Schlesinger's 1896 address, titled "Practical Spiritualism," expressed these anti-capitalist values:

Error is sitting in high places, clothed in the royal vestments of power, while truth—sweet, loving, beautiful, truth—goes naked through the world. Greed and avarice are piling up their shining millions, while honor and virtue are starving in cellars and attics. Vice and idleness are arrayed in fine linen and purple, faring sumptuously every day, while honest labor is clothed in rags, and goes begging for its just dues. The debauchee, who glorifies in the spoilage of innocence and virtue, is pampered and petted, feasted and praised, while his helpless and hapless victim is doomed to a life of shame and disgrace . . . See that your own life is pure, that your motives are unselfish, that your souls are full of love and charity for all humanity. Never lose an opportunity of saying a kind word, or reaching out a helping hand to any unfortunate struggling in the depths of despair, even though his own wrong-doing may have been the cause of his desolation and distress [1896:260].

The same publication contained “The Creed of Spiritualists,” in which the author, J.W. Reynolds, M.D., opined, “Every person is under a moral obligation to prevent poverty by working for the enhancement of laws for the just distribution of the products of labor, and also to help the deserving to the extent of his means” (1896:81).

By comparing the family’s wealth with the remains left to us in Privy 1785, it appears that Curtis practiced these Spiritualist ideals. While their tableware and diet were above average compared with other local residents, they were not as lavish as Curtis could afford. While the family lived in a larger, more stylish house than the capitalist Benjamin Mann on Block 1, there is no evidence that that the Curtis parlor or dining room was as lavishly decorated as the Manns’ (Figure 3.6; see also Privy 900 and Privy 1785 snapshots in Appendix D).



Figure 3.6. The Curtis family tableware. These few pieces were probably broken when the Curtis family moved to their new house. The handpainted porcelain plate (left) was one of the most expensive pieces of tableware recovered from the neighborhood. (Privy 1785)

For Victorians, “the ideal house was to be a personal statement—a symbolic representation of what the owner stood for and valued. The ideal house was to function as a vehicle for displaying the civilized nature of its inhabitants” (Clark 1986:114). With the stylish design and large bay windows of his new house at Sixth and Market, Curtis used an accepted means of display to announce his membership in the middle class. But, he chose to use the development of the entire block as a display of good moral character and spiritual values. Rather than merely displaying order in a single room, Marshall Curtis had ordered an entire block. Curtis Hall was an obvious example of this, but the development of the entire block follows the pattern.

Since Curtis developed all but one corner of the block himself, he had control over what was built. While surrounding blocks were filled with more expensive homes of more uniform size, the worker’s cottages on Fifth Street were small. Since Curtis rented and eventually sold

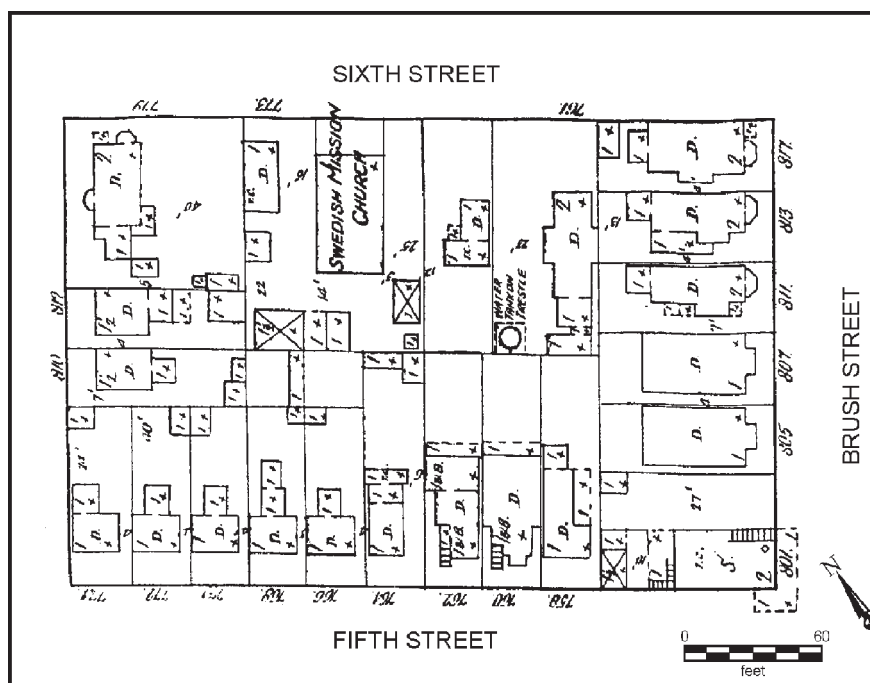


Figure 3.7. Marshall Curtis's legacy. Developing all but one corner of Block 3 himself, Curtis had control over what was built. While surrounding blocks were filled with more expensive homes of more uniform size, the worker's cottages on Fifth Street were small. Curtis's new home is shown at 779 Sixth Street. (Source: 1889 Sanborn Insurance map)

most of his Block 3 holdings, he could have made a larger profit by building larger homes but instead chose to create a block of diverse house sizes for people of differing means (Figure 3.7).

While Curtis had done well for himself and his family, he was true to his Spiritualist values, creating housing that reflected "just distribution of the products of labor" (Reynolds 1896:81). During the 1870s, families of tradesmen like the Taylors at 768 Fifth occupied these rental cottages, which may have provided housing close to the much larger homes—what we have dubbed Polite Victorian Houses—that they, themselves were building.

Across the street was the large home of John Wright, a successful '49er who moved his family's steamboat business from New York to San Francisco. Wright, a self-described capitalist, purchased the row of cottages from the Curtis family and must have kept a watchful eye on his investment from across the street, until selling his Fifth Street holdings and moving to the more fashionable shores of Lake Merritt.

A final example of the material expression of Curtis's values can be found in Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery. Curtis's plot is marked with an obelisk that bears names of family members who preceded him in death, but not his own. The modest monument is a third the size of John Wright's, which stands nearby. Both the Curtis and Wright obelisks are dwarfed by the lavish tombs of city founder Edson Adams and railroad magnate Charles Crocker. Curtis's Spiritualism would never have allowed his heirs to spend a great deal of money for such an ostentatious display. For him, Curtis Hall was a far more worthwhile investment.

Out for a Stroll: The Visual Experience of a Sunday Afternoon in West Oakland

Sunshine Psota



Oaklanders enjoy an afternoon at the merry-go-round at Shellmound Park. To the right, the man with a cigar donned a cap instead of the preferred wool-felt hat chosen by the rest of the men. Dressed for an outing, most of the men wear buttoned-up vests, ties, and a suit, oftentimes a pocket watch stuck into a vest pocket. More variety of fashion and dress can be seen in what women have chosen to wear. The fashionable light-colored skirts and waists, with their full 1890s sleeve, could be set off by anything from a straight-forward hat worn by the woman on the far right to a straw hat by a woman on the far left, to extremely elaborate works of art by women at center right and the far left. (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

Let's go for an imaginary walk through West Oakland in the mid-1880s.

It is a beautiful autumn afternoon. The fog is tucked well out of sight beyond San Francisco, so the air is warm when you are in the sun. We are on Seventh Street, where everything from commerce and industry to what people are wearing is influenced by the ever-present railroad. Into this world steps an anonymous hotel manager who was hired by Mr. Frese, after his wife died, to help run the Railroad Exchange Hotel [1].

She is dressed in her Sunday best: a pink and black buffalo-plaid wool dress. Her skirt is narrow, reflecting this year's fashion, with extra fabric gathered in the back to accentuate the full roundness of her artificially enhanced hips. The tight-fitting

basque body is trimmed with small pleats and buttons; some lace softens the neckband [2]. The tight-fitting coat so restricts her movements that she must take it off to pin her hat on her head. She pauses thinking about which route to take—shall she head to the park on her afternoon off or just a saunter around the neighborhood?

Behind her, two of the male lodgers have also ducked out into the street. In contrast to her fashionable ensemble, they wear basic, wool sack coats (today called sport coats or just jackets) [3]. As lodgers, they enjoy the independence and flexibility of living in a respectable place with a night clerk and, therefore, no curfew [4]. While the rooms are compact, the neighborhood is a string of social connections and businesses where they interact daily. The men proceed on their way, perhaps for a



Jewelry of West Oakland. This medley of jewelry recovered from various features excavated for the Cypress Project includes a stick pin and a cufflink, along with the more commonly recovered items.

smoke outdoors or a visit to the hotel's saloon next door for a drink or to chat with other Southern Pacific Railroad men. They are especially fond of the full-bodied, aromatic Cuban cigars of Colorado tobacco that the saloon usually has available to be inhaled in the company of friends [5].

Acknowledging them with a bob of her head, the woman strolls east on Seventh one block, turning left onto Cedar, and walks smartly across Goss Street. Here she passes the home of Ellen McLaughlin and her family, one of four houses on this side of the street. Although our stroller doesn't know the young woman's name, even in a group of her childhood friends, Ellen stands out as a smart dresser with an eye for the most current fashions. A dressmaker, Ellen wears a dress she fashioned from brown silk with fancy woven stripes, accessorized with a piece of inexpensive jewelry and her high-laced street shoes with fashionable sculptured heels [6]. In her business it is important to have a stylish dress that shows off both her assets and her abilities.

Throughout the neighbor-hoods, West Oaklanders are coming out of their homes and onto the streets, escaping their daily demands for a little while to socialize on this fine afternoon. Over on Fifth Street east of Market, Eunice Mann, Fredrick's

much-younger widow, has on her black silk dress. Walking slowly next to her teenage son, Fredrick Jr., the light catches the somber dress, highlighting the intricately woven floral design. The widow made these mourning clothes on a sewing machine. She had sewn the details, such as gathering and other touches, by hand while sitting next to the bedside of her poor sick brother-in-law, Benjamin; a welcome respite from his daily care [7]. While she takes her Sunday walk, Mrs. Mann's two youngest daughters will look after their uncle. As she walks, she acknowledges with a nod her well-dressed neighbors Mrs. Lucinda Tilghman and Abraham Holland. The sun reflects off Abraham's gold cuff links as he tilts his hat her way. The buttons, earrings, and gold pendant worn by Lucinda catch her eye. It is a sweet, heart-shaped pendant encircled with blue-glass beads [8].

In contrast to these well-dressed Sunday walkers are the Patrick Barry family, who live several blocks away on Linden. As Patrick is a worker for the Southern Pacific Railroad, they have a more modest budget for dressing, but still appear quite presentable by West Oakland's fashion standards. As the family prepares to go for their after-dinner stroll, Mr. Barry is wearing a comfortable herringbone-twill jacket while his wife,

Ellen, must decide between a black basket-weave jacket of wool and silk or her brown-wool, fitted basque with decorative black-glass buttons [9].

Strolling is as much a social event as it is exercise. Seeing and being seen by neighbors, business associates, and others keeps up social contacts with little interactions. In this street scene, the women and children are a sea of colors, fabrics, and patterns, with different textures and sounds, including the rustling of silk as women walked. Bustles had returned to fashion in 1883, reaching their height and breadth in 1886, and then deflating over the next few years [10]. Fans and parasols were popular accessories. Recently introduced alkali dyes splashed strong colors on gaily dressed women in this urban landscape.

Men in the 1880s, as today, tend to be visually homogeneous. Their clothing at the time of our stroll was influenced by the change from handmade to the standardization of the new ready-to-wear garments. The uniform varies little: each man dons a wool-felt hat and saunters around in wool trousers, vests, and sack coats. Black or brown are the most popular colors, with the occasional stripe, check, or tweed for casual wear. While styles did change with the years, they are far more subtle than those configured for women or children. For most working men, this meant that the suit you were married in became your Sunday best until it wore out or became so out of style that it attracted comment. Some of the common fashions seem timeless—like uncreased trousers. Other trends were subtle, as sack coats became shorter and narrower in fit. The trend in the 1870s to wear sack coats with only the top chest-height button fastened led, in the 1880s, to more buttons with a shorter lapel for a higher buttoned look. Then the top three or four buttons are buttoned, with the lower opening showing off the bottom of the vest and displaying a pocketwatch.

Our hotel manager quietly notes all the fashions of the neighborhood women, while keeping her eye on the neighborhood men and children. Generally, she notices, the older a person is, the more conservatively they dress. So while they never appear to be noticeably out of style, their clothes are never that fashionable. Younger people seem more concerned with keeping up with the changing fashion trends. The unmarried are usually the nattiest dressers, for most will have a job and be semi-independent for the first time in their life, and most are either entering or well-entrenched in the search for a mate.

Jack London summed up the situation in *The Valley of the Moon*: the number of shoes a woman had spoke eloquently of her life. Beautiful 24-year-old Saxon, London's main character, has dated several men but is not yet engaged. Working six days a week, she often goes out to dance on work nights and weekends. She makes many of her clothes and is very concerned with her appearance on these outings. Her sister-in-law, Sarah, complains about Saxon's behavior: why should she have new silk stockings and three pairs of shoes; poor Sarah can only afford cheap cotton stockings and one pair of shoes in decidedly bad shape [11]. While Saxon focuses only on herself, Sarah cares for the needs of her husband and children before her own vanity. The number of shoes seems so extravagant that the difference in their clothes is not even discussed.

On her way home, the new manager saunters by the Pullman Hotel to have a peek at the competition. Just a block away from the Railroad Exchange Hotel where she works, it doesn't appear quite as nice, though the lodgers, all railroad men, look about the same [12]. She looks away, distracted by the passing of a train down the middle of Seventh Street, and now she is back at the hotel, ready to settle down to the latest edition of *Butterick's Delineator, A Journal of Fashion, Culture and Fine Arts*. What would the experts have to say about next season's fashions?



Strolling boot. This well-preserved, high-laced boot was recovered from the Railroad Exchange Hotel on Seventh Street, where dozens of clothing items were identified. An example of good-quality woman's footwear, it was just the thing to wear when sauntering through the neighborhood (Well 4600).

Sources for "Out for a Stroll":

1. Information on the Railroad Exchange Hotel and Mr. Frese comes from Tax Rolls (1862-1866), City Directories (1869-1888), Block Books (1877-1887), U.S Census (1870, 1880), and M.W. Wood's *History of Alameda County*, 1883. This information is presented on the Documentary Research Table (DRT) on pp. 168-170 of *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 22, 24, and 29*, edited by Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 29 BTR). According to the census information, Mrs. Frese died between 1870 and 1880.
2. The description of the hotel manager's attire is based upon the remains of fabric, buttons, and jewelry found in the Railroad Exchange Hotel well (4600). A portion of the well extended below the water table, which resulted in the excellent preservation of fabric and other fragile artifact types that generally do not survive in archaeological contexts. The clothing remains are described in the Feature Summary (pp. 172-173) and tabulated on the Artifact Descriptive List (pp. 180-190) of the Block 29 BTR.
3. Remains of men's clothing were also recovered from Well 4600. A suit and hat are pictured on p. 172 of the Block 29 BTR, while the remains themselves are described and tabulated on pp. 172-173 and 180-190 of the BTR, respectively.
4. Paul Groth has written about residential hotels in general in *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*, 1994, and about hotels in West Oakland in *Sights and Sounds: Essays in Celebration of West Oakland*, edited by Suzanne B. Stewart and Mary Praetzellis, pp. 85-112, 1997.
5. The Railroad Exchange Hotel had a bar from its inception, as shown by John Frese's 1863 tax assessment for bar fixtures. Twenty-one cigar boxes were recovered from the hotel's well, including some marked "El Aguila de Koeniggraetz/A. Bacallao C.M. Havana," "Flora Fina," and Flora de Lorujo"; see DRT and Artifact Descriptive List of the Block 29 BTR. The smoking assemblage from the Railroad Exchange Hotel is shown in Figure 9.9, this volume.
6. Archaeologists excavated a series of deposits associated with Ellen McLaughlin's family at 881 Cedar Street on Cypress Block 27. These features are discussed in *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 27, 28, and 31*, edited by Mary Praetzellis, pp. 50-107, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 27 BTR). The 1880 U.S. Census listed 18-year-old Ellen as a dressmaker; see DRT, pp. 53-55. Silk and woolen clothing, buttons, jewelry, a purse, and numerous items of footwear—including a pair of fashionable women's high-laced shoes—were recovered from Privy 2822; see Feature Summary and Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 69-72 and 75-80 in the Block 27 BTR.
7. The Mann family is discussed in many sections of this report and in *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Block 1*, edited by Mary Praetzellis, pp. 33-63, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 1 BTR). Women's silk clothing, buttons, jewelry, hair accessories, bone fans, corset fasteners, shoes, slippers, and a sewing-machine-oil bottle were recovered from Privy 900 associated with the Mann family. These items are described in the Feature Summary and listed on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 39-41 and 45-52 of the Block 1 BTR.

Sources for "Out for a Stroll": (continued)

8. The household of Lucinda Tilghman and Abraham Holland was just a few doors down from the Mann family on Block 1. Their collection was remarkable for the number of gold items. These are described in the Feature Summary and listed on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 85-86 and 90-95 of the Block 1 BTR. Some of their items are pictured in Figure 3.9.
9. The Barry family lived in a small residence divided into flats on Linden Street. Their privy is discussed in *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 4, 5, 6, and 9*, edited by Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, pp. 415-440, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 6 BTR). Men's and women's clothing, buttons, jewelry, eyeglasses, and a corset fastener were recovered; these are described in the Feature Summary and listed on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 419-420 and 425-431 of the Block 6 BTR.
10. Historical photographs, such as the accompanying one of Shellmound Park in nearby Emeryville, are a good source for tracing changing fashions. See Joan Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900*, 1995.
11. Jack London had an excellent eye for detail, including women's fashions. His young heroine, Saxon, knew how to dress for her nights out and how to attract the attention of the man she fancied: she bought another pair of silk stockings and made a new dress. Saxon's troubles with her sister-in-law over her extravagances are covered in the first 10 chapters of *The Valley of the Moon*, 1913.
12. Archaeologists also excavated a well associated with the Pullman Hotel at 1802-1808 Seventh Street; these data are presented in *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 22, 24, and 29*, edited by Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 24 BTR). The Pullman Hotel is discussed on pp. 93-126 of the Block 24 BTR. Although both the Railroad Exchange and Pullman Hotel were among the better and probably more expensive of the third-rank hotels in West Oakland, according to the categories developed by Paul Groth (1994), the Railroad Exchange generally appears the more upscale of the two.

REBEKAH-AT-THE-WELL: A 19TH-CENTURY ICON

Toni F. Douglass

The age-old, biblical story of Rebekah at the well describes the quest of Abraham's servant for a proper wife for Isaac, his master's son. The mission leads him to a distant village, where Rebekah offers to draw water both for the servant and his camels. This gesture is the sign he has been looking for, and the beautiful girl is instantly chosen to be Isaac's wife. Her hospitality is surely the reason that the image of Rebekah became so common on 19th-century ceramic wares, particularly on Rockingham-glazed teapots. By the mid-1800s, these items were being made in the tens of thousands by several pottery companies in the eastern states and may have been "the most popular piece of American pottery ever made" (Gross, Pastron, and Garaventa 1981:480-483; Stradling 1997:334).

Rockingham-glazed pottery is a "pale yellow or cream-colored earthenware covered with variegated purple-brown, brown, or yellow-brown glaze" (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1980:14). It was first made in America in 1824 by David Henderson and George Dummer, who gave new life to the obsolete Jersey Porcelain and Pottery Works in Jersey City, renaming it the American Pottery Manufacturing Company. After four years, the partnership ended in failure and Dummer sold his share to Henderson who, joined by his brother, proceeded to "plant the seeds of modern pottery in America" (Leibowitz 1985:27). Indeed, the Hendersons' introduction of mold-made ceramics was responsible for its transition from a cottage industry to a fully industrial production. With help from some of England's best pottery craftsmen, Hendersons' company produced the first yellowware and what has become known as Rockingham ware in America.

The iconic Rockingham-glazed Rebekah-at-the-Well teapot is believed to have been introduced to America by the E. and W. Bennett Pottery of Baltimore (Stradling 1997:333). Charles Coxon, a modeler for Bennett, redesigned the Rebekah image from an English stoneware pitcher in 1851 (Gross, Pastron, and Garaventa 1981:480-483). The Rebekah degree—a society for wives and daughters of members of the fraternal order of Odd Fellows—was also established in 1851. This has led some to attribute the image's popularity to this group (Stradling 1997:335).



Rebekah-at-the-Well teapots. Found in more than one-quarter of the excavated deposits in West Oakland, among households with a range of ethnic/national ties and varied occupations, the Rebekah-at-the-Well teapots were one of the most popular pieces of pottery in the mid-19th century.

To Victorian America, the Rebekah-at-the-Well teapot was a familiar, cozy, and informal item. Its place was deep in the private center of domestic sacred space, the kitchen, itself the heart of the Victorian home. The large number of these pots found archaeologically in West Oakland demonstrates the popularity of informal tea drinking. Of the 26 contexts where these items were found, most were associated with Anglo-Americans; some were linked with households from Canada, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and England, while two of the four African American households had also used these vessels. Many of these people worked for the railroad, including laborers, conductors, porters, a brakeman, and a fireman. Others were carpenters, a housepainter, a carpetlayer, a plumber, a paperhanger, a butcher, a bridgebuilder, a cooper, and a dressmaker. That this group of people were so occupationally diverse shows that the Rebekah-at-the-Well teapot was an icon of both Christian respectability and hospitality that crossed most class and ethnic boundaries.

HOPE IN A MEDICINE BOTTLE

Maria LaCalle

Tuberculosis, or consumption as it was popularly known, was one of the most dreaded diseases of the 19th century, being responsible for one out of every five deaths from 1800 through 1870. During the late 19th century, death rates were reduced due to medical advances and increasing public-health measures; fear of tuberculosis increased, however, as it became understood that the disease was infectious. The frightful symptoms of tuberculosis provided fuel for concern, as the unfortunate victim experienced a persistent cough—often bringing up blood, fever, night sweats, and severe loss of appetite. Consumption flourished amid the dense living-quarters of 19th-century American cities.

Mirroring the larger national problem, tuberculosis was the leading cause of death in late-19th-century Oakland, replaced only in the late 1890s by heart disease (Oakland Health Department 1916). Although Oakland had lower rates (1.7 per 1,000 in 1896) than other urban centers such as New York (3.06) or Paris (5.0) (Oakland Health Department 1897), City public-health officials considered their rates to be artificially high, for “we always have in our midst a large number of consumptives from San Francisco and other places, who have been drawn here by the mildness of our climate” (Oakland Health Department 1881:45).

German physician, Robert Koch, isolated the bacilli *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in 1882. This discovery resulted in gradual acceptance by the medical profession that tuberculosis was not due to a hereditary predisposition, as was previously thought, but was a contagious condition that could be spread via human contact. The consequences of this discovery on medical science and public-health policy were not immediate. Physicians continued to contest the contagious nature of tuberculosis. This professional debate affected the advice that patients received. While physicians still had no effective treatment, efforts were made to improve sanitation and nutrition. Focus was placed on reducing the spread of disease and strengthening the body’s ability to defend itself against the infection. The combination of increasing numbers of consumptives and professional debate over the infectious nature of the disease created an ideal environment for patent-medicine entrepreneurs to peddle their putative “cures.”

Dr. Dunn, Oakland Health Officer, reported in 1897 that in the past the causes of tuberculosis remained unknown and few measures had been adopted to halt the spread of tuberculosis.

Now, however, we know that a bacillus of well known characteristics is always responsible for the disease, that it is always carried by certain vehicles, viz: the sputum, meat and milk and that it infects those whose systems have been brought below par, most frequently by living in illy ventilated, damp or filthy apartments, that have not been sufficiently exposed to sunlight . . . Science has, with tireless patience and sacrifice studied and finally discovered the means whereby we can become the conquerors in this formerly apparently hopeless fight with tuberculosis [Oakland Board of Health 1897: 5-6].

Dr. Dunn recommended that tuberculosis be placed on the list of contagious diseases, that patient’s quarters be disinfected, that milk be tested, that only federally inspected meat be sold, and that spitting in public places be forbidden.

Although the gradual scientific acceptance of germ theory in the late 19th century improved society’s ability to prevent tuberculosis, progress was slow in its treatment. Despite the claims of numerous patent medicines, there was no cure. However, significant gains had been made in extending

the patient's life. "It is not uncommon," wrote Dr. Austin Flint, a prominent figure in medical education, "to meet with instances of considerable deposit tubercle remaining quiescent or progressing very slowly and the patient able to engage in the active occupations and enjoyments of life" (Brieger 1972:142). At the same time, medical progress was opening up a new market for so-called "consumption cures," which universally promised patients a speedy recovery. The patent-medicine business encouraged the public to bypass physicians and treat their ailments themselves (Figure 3.8). Self-medication became a big and extremely profitable business for these entrepreneurs.

In his book *Health and Disease*, Oakland surgeon Dr. C.G.R. Moutoux expressed concern regarding the vulnerability of these patients and the dubious industry that formed in order to profit from their misfortunes:

From the time when consumption began increasing in severity, as well as in numbers of victims, many special methods have been proposed and practiced; but, after the test of experience, have been abandoned. And this will perhaps be the fate of others yet to be advanced as sure cures. But I fear that not only disappointment on the part of patients, but injurious effects on their organisms, will be the sad result—out of all proportion to the real benefits [1905:169].

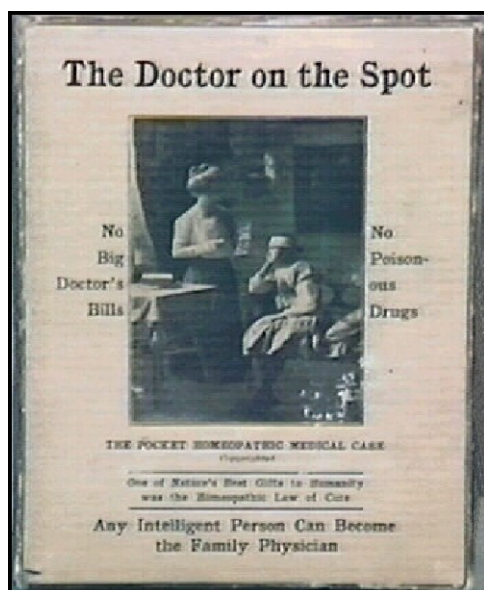


Figure 3.8. The Doctor on the Spot. This book on homeopathic care was one of many such volumes that guided an "intelligent person" through home diagnosis and treatment of a family's medical ailments. (Photo courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California)

Journalist Samuel Hopkins Adams famously opposed the burgeoning patent-medicine industry. In his 1905 series in *Collier's Weekly*, "The Great American Fraud," Adams analyzed the ingredients of many of the best-selling patent medicines of the time. He reported that these companies made false claims and more importantly that, in fact, the ingredients in these nostrums often harmed those taking them. Adams' articles single-handedly delivered a massive blow to the credibility of the industry, and ultimately led to legislative action the following year.

Several consumption "cures" were found among the numerous patent-medicine bottles excavated on the Cypress Archaeological Project. A deposit at 881 Cedar Street, home of the O'Brien family, contained the best example of self-medication among tuberculosis patients. Railroad engineer Michael O'Brien died of tuberculosis while living here in May of 1900. During his 19 months of illness, he used several proprietary medicines to ease pain and in the hopes of curing his affliction. He took cathartics—Pitcher's Castoria, Citrate of Magnesia, and Ayer's Pills—possibly to counteract the constipating side effects of the morphine, as well as general cure-alls:

Kelly's Bitters, Jamaica Ginger, Joy's Sarsaparilla, and Jayne's Tonic Vermifuge. Shiloh's Consumption Cure seems, however, to have been Mr. O'Brien's proprietary medicine of choice (Figure 3.9).

Michael O'Brien's untimely death may well be testament enough as to the effectiveness of this supposed cure. Just five years after his demise, Samuel H. Adams wrote biting of Shiloh's

money-back guarantee: “if I were a consumptive, after I had taken ‘Shiloh’ for awhile I should be less interested in recovering my money than in getting back my wasted chance at life” (1905:48). In the case of Mr. O’Brien, a money-back guarantee seems painfully ironic. While Mr. O’Brien may have received some relief from Shiloh’s, several of the ingredients posed as great a threat to his health as did tuberculosis.

While the chloroform in Shiloh’s Cure would have quelled O’Brien’s nagging cough, it would have also hindered his body’s way of expelling excess mucus. By the same token, as the opiates in Shiloh’s would have made him more comfortable, they undoubtedly hastened his death by weakening his body’s ability to defend itself.

Like many patent medicines of the time, Shiloh’s contained “natural,” “herbal” ingredients that had been traditionally used as folk remedies to treat similar conditions. Shiloh’s contained three of these seemingly benign ingredients: peppermint, licorice, and lobelia.

Lobelia has an effect similar to tobacco on the nervous system. It also can produce serious side effects if taken in too large a dose, including profuse sweating, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, rapid heartbeat, mental confusion, convulsions, hypothermia, coma, and even death. The licorice in Shiloh’s was used as an expectorant, offsetting the chloroform, and helping to remove mucus from the lungs.

Among the most dubious of all ingredients in Shiloh’s Consumption Cure was hydrocyanic acid. Used to allay the cough, it was also an exceptionally poisonous chemical that could be fatal at a high dose.



Figure 3.9. Shiloh’s Cure. One of the best-selling consumption remedies, Shiloh’s Cure was clearly the medication of choice of the Michael O’Brien family. Although the ingredients (see recipe) indicate that he would have been well-sedated by the nostrum, there was nothing that would have effected a cure.

Shiloh’s Consumptive Cure Recipe

1. *Hydrochlorate Morphia- 4 grains*
2. *Oil Peppermint- 10 drops*
3. *oil tar- 1 fluid dram*
4. *Dilute hydrocyanic acid- 1 fluid dram*
5. *Chloroform- 2 fluid drams*
6. *Powered extract licorice- 2 drams*
7. *Tincture Lobelia- 4 fluid drams*
8. *Alcohol- 1 fluid ounce*
9. *Syrup to make 1 pint*

(The Cottage Physician 1892)

The Franks' Guilty Secret – Allan's Anti-Fat!

Erica Gibson



Allan's Anti-Fat. Remedies for a variety of other ailments or conditions, were part of the patent-medicine armory. Among the targets were obesity, which was purportedly cured using Allan's Anti-Fat.

Annie Frank felt tired; it was Wednesday, cleaning day, and when she had taken the lamps down from the front room wall to clean them, she had dropped one of the chimneys. Tiny glass shards flew everywhere and Annie had spent quite a bit of time—most of it down on her hands and knees—trying to get them all. Struggling to get up from that awkward position just served to remind her that both she and her husband, Charles (who worked as a barkeeper, bottler, and brewery agent), needed to lose some weight [1].

Born and raised in Germany, Charles and Annie had a fondness for their native foods, especially sausages: bauerwurst, blutwurst, pinkelwurst, and Charles' favorite weisswurst. While they still ate the traditional light evening meal—Abendbrot, or 'evening bread,'—they indulged heavily in the beers and ales that Charles was able to bring home from work. And of course, a meal wouldn't be a meal without a little something sweet at the end [2].

Annie felt comfortable about her weight when she and Charles had first bought the house at 818 Magnolia Street in 1877. At that time, Lillian Russell was just becoming popular, and her voluptuous figure mimicked Annie's. Indeed, Lillian Russell was so celebrated that the deep red American Beauty rose had been named after her. Lately though, more slender women had become the rage. First there had been that Lillie Langtry woman, who caught the Prince of Wales' eye and became his mistress. When their affair ended, Lillie came to the United States and took up acting. Tall, with a large bosom and hips just like Annie, Lillie was given to morning

exercise and long walks of several miles which resulted in a much more slender physique [3]. More recently, Annie had seen pictures of the new national ideal, the Gibson Girl, who was positively skinny!

Resolving that something had to be done, Annie decided to lose weight. And if she was going to lose weight, so was Charles. Morning or evening walks would be a start, but Annie knew she would never get her husband to give up his beloved beer and sausage. She would just have to find another way. Just yesterday, while skimming some periodicals, Annie found an advertisement for Allan's Anti-Fat. Would this be the answer? The advertisement stated with convincing authority that, "Allan's Anti-Fat is the great remedy for Corupulency. It is purely vegetable and perfectly harmless. It acts on the food in the stomach preventing its conversion into fat. Taken according to directions, it will reduce a fat person from 2 to 5 pounds a week" [4].

The very next day Annie went for a long walk, straight to the drugstore. There she made her first purchase of Allan's Anti-Fat. At \$1.56 for a 6.5-ounce bottle, it was expensive, but Annie felt the price was worth it—if it worked.

Unbeknownst to Annie, most of Allan's Anti-Fat was water, along with smaller amounts of potassium iodide, salicylic acid, glycerin, and extract of bladderwrack. This latter ingredient was actually seaweed, a popular obesity cure of the day [5]. While the success of Annie's efforts at reducing are not known, she obviously kept trying as a total of 13 bottles of Allan's Anti-Fat patent medicine were recovered from the family's backyard privy.

Sources for "The Frank's Guilty Secret":

1. A privy associated with the Frank family was excavated on Cypress Block 9; these data are presented in *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 4, 5, 6, and 9*, edited by Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, pp. 447-459, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as Block 9 BTR). Their privy was remarkable for the presence of 13 bottles of Allan's Anti-Fat, along with numerous root beer bottles, as well as beer and other alcoholic-beverage bottles, and a shattered chimney lamp. These are described in the Feature Summary and listed on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 451 and 455-456 of the Block 9 BTR. We don't know whether Annie or Charles Frank purchased the Anti-Fat, we cast Annie in that role because women who kept house full-time were frequently the primary shoppers of the family. This "story" demonstrates the power of advertising (see also Chapter 4, Mullins).
2. The Frank privy did not contain a large enough sample of faunal remains for analysis, and the German foods listed here—processed meats and bread—would not have left archaeological evidence. For the purposes of this "story," we have assumed that the Franks enjoyed traditional German cooking.
3. For changing ideals of feminine beauty see Lois Banner, *American Beauty*, 1983, pp. 136-137.
4. The advertisement for Allan's Anti-Fat comes from the standard bottle reference: Bill and Betty Wilson, *19th Century Medicine in Glass*, 1971, p. 16.
5. Dr. Arthur Cramp has written extensively on hoaxes perpetuated on the unwitting consumer by patent-medicine retailers. He discusses Allan's Anti-Fat on p. 686 of *Nostrums and Quackery*, 1921.

(continued on page 72)

BECOMING JEWISH AMERICANS

Adrian Praetzellis

We will probably never know whether the artifacts from Privy 1409 at 712 Fifth Street came from the family of Isaac Barnett, Samuel Jacobs, or a combination of the two. Both of these households, however, were made up of German/Polish Jews who made their living peddling fruit.

The Golden Land

To immigrant eastern European Jews, America was *die goldene medina*, "the golden land," where anything was possible. Although its entry fee—the abandonment of much traditional culture—was high, many people were more than happy to pay the price. To an ambitious immigrant, the *grueneheim*, or greenhorn, was the most pitiful of creatures. Conspicuous by his old-country dress and manner, this character was anathema to his co-religionists, an embarrassment that represented everything they had enthusiastically abandoned in Europe. Before

ever the first sociologist coined the term "assimilation," the process of replacing old ways with new was known in Yiddish as *ausgreenen*—and the practice embraced with zeal. The archaeological remains in the Barnett/Jacobs privy speak of this process and how California Jews participated in it.

Peddling Fruit: A Family Business

Samuel Jacobs immigrated in 1879. The 1880 Population Census finds him living as a boarder in the home of Julia and Jacob Glassman (also a German peddler) in San Francisco. Peddler was a common occupation among new Jewish immigrants. Even the poorest could afford the rent of a cart by the day, either selling their goods door to door or, more likely for fruit sellers like Jacobs, setting up in a street market. It may be that Jacob Glassman was a landsman—someone from the Jacobs' home district—who established

Who Lived at 712 Fifth Street in the mid-1880s?¹

Year	Name	Birth Year	Nativity	Occupation
1884	<i>Barnett, Isaac</i>	1848	Poland	Fruit peddler
	<i>unknown (wife)</i>	?	?	
	<i>, Jennie (dau)</i>	1875	Cal.	
	<i>, Mark (son)</i>	1876	Cal.	
	<i>, Beatrice (dau)</i>	1882	Cal.	
	<i>, May (dau)</i>	1886	Cal.	
	<i>, Harry (son)</i>	1884	Cal.	
	<i>, Bear (son)</i>	1884	Cal.	
	<i>, Bertie (dau)</i>	1886	Cal.	
1886	<i>Barnett, David (bro)</i>	?	?	Fruit dealer
1887	<i>Jacobs, Samuel</i>	1845	Germany ²	Fruit peddler
	<i>, Rebecca (wife)</i>	1842	Germany	

¹Data derived from city directories, leases, and U.S. Population Census.

²It is likely that Jacobs was from Posnan.

the latter in the peddler's trade. By 1887 Jacobs had set up on his own and leased the house at 712 Fifth Street, where he and his wife, Rebecca, lived until the mid-1890s. In 1890 Samuel's brother Isaac—yet another fruit peddler—and his family had bought a home at 762 Fifth Street, on an adjacent block, and lived there for more than 30 years.

The census lists the birthplace of Isaac and Rebecca Jacobs variously as Germany and (after WWI) as Poland, and notes that both spoke Yiddish and Russian. It is likely that the family originated in the German state of Posnan, whose Jewish residents were commonly fluent in Polish, Russian, or German, as well as Yiddish, which was spoken in the home.

Samuel Jacobs had taken over the house at 712 Fifth Street from Isaac Barnett, a Polish-born fruit peddler who had lived there with his wife, six children, and his brother David (who was also in the fruit business), from the early 1880s. Sadly, Bear and Harry, the family's infant twin sons, died of jaundice on successive days in December 1884. The boys' names suggest their Jewish origins, for Bear is the English translation of the Hebrew name *Dov* and even the very English-sounding Harry was a common homonym of the Hebrew name *Hayim* that a later generation would change to *Hyman* (Rottenburg 1977). The family name Barnett is also a common adaptation of *Dov* (Blatt 1998).

Archaeology of a Jewish Household

Paradoxically, most of the artifacts that now represent the families are household objects that would probably have been chosen and purchased by those who figure the least in the documentary record—the women. Exceptions to this may be the carriage parts, probably from the wagon that was kept in the backyard shed; the seeds of 10 fruit and vegetable species, an unusually wide range, may also reflect the fruit vendor's trade. Other artifacts, such as the 104 British ale bottles, suggest the idiosyncrasies of one member of the household or another. That six different manufacturers were represented may indicate an accumulation over time.

These items either fit in with what we know of the family from historic records or suggest their personal habits. Other discoveries, however, suggest their cultural trajectory and, through this household, speak of people of similar backgrounds and futures.

Meat that's Fit to Eat

Within the system of Jewish dietary laws known as *kashrus*, ritually acceptable food is said to be kosher; all other is *treyfe* and not to be eaten. Among the prohibitions of *kashrus* are those against the consumption of certain mammals, such as pig and rabbit, as well as fishes that lack scales and fins, all shellfish, and animals not ritually slaughtered. In addition, the hindquarters of otherwise acceptable mammals must be purged of the *gid ha-nasheh*, the sciatic nerve, to make them *kosher*. This technically difficult procedure, known as *traibering*, was rarely done; rather, the kosher butcher usually sold the hindquarters of cattle and sheep to non-kosher shops. Thus, hindquarters were effectively *treyfe* (Donin 1972:116).

Meat and Shellfish Remains from Privy 1409 – Barnett/Jacobs Households

SHELLFISH		
	Fragments	Hinges
Eastern oyster	? ¹	
Pacific Calico scallop		42
FOOD BONE		
	Meat Weight (lbs.)	
Beef	104.0	
Mutton	76.6	
Pork	37.2	
TOTAL	217.8 lbs.	
HINDQUARTER ONLY (Beef/Mutton)		
	Meat Weight (lbs.)	
Round	10.4	
Rump	28.2	
Hindshank	8.1/1.5	
TOTAL	46.7/1.5 lbs.	

¹ Several fragments; number of hinges cannot be determined.

The table below shows that the remains of two species of shellfish were found among the refuse in Privy 1409. Furthermore, nearly 40 percent of the meat represented (85.4 of 217.8 pounds) was either from a *treyfe* species or cut from the hindquarters.

It would be difficult to overemphasize the significance of maintaining a kosher home to a family of traditional Jews (Ganzfreid 1996). More than merely a tradition, the practice was and is considered a *mitzvah*, a commandment from God. It was not optional. Today, as in the past, maintaining *kashrus* has the effect of socially segregating the group, for a traditionally observant Jew could not accept an invitation to eat at the non-kosher home of a friend and business lunches were effectively impossible. While some gentiles understood the situation, others interpreted the practice as arrogance and used it as fuel for the anti-Jewish sentiment of the era. A mechanism for social cohesion within the group, *kashrus* was also a barrier to advancement and the mark of a *grueneheim*.

Thus, the Barnett/Jacobs families would have found themselves confronted with several choices: the culturally conservative course would have been to remain true to the practices of their forebears, buying their food from kosher sources. Alternatively, they might have obtained meat from non-kosher butchers but avoided *treyfe* species. Or the family could have taken the most extreme course and abandoned *kashrus* altogether—and this is what archaeological evidence shows they did.

Percent of Major Meat Types Compared – Barnett/Jacobs and Entire Cypress Sample

	Barnett/ Jacobs	Skilled Working Class (entire Cypress sample)
Beef	48	47.6
Mutton	35	39.0
Pork	17	13.4
TOTAL	100%	100%

It is revealing to compare the proportion of the three major meat types between the Barnett/Jacobs household and the mean of all other households of the same economic level (skilled working class) in the Cypress Project sample. The similarity is startling, with the Jewish family consuming even more pork than the mean skilled working-class household. From a strictly religious perspective, the consumption of pork was no worse than eating, for example, non-kosher beef hindquarters. Yet it would have had greater symbolic significance because of the particular abhorrence in which the pig is held in Eastern European Jewish folk belief, as well as the medieval practice of force-feeding pork to Jews who refused conversion to Catholicism.

Constriction and Freedom

A corset fastener is a small thing. To find such an object would not be of much note in most archaeological contexts of the period. Here it is different, because this tiny item represents the unnamed woman of this household and the role she took in the process of cultural change.

For centuries, eastern European village communities had been ruled by traditional socio-religious strictures that stipulated a style of women's clothing and gave limited range for the expression for either fashion or individual taste. For the sake of modesty, married women were expected to conceal their hair under a *sheitel*, or wig, while the female form was concealed behind shawls, voluminous skirts, and straight-cut dresses. In late-19th-century America, however, the ideal female body type was hourglass-shaped, rounded above and below with a wasp-like waist (Scherier 1995). It was a sculpted look could only be achieved by that science of bodily engineering known as corsetry (see also Chapter 6).

To modern sensibilities, the physical constriction of the corset makes this garment a fitting metaphor for the 'tight-laced' Victorian culture of which it was a part. But what did it mean for the woman at 712 Fifth Street, most likely a recent immigrant from an eastern European village, to wear a corset in the 1880s?

It would have been no small matter that clothing no longer marked her ethnicity. Coming from a larger environment in which to be visibly Jewish was to invite ridicule or worse, American clothing offered anonymity. Although the garment was widely used by urban middle-class

Europeans, to women in eastern European Jewish villages, the corset was a uniquely American artifact. While physically constraining, the corset was psychologically and culturally liberating. It represented style and, upon immigration, the elevated status that one could achieve by the apt use of the symbols of fashion; for it showed that the wearer was no *grueneheim*, but a sophisticated American (Scherier 1995:64).

By 1900 Samuel and Rebecca Jacobs lived in San Francisco with their 14-year-old niece, Gertie, a “tailoress.” Isaac Barnett’s young daughters May (17) and Bertie (13) were “at school,” while 25-year old Jennie was keeping house. For working-class Jewish girls of the era, Gertie’s path to employment in the needle trades was more common than the place of May and Bertie. Traditional practice would have seen a 25-year-old long married and the elder, or even both, of her sisters at work. While girls’ education was not thought worthwhile by many of the Barnetts’ background, this was yet another way in which the family demonstrated their modern, American values.

Peddlers on the Road to Assimilation

An archaeology based on a single deposit from one household provides a glimpse of a moment seemingly frozen in time. We can project the family’s experience based on what we know of their background and see how the immigrant generation adapted to the circumstances of their new home, but we do not know how the story played out in succeeding generations (cf., Silverstein 1994). In a sense, one’s appetite for information is increased rather than satiated.

Education, clothing, food, language, and personal names—each a seemingly mundane aspect of culture that would nonetheless have had enormous symbolic significance to this immigrant family. Decisions about these small but ultimately defining aspects of life were made at the household level. Though fragmentary and ambiguous, the archaeology of families is a uniquely evocative source of *prima facie* evidence of the outcome of the many day-to-day negotiations of which 19th-century culture was composed.

If the general process and trajectory of assimilative cultural change seem clear, the mechanisms by which it occurred are not so well understood. There is a great deal to be learned about the everyday practices that either reinforced these changes or worked to counter them.



A family of immigrant Jews, circa 1900. Jacob Peter and Esther Cohen (Adrian Praetzellis’ maternal grandparents) fled the Ukraine and Poland, respectively, in the late 19th century to escape the pogroms of their native countries. While tradition required a beard for men and a wig for married women, Jacob’s sporty mustache and Esther’s natural hair show the couple’s desire to blend into their new country. It is exceedingly unlikely that this tailor’s children would ever have played the middle-class games suggested by the photographer’s props they hold. (Photo courtesy Adrian Praetzellis)

HOPE BUT NO CURE IN OAKLAND

Like Americans all over the country, Oakland residents feared falling victim to consumption and used what was available in the battle against this dreaded disease. While Oakland health officials tried to control outbreaks of tuberculosis, progress was slow. Physicians had little more to offer the consumption patient. Instructions to maintain a “wholesome diet” and “exercise in the fresh air” (Faulkner and Carmichel 1892:129) must have offered little comfort to the patients battling for their lives. The patent medicine industry’s “consumption cures” offered hope in an otherwise dismal prognosis. Its profiteering on the desperation of tuberculosis patients is certainly one of the most massive public frauds ever carried out in the United States.

It may be overly simplistic to state that patent “cures” offered no real benefit to their consumers. Aside from their analgesic qualities, consumption medicines also offered the power of suggestion—and a patient who truly believes that their medicine is an all-powerful serum will often experience temporary improvement. This effect, combined with the many remissions that tuberculosis patients naturally experience, made for a perfect disease from which “cure” manufactures could profit (Cramp 1921).

We can never know what Michael O’Brien experienced. More than likely in his 19 months of sickness, Mr. O’Brien did undergo the fluctuations of tuberculosis, and perhaps attributed these periods of improvement to Shiloh’s Cure. While duped, Mr. O’Brien may have gained a sense of control. If his ultimate fate was not changed through his ingestion of Shiloh’s, the nostrum appears to have offered temporary relief and a glimmer of hope.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Adrian Praetzellis

One of the few unequivocal ways in which we can measure material well-being is in the area of health and nutrition. One can ask, what did this population eat and how did their diet compare with that of their contemporaries? Part of the answer lies in the material description of life at the time. Documents show what was available, but what were people of various economic levels and ethnicities actually *doing*? And how does their behavior compare with that of their contemporaries elsewhere and at earlier periods?

Novelist and social critic Jack London was a passionate writer whose 1903 account of the terrible conditions of the English poor, *The People of the Abyss*, is credited with having a similar level of influence on attitudes toward poverty in the early 20th century as did the works of Charles Dickens, which transformed British public opinion 50 years earlier. The poverty of his boyhood neighborhood of West Oakland was a constant theme in London’s writings and the genesis of his brand of enthusiastic—if idiosyncratic—socialism. Although contemporary accounts and government reports support much of what London had to say, he told only part of the story of West Oakland, for many working-class people may have found their standard of living to be relatively high.

The rise of trade unionism and class-consciousness were important outcomes of late 19th-century industrialization. Although rapid cycles of economic boom and depression created unstable labor conditions in the West, Oakland’s railroad workers were protected from the worst of these fluctuations by the very size of their employer. Unionism was strong. By 1900 railroad workers were both the most heavily unionized and best paid in the country (U.S. Department of Commerce 1975:166-168).

It was paradoxical, felt London, that the availability of consumer goods and plentiful high-quality food thwarted the movement toward structural change and a socialist economy—revolution—by creating what Lenin called an “aristocracy of labor.” The transient underclass is represented neither in primary historic sources nor the archaeological record. Regardless of one’s view of London’s political agenda, it is possible to investigate food and nutrition among West Oakland’s working class and see how the archaeological evidence compares to the assertions of contemporary social reformers (see also Chapter 7, Walker).

Reconstructing the late-19th-century diet using documentary sources alone is fraught with problems. Cookbooks and guides are prescriptive, indicating what the authors believed people should eat. The historic interview-based official report is as likely as its modern counterpart to be ridden with misrepresentations, “a sad catalog of self-delusion” (Rathje and Murphy 1992:71) rather than the objective chronicle it purports to be.

Although the diet itself provides valuable information about nutrition, its composition and preparation were influenced by the economic condition and culture of subpopulations, which are themselves important areas of investigation. Simplistic economic modeling might lead one to conclude that households purchase at the highest level of their ability (the poor and the wealthy eat the cheapest and the most expensive foods, respectively). These kinds of taken-for-granted notions are eminently worthy of empirical testing, since between the ability to purchase a commodity and desire to do so sits the multi-layered filter known as culture. As a result, archaeological findings are frequently counter-intuitive: modern garbage studies, for example, have concluded that the wastage of a type of food actually increases as it becomes rarer; and although, pound for pound, candy is one of the most expensive foods, poor people in Mexico City eat more of it than their affluent neighbors (Rathje and Murphy 1992).

Food is more than merely a nutrition delivery system: to various populations in 19th-century Oakland, it had ethnic, class, ideological, and even political significance. The massive influx of immigrants in the mid-and-late 19th century engendered a curious mixture of nativism, fear, and—in the Domestic Reform movement—the desire to improve the standard of living of these newcomers by the rationalization of housework (Figure 3.10). Although the latter is credited with having a profound effect on the trajectory of America culture and social life, its sway over the material culture of the home seems to have been minor (see Chapter 6, Gutman). Thus, we can speculate that the movement’s homogenizing influence may have been similarly ineffective on the patchwork of cultures that made up West Oakland. This chapter emphasizes that archaeology can contribute *prima facie* evidence to the discussion by examining and comparing the consumer choices of West Oaklanders—especially immigrant and non-white households—in the realm of food.

THE MEANING OF MEAT

Historians have long recognized general correspondence between a household’s expenditure on meat and its relative wealth/social class. “People ate,” wrote nutritionist H.J. Teuteberg, “according to the estate into which they were born” (1975:71). As analysts of material remains, historical archaeologists have taken up the study. However, while the correlation between wealth and the quality of meat purchased is often relatively clear in institutional settings (e.g., Schulz and Gust 1983), it is less so in domestic ones (e.g., Henry 1987). The remains of expensive meat cuts cannot be taken as an unambiguous marker of either wealth or elevated social position.



Figure 3.10. The Cooking School in West Oakland. The New Century Club offered a Mothers' Class and an after-school Girls' Class, both taught by Jessie Harding Jones, a graduate of Mrs. Rorer's Normal School in Philadelphia. The Girls' Class prepared a dinner for the club matrons during the 1901 Christmas season; the menu included potato soup, spaghetti with tomato sauce, French chops and baked potatoes, egg salad, biscuits, and angel-food cake. In the photo, the teacher is writing out the recipe for White Sauce. (Source: *New Century Club* 1901).

Mary Maniery's (2002) study of a California labor camp, for example, concluded that 40 percent of the meat eaten by the workers could be classed as expensive. These results surely reflect the 6,000-calories-per-day diet needed to maintain the laborers' demanding work, but functionalist explanations may not always be in order.

The counter-intuitive character of archaeological findings relating to diet is frequently one of their most important contributions. Considering the problem of representativeness (or the lack thereof) of the archaeological record, what can be said about the diet of West Oaklanders?

A great deal is known about food in 19th-century America. Reliable government statistics have been collected for more than 150 years (e.g., U.S. Department of Commerce 1975) and detailed studies of the diets of a variety of households are available; the supply of books and articles on the subject shows no sign of abating. Such a superfluity of scholarly scribbling might be thought to preclude the possibility of important new insights. Yet, archaeology on a household scale makes a contribution that complements, qualifies, and deepens the revelations of those scholars whose data derive from the printed page. The existing historic record has problems that cannot be solved by analysis: problems of scale, representativeness, and accuracy.

Official statistics document the import, production, and sale of almost every conceivable commodity; yet the scale is such that one cannot apply the data to particular populations in specific places and times. Household diet studies list the foods consumed daily by representative households of various social classes and ethnicities in the 1890s. Presented as models of objective science, they are ideals; for, as Bill Rathje's Garbage Project has repeatedly shown, people are less than candid when reporting what they consume (Rathje and Murphy 1992).

With anecdotal accounts on one end of the spectrum and statistical conglomerations on the other, archaeology is in an ideal position to fill the gap with empirical data available from no other source. Archaeology can also bring to bear an anthropological perspective that views food as material culture. Through it, we can both document what discrete populations actually did and put this information into its cultural and historical context—seeing how the class of artifact called ‘food’ operated in the society of the era—to address the central question:

What did meat mean?

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FOOD-BONE DATA

Our archaeological research design posed questions about consumer behavior among the various ethnic and economic groups who lived in West Oakland. The study of these questions was seen as an opportunity to

- examine the eating habits of these populations,
- investigate the degree to which the latter were affected by economic and cultural factors, and
- test the notion that class/wealth and ethnicity determined what people purchased.

While historical archaeologists have examined the archaeological manifestations of class and ethnicity for some time, most analysis has been done on a small scale, comparing one household to another. The Cypress Project, however, allows a whole new level of analysis due to

- the large number of collections discovered,
- the methodological uniformity of excavation and analysis of these collections, and
- the reliability of the historical associations for each collection, which has enabled researchers to link materials with documented households.

Taken together, these qualities create what may be an unprecedented degree of control over this type and quantity of archaeological data, making it useful to apply statistical analyses not attempted heretofore (Figure 3.11). Furthermore, the relatively large number of collections involved allows us to examine two of the models that archaeologists commonly use to interpret their data: first, the assumption that consumer purchasing patterns follow a model of economic rationality whereby wealthier households purchase more expensive commodities than poorer ones; and second, that



Figure 3.11. A grand collection. Nearly 2,000 pounds of meat are represented by the bones in Well 7511, associated with the 1890s households of Southern Pacific workers, mostly African American Pullman Car porters. While this one is clearly exceptional, many of the Cypress Project faunal assemblages are robust, allowing a variety of statistical studies.

**Table 3.1. Archaeological Features with Faunal Remains
and the Households that Created them**

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Occupational Class	House Type	O/E
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	P+	APH	U.S.
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908	P	IWC	Ita
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	S	IWC	AA
1	Privy 951	Paddack/Swain household	1878	P	IWC	U.S.
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	S	IWC	Irish
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	S	IWC	AA
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s	P	APH	Irish
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880	P	--	--
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	P	IWC	Scot
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	S	APH	U.S.
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	P+	PVH	Ger
2	Privy 1431	Van Epps family	1880	S	IWC	U.S.
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	S	IWC	Ger/J
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900	S	APH	Ger
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880	U	APH	Irish
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	L	IWC	Irish
2	Pit 1469	Tierney household	1901	S	--	AA/Irish
2	Privy 1452+	Stewart household	1880	P	PVH	AA
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	P	IWC	Irish
3	Privy 1785	Curtis family	1874	P+	PVH	U.S.
3	Privy 1858	Tighe family	1882	U	APH	Irish
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884	S	IWC	U.S.
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	S	IWC	U.S.
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906	S	IWC	U.S.
4	Pit 3137	Dutton family	1880	P	IWC	U.S.
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880	S	APH	--
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	S	APH	Can
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	U	IWV	Irish
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880	S	PVH	U.S.
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	S	PVH	U.S.
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890	P	PVH	U.S.
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	P	IWC	U.S.
5	Privy 1454	Farmer household	1880	W	APH	Irish
5	Privy 3830	Quinn family	1877	S	IWC	Irish
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	P	PVH	U.S.
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	P	APH	Scot
6	Privy 4220	Broderick family	1880	U	IWC	Irish
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880	S	IWC	Irish
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	S	IWC	U.S./Ger

(continued on next page)

Table 3.1. Faunal Remains (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Occupational Class	House Type	O/E
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1887	S	IWC	Irish
9	Privy 10102	Frank family	1890	S	PVH	Ger
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	S	IWC	U.S.
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	S	IWC	Ger
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	S	IWC	Ger/Eng
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	S	IWC	U.S.
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885	P	APH	Can
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	S	IWC	U.S.
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family	1905	S	IWC	U.S./Ger
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895	U	APH	AA/Irish
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	S	PVH	U.S.
24	Pit 574	O'Brien family	1909	S	PVH	U.S.
27	Pit 2855	Fischer family	1900	S	IWC	Ger
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880	U/P	IWC	Irish
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	U/P	IWC	Irish
27	Pit 2870	O'Brien household	1900	W	IWC	U.S.
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	S	IWC	U.S.
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895	S	IWC	U.S.
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	S	PVH	U.S./Eng
28	Pit 2404	Crocker family	1900	U	IWC	U.S.
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	P	PVH	Ger
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	U	IWC	Irish
29	Privy 4648	McNamara rental	1880	U	IWC	--
31	Pit 2524	Unknown renter	1895	U	IWC	--
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895	U	IWC	U.S.
37	Privy 100	Huddleson household	1880	S	APH	U.S.
37	Privy 101	Stryker household	1881	S	APH	U.S.
37	Privy 141	O'Connell family	1878	S	IWC	Irish
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	S	--	Ger

Key:

Plus sign following feature number indicates additional contexts included (see Appendix C: Feature Associations by Block).

Date ca.= Estimated deposition date

Occupational Class: P = Professional; P+ = Wealthy Professional; S = Skilled Worker; U = Unskilled Worker.

Two types of residents, L = Landlady and W = Widow, could not generally be assigned to an occupational class.

House Type: APH = Almost Polite House; IWC = Informal Workers' Cottage; PVH = Polite Victorian House (see Appendix D for definitions).

O/E = Origin or Ethnicity: U.S. = U.S. white; AA = U.S. black; Ger = German; Scot = Scottish; J = Jewish; Can = Canadian; Eng = English; Ita = Italian.

(see Chapter 1 for further definitions)

foodways, long known as the most culturally conservative trait, reflect ethnicity/nativity and can be an indicator of cultural change.

In this essay, I examine the food-bone data for 68 archaeological features, combining and recombining the data according to the occupation/class, origin/ethnicity, neighborhood, the gender of the head of household, and the house type of the households that created them (Table 3.1). The goal of this analysis is to determine whether statistically significant patterns exist in the grouped data and, if so, which of these represent real behavioral differences between the groups and which are meaningless statistical artifacts, the result of differences in sample size or similar factors. Bruce Owen, whose comments form the basis of "By the Numbers," performed the statistical analysis. The raw data, his methods, and report are reproduced as Appendix F.

By the Numbers: Neighborhoods and Meat

Our West Oakland study area was divided into three neighborhoods—West of Market, East of Market, and Oakland Point (see Figure 2.1)—divisions that would have been familiar to 19th-century Oaklanders. Market Street was seen as an important division: residents on the east side were perceived as oriented toward the cosmopolitan downtown core, whereas those on the west—including the well-known West of Market Boys—saw themselves as the "real" Oaklanders. To the west of Willow Street was Oakland Point: adjacent to the Southern Pacific Railroad yards, this was an area of small homes, residential hotels, and light industry.

Throughout the statistical studies, the Wilcoxon rank-sum test (also called the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon test) was applied to compare the samples quantitatively in cases with two

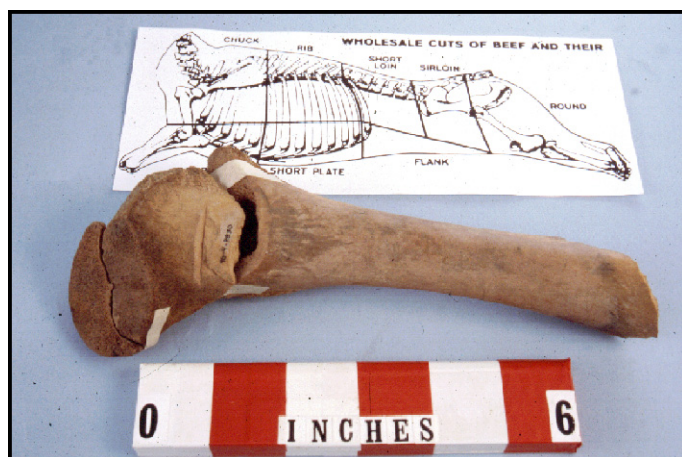


Figure 3.12. Kitchen butchering. A large number of the bone pieces in Cypress assemblages fit together, identifying them as the products of home butchering. In this sample from Well 7511, there are visible ax/cleaver marks, probably the result of reducing the cuts for preparation of soups and stews. Kitchen butchering was most common with mutton.

classes and the Kruskal-Wallis test, the equivalent for more than two classes. There is clear patterning by neighborhood in meat preference by species but none in the cost of meat purchased. The most evident pattern is in mutton, which has a significantly non-random distribution among the three neighborhoods (Figure 3.12). West of Market has significantly higher percentages of mutton than either the East of Market or Oakland Point. West of Market had a correspondingly lower percentage of beef than the others, although the pattern is significant only in comparison with the East of Market neighborhood at the 5 percent level. It seems that people in the West of Market neighborhood were substituting mutton for beef, relative to the others.

While it is tempting to conclude that the greater prevalence of mutton in the West of Market neighborhood is because this was an Irish district, the reality is not so clear. The West of Market sample does have a higher percentage of Irish units (35%) than the East of Market (26%) or Oakland Point (17%) neighborhoods, and while these differences are of the correct nature to explain the neighborhood species patterning, they are not large enough to do so.

Interestingly, there is no parallel pattern in the distribution of meat-cut costs. Although the percentages suggest that the Oakland Point neighborhood had generally less expensive cuts, the pattern is not statistically significant. In any case, it is not Oakland Point, but the West of Market neighborhood that stands out as different in species preference. It appears to be intermediate, not extreme, in cut costs. This all suggests that the neighborhood differences relate more to preferences than to economics.

By the Numbers: Gender

Is it possible to determine the influence of gender on meat purchases? Unfortunately, our results are difficult to interpret.

The population census and city-directory data indicate that some households were headed by women but did not always show which of the others were definitely headed by men, as opposed to being unknown or assumed. For this reason, we have used the clumsy woman/non-woman categories to distinguish between these households.

Five of the six woman-headed households were Irish (a pattern that is interesting in itself), and three of the six lived in Informal workers' cottages. Since the small number of woman-headed households was so concentrated in certain subsets of the sample, we compared them to all the other residences, to the other Irish households, and to samples from the other Informal workers' cottages. In this way, we hoped to be able to separate the effect of the head of household's gender from that of their ethnicity or dwelling type.

Few statistically significant differences emerged. Woman-headed households appear to have had significantly more mutton and less pork than non-woman headed households, a pattern that holds at the 5 percent level of confidence. This might be due to the woman-headed households being Irish, and the Irish generally having more mutton (see the discussion below). Conversely, the apparent Irish preference for mutton might equally well result from the high number of woman-headed households in the Irish sample.

By the Numbers: Economics, Ethnicity, and Meat

Each of the samples was assigned to one of four economic/profession (e/p) categories based on the occupation of the head of the household: Unskilled, Skilled, Professional, Professional+. Each sample was also assigned according to the predominant ethnicity and/or nativity (e/n) of the household: US-born white American, African American, Irish, English, Scots, Italian, Jewish, and German.

The most surprising result is that samples representing the four household e/p categories do not relate as clearly or consistently as might be expected in relation to either meat species (beef, mutton, or pork) or meat-cut cost (high, medium, or low). If we consolidate the professions into "low status" (Skilled and Unskilled) and "high status" (Professional and Professional+), no significant differences in either meat species or cut cost, even at the 10 percent level, can be seen. Since Unskilled seems to be the lone genuinely distinctive category, and its distinctiveness is reduced by combining it with the Skilled sample in this scheme, this is not a surprising outcome. Wealthy (P+) households consumed more expensive meat than the two categories below them, but there is no linear relationship between wealth and cost of meat. Not only did Unskilled households not have the most economical cuts but, on the contrary, the percentage data suggest that they were more similar to the P+ category in their consumption of high-cost cuts.

There may be a weak pattern in the preference for pork: the percentage data suggest that it becomes more common as one progresses from lower to higher economic categories; this is

reflected in a difference at the 5 percent level between the U and P households, the latter showing more pork. With this exception, we can say with confidence that there are no clear differences in meat species utilized between the e/p categories.

The same data were examined by the ethnicity/nativity (e/n) of the households to distinguish differences in the meat consumption of these populations. Comparing U.S.-born whites to the other e/n categories revealed some differences: the former show less beef than African Americans and Germans at the 5 and 10 percent levels, respectively. When compared with a combination of all others, Irish households show a preference for mutton at the 10 percent level. Surprisingly, none of the e/n categories differ from each other at either the 5 or 10 percent confidence level in meat-cut cost (high, medium, or low). Thus, we can say with confidence that no single ethnicity/nativity group ate consistently more expensively or cheaply than any of the others.

While these differences between e/n categories are statistically significant, it would take the analysis of additional collections to determine if the pattern is behaviorally meaningful or an aberration. By the same token, to state that there is no statistically significant difference between most of the categories that were examined is not the same as saying that the categories do not differ. It simply means that any difference that may exist is not great enough to be detected with confidence with the given sample size. Actual differences may be too subtle and obscured by individual variation to be picked up with confidence. Although as archaeological data go, these are highly controlled, overall patterns are more likely to reflect real differences and similarities than carefully chosen comparisons.

After the statistical tests that produced these results had been run, we scanned the raw percentages of high-, medium-, and low-cost meat remains between the e/p categories and noticed an interesting pattern: the meat purchases of the wealthiest households (P+) seemed to more closely resemble those of the poorest families (U). Similarly, the middling groups, S and P, resembled each other. To test this observation, data representing the two sets of e/p categories—U/P+ ($n = 8$) and S/P ($n = 35$), respectively—were combined and compared.

The combined U/P+ category was found to be quite different from the S/P, being composed of more medium-cost cuts—and, consequently, fewer high and low ones. The difference was significant at the 5 percent level with a probability of 0.0062, the smallest of any compared sets. By the same token, U/P+ households had more high-cost cuts than S/P, a probability of 0.0656. The fact that these patterns appear mostly in the medium-cost cuts, but not consistently in the high-cost cuts or at all in the low cost ones, suggest that the influence of a household's e/p characteristics on meat purchases was complex, and not simply a reflection of their ability to pay.

Representativeness is as important in archaeological analysis as it is difficult to control. If some of these collections are the products of wildly idiosyncratic behavior, the apparent patterns may not be noteworthy. With that caveat in mind, our data strongly indicate that the working-class people of West Oakland ate far greater quantities of expensive meat than one might expect from the occasional Sunday dinner or holiday celebration.

What could be the explanation?

SCIENCE AT THE TABLE

Prized but not always available, meat was the most sought-after food in the homes of working-class Americans in the middle of the 19th century. Vegetables, on the other hand, were valued only for taste, variety, and for the bulk they provided. Many people were positively mistrustful of green vegetables, blaming them (in some cases with justification) for the spread of cholera and other diseases endemic to the newly industrial cities, whose populations had outgrown their infrastructures (Cummings 1941:43). Well into the 20th century, potatoes and products made of cereal flour filled, with varying adequacy, most peoples' nutritional needs. The 20th century saw a massive decline in the consumption of carbohydrates in the form of starch from sources such as bread and cereal, while the daily per-capita consumption of beef nearly doubled between 1910 and 1976 (Brewster and Jacobson 1978).

The first scientific study of the American diet was undertaken in 1874. It was not until the late 1880s, however, that the combined resources of businessman Edward Atkinson and nutritionist Wilbur Atwater led to a pivotal series of articles in the reformist *Century* and *Domestic Science* magazines. Atkinson and Atwater were a pair of Victorian rationalists who believed that the country's social problems could be defined and solved by science. Behavioral change would proceed quite naturally from education, or so they believed. The poor, wrote Atwater, must be "free from ignorance and prejudice, and must understand the principles that underlie the right practice of the arts of life" (1888:444).

Their zeal was driven by anecdotal accounts and, later, by survey data that demonstrated that working-class people sometimes paid more for food than was necessary to get adequate nutrition. This situation was abhorrent to the reformist pair for its inefficient use of resources. Atwater felt that if the poor spent their money wisely on more nutritious food, they would have more for housing and clothes. As a chemist, Atwater did not concern himself with such irrelevancies as palatability and desire; only nutrition was significant in "scientific eating" (Cummings 1941:80).

The social effects of industrialization were clear, and empirical studies of the working-class diet in the United Kingdom and North America were initiated in both regions in the 1880s (Oddy 1976). Men like Atwater and Rowntree (1902)—who brought public attention to the terrible conditions of English industrial workers—were social reformers as well as scientists. One reformer after another complained that working-class households, even the poorest, spent too much of their money on high-quality meat and continued to do so even when told of the error of their ways (Rowntree 1902). Those who did economize on meat cuts made up for the savings by purchasing lavish sauces and

EXPERT OPINION?

The experts get it wrong sometimes.

Writing before an understanding of the crucial role of vitamins and minerals in healthy eating, Wilbur Atwater and the followers of scientific, rational housekeeping suggested that the "cost of a diet may be diminished by consuming less fruit, less expensive cuts of meat, and fewer vegetables" (Atwater and Bryant 1898:72).

One might also muse on the words of nutritionists Brewster and Jacobson, who predicted that "because imitation meat made from soybeans is a low-cost and low-fat alternative to red meat, we may see more and more of it in the future" (1978:65). From the vantage point of nearly 30 years it is clear that, like their 19th-century predecessor, Dr. Atwater, these scientists placed too much confidence in a rational, modern-day form of optimal foraging over cultural decision-making.



Figure 3.13. Peppersauce bottle. This bottle of peppersauce recovered from the Railroad Exchange Hotel well still contained the seeds of the peppers and raisins that gave it its tangy flavor. Nineteenth-century diners were especially fond of such sauces and condiments for dressing-up dull food, especially low-cost meats (Well 4600).

relishes to counteract the dull fare (Figure 3.13). The poorest Italian immigrants to Chicago would not dream of buying anything but Italian olive oil, in spite of its high cost relative to similar products (Atwater and Bryant 1898:15). Commodities like wheat flour, rice, potatoes, and beans could provide the same quality of nutrition at a fraction of the cost of beef. But only meat would suffice, and the working class “showed little interest in increasing their intake of vegetation proteins” (Oddy 1976:225).

Anecdotes describing the profligate working class (such as the following story from Wilbur Atwater’s classic tract “The Pecuniary Economy of Food”) appear frequently in the writings of the era’s reform-minded nutritionists: In the 1880s, a Boston butcher asked a poor seamstress why she purchased tenderloin and not the cheaper round or sirloin steak. She replied indignantly, “Do you suppose because I don’t come here in my carriage I don’t want just as good meat as rich folks have?” (Atwater 1888, emphasis added).

Atwater felt that the core of this problem was in “the conceit, let us call it, that there is some kind of mysterious virtue in these kinds of foods that . . . have the highest price” (1888:437). Although the butcher’s tale may be literally true, it has the feel of allegory, a form to which the Victorians were quite partial in their

tireless search for moral lessons. To Atwater, the widow’s behavior was an extravagance that represented the irrational, unscientific approach to household economics endemic among the working class.

Writing of 19th-century Germany, Teuteberg summed up both the situation and the frustration of the scientists who encountered it: “Economic necessities certainly did shape nutritional behavior . . . in the direction of greater rationality, but irrational motives continued to play a part . . . expenditures for food were, in many cases uneconomical and conditioned by emotion” (1975:102). Far from purchasing food appropriate to their economic station, the poor industrial workers of 19th-century Massachusetts “want the best food and are the most fastidious” (Massachusetts Labor Bureau, quoted in Atwater 1888:442). Why couldn’t the working class just be *sensible*?

Republicanism and Meat

In the 1832 account of her visit to America, the imperious Frances Trollope comments on the widespread belief in social equality among white Americans (Trollope 1960). The republican ideology manifested itself in a lack of deference to one’s social betters, a traditional convention in Europe. Although hardly shocking to modern sensibilities, to an English lady of the 1820s

this was an appalling breach that brought to mind the excesses of the French revolution and the democratic goals of the Chartists at home.

Mrs. Trollope was not alone in her concern. While Jeffersonian democracy was lauded in North America, the middle class nevertheless feared the ambitions of the “rabble.” Victorianism (Howe 1976) and its social restraints were, in part, a reaction to the social turmoil of the era, as the middle class sought to establish a safe and structured environment. This was particularly notable in the home, where a raft of etiquette books published from the 1840s onward show the ever-increasing ritualization of dining (Schlesinger 1946). In the public realm, education based on the principals of domestic reform would elevate the working class and immigrants, allowing them to see the error of their old habits.

Paul Shackel (1998) has demonstrated how overtly political republicanism could be displayed through consumer goods such as tableware. We suggest that the working-class households of West Oakland expressed, in their selections of food, the values described by Mrs. Trollope. Atwater sums up the attitude of the 19th-century American: “to economize closely is beneath us. We do not want to live cheaply, we want to live well,” economizing was incompatible with “our dignity as free-born Americans” (1888:445). In the same way that displaying the appropriate parlor paraphernalia showed one’s attachment to certain values, eating meat above one’s station was also an expression of egalitarian, republican sentiment. Thus, the meaning of meat (or at least expensive meat) is less clearly not an outcome of pure economics. Its purchase by working-class Oaklanders was not the economically rational act envisioned by Atwater, wherein choice should be determined by one’s ability to pay and where meat is conceived of as little more than nutrient mass in its predigested stage.

In the field of microeconomics it is axiomatic that, all else being equal, resources are allocated so as to maximize the benefit gained from them. Similarly, modern theories of rational choice emphasize how people anticipate alternative outcomes and various courses of action and decide which will be best for them; “rational individuals choose the alternative that is likely to give them the greatest satisfaction” (Carling 1992:27). Household nutrition studies tend to begin with an assumption of the primacy of nutrition and economics in the household decision-making process. On the supply side are variables such as availability and price, while consumer-side constraints involve the ability of the purchaser to pay and their preferences. Historians and archaeologists have been studying the role of ethnicity in food choices for years, while social class has received less attention except as a function of the customer’s ability and willingness to pay.

Two things we know for sure:

- there was no neat correspondence between a family’s wealth and the purchase of high-quality cuts of meat in 19th-century Oakland;
- and, as Dr. Atwater would have agreed, the meaning of meat extended beyond nourishment.

What the 19th-century reformers saw as an oddity is suggested by our studies of West Oakland households to be a distinctive working-class practice. Rather than a behavioral quirk or statistical outlier, the purchase of commodities above one’s conventionally assigned status seems to have been a common practice. We continue this topic in Chapter 11. There we use additional classes of artifacts to suggest that this was not irrational behavior. For in the remains of their meals and other purchases, we see people seeking to advance goals that had less to do with nutrition or class emulation than with pride and identity.



CONSUMING ASPIRATIONS: BRIC-A-BRAC AND THE POLITICS OF VICTORIAN MATERIALISM IN WEST OAKLAND

PAUL R. MULLINS

INTRODUCTION

In 1881 Oakland's Health Officer E.H. Woolsey complained to the city council that "many populated streets are not provided with sewers," emphasizing that the "ventilation of our street sewers is an urgent requirement, for at present the principal escape of the fetid and noxious gases is through the ordinary house-traps, into sleeping rooms" (1881:71). These conditions were not significantly better in July 1894, when the subsequent city Health Officer reported that "the sewers had not been flushed since January, resulting in their bad condition at present" (*Oakland Enquirer* 1894b).

The sewer system's January 1894 flushing did not come soon enough for the residents at 737-½ Myrtle Street. On 13 January Oakland's Health Officer was compelled to evict the residents because the home was considered "unfit for human habitation by reason of defective plumbing and drainage" (*Oakland Enquirer* 1894a). When the residents at 737-½ Myrtle Street were expelled, their West Oakland neighbors included Harry Pierson Chapman, an Illinois-born paperhanger who lived at 828 Myrtle Street between 1892 and 1896 (Privy 3300/Pit 3301). Like any resident of the area, Chapman certainly would have been hard-pressed to overlook the unsanitary state of the community. Indeed, the Chapman's own backyard contained an open depression that attracted rats that gnawed much of the pit's exposed food remains; remains of at least five rats, a cat, and a kitten were recovered from the pit's archaeological assemblage. Yet, in contrast to the community's sanitary disorder and the household's less-than-antiseptic yard, the Chapman home was populated by a rich array of decorative material culture ranging from Asian ceramics, to glass vases, to a pair of porcelain figurines. Two of these objects at least symbolically recast those objective conditions through the most mundane Victorian decorative goods. The 2-½-inch tall porcelain figurines depict two characters seated on chamber pots, a curious motif with relatively bewildering meaning (Figure 4.1). They are only two inexpensive and symbolically enigmatic items in an assemblage of nearly 1,500 objects, so it is tempting to simply ignore them as quaint but inconsequential whimsies. Yet with a modest rethinking of material symbolism, we can begin to see these objects as penetrating, albeit oblique, observations on turn-of-the-century society.

Like most late-19th century bric-a-brac, these curious chamber-pot figures were not mirrors of the real world as much as they were distorted symbols of what their possessors wished it to be. In the midst of West Oakland's poor drainage, sewer, and plumbing conditions, the Chapman figurines served as a concrete symbol that distanced the household from the consequences of



Figure 4.1. The Chapmans' porcelain chamber-pot figurines. These two porcelain figurines are typical of the oblique social commentaries and ambiguous symbolic mechanics of bric-a-brac. The chamber-pot figures romanticized their consumers' distance from a distinctly non-genteel practice; they indirectly illuminated the dilemmas of public sanitation, and they provided whimsical and ambiguous symbolism. These figures were recovered from 828 Myrtle Street (Privy 3300/Pit 3301), the ca. 1890s home of paperhanger Harry Pierson Chapman.

poor sanitary conditions. Dressed in a gilded skirt and bonnet and wearing a trace of red lip coloring, the female figure provides a curiously dignified demeanor to one of the most basic of human experiences. Alongside her now-decapitated partner, the pair made it possible to comment on an activity few people share with each other, let alone display in their front room. Yet the childlike figures project an innocent humor onto the realities of a universal albeit unexpressed experience—and the broader dilemmas of public sanitation—in one of many communities aspiring to improve public sewer conditions. In the 1890s, proper Victorians and aspiring gentility were abandoning chamber pots for a range of new sanitary technologies, so the figures illuminated significant Victorian transformations by overemphasizing their consumers' distance from “uncouth” historical practices. These figurines had no impact on objective sanitary conditions in West Oakland, but they did furtively reflect and shape how the household perceived and expressed those conditions.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO BRIC-A-BRAC

Examining just these two trinkets emphasizes how bric-a-brac complicates standard archaeological analyses that fixate on function, cost, quantity, and self-evident symbolism. Most archaeological analysis is based on artifact function, which traditionally is defined as the utilitarian union of physical form and task (e.g., a projectile point is manufactured for hunting, a hammer is made for driving nails). The Chapman figurines' function can be termed ornamentation or decorative furnishing, but the notions of ornamentation and decoration are quite ambiguous and do not provide a concrete sense of the meaning these figurines assumed in the Chapman household. The suggestion that these things should be ignored because they are found so infrequently is imprudent, because the paucity of archaeological bric-a-brac likely reflects distinctive curation processes. For instance, one Greek-American born in West Oakland in 1915 noted that she and her siblings rarely entered their front room: “That was like a museum. My mother's house is a museum” (Karnegis 1996:11). Victorian parlors were generally stocked with a household's showpiece furnishings and reserved for “public” entertaining and social ceremony, so the specialized care for decorative parlor objects should be reflected in low breakage rates (compare similar patterns in Mullins 1999:163).

While historical archaeologists devote considerable attention to artifact value, an analysis focused on cost and the assumed social cachet of pricey objects does not provide much insight into bric-a-brac symbolism. In most cases, bric-a-brac was quite inexpensive, yet it had sufficient social consequence to populate the homes of elite and working classes alike.

Decorative-arts scholars interpret household material culture such as bric-a-brac by assessing its aesthetic style; such an analysis would identify distinct motifs and relate them to broader stylistic patterns, design movements (e.g., Beaux-Arts, Colonial Revival), and dominant decorative counsel. This provides some useful insight, but it underestimates how clearly defined aesthetic design movements were themselves reinterpreted by bric-a-brac producers and consumers; that is, any given home might have objects that borrowed from many different decorative movements, and single mass-produced objects often incorporated elements from multiple styles. Focusing on style and dominant counsel also suggests that stylistic mavens, producers, and moral ideologues—rather than consumers—determined the meaning of objects.

The challenge in interpreting Victorian bric-a-brac lies in defining the range of possible meanings in objects and then building a persuasive case to argue why certain consumers favored particular meanings from that range of possibilities. What specific examples of bric-a-brac meant is difficult to fathom without knowing about the consumers themselves. This is not utterly unlike symbolism in any material object: the meaning of any object is a complex, situationally distinct amalgam of producer-imposed symbolism as well as specific consumers' sentiments. Those sentiments are shaped by personal and group identity, including class, ethnicity, gender, and any other dimension of identity. Consequently, bric-a-brac interpretation demands an appreciation of the consumer who invested an object with meaning, not simply an understanding of function, aesthetic motifs, artifact quantity, or cost.

Bric-a-brac is a somewhat ambiguous term that refers to a range of primarily decorative objects common in American homes from about 1850 into the 1930s. Ornamental objects such as figurines, vases, statuary, and chromolithographs were produced in staggering quantities in the late 19th century; their use was discussed extensively in household literature, and they could be purchased in virtually any American market for relatively modest expense. The definition of decoration and its distinction from function are admittedly unclear, since most material objects have functional utility and decorative symbolism that are difficult to separate. Most Victorian parlor furniture, for instance, had genuine utility, but genteel consumers also valued furnishings for their inferred capacity to fabricate and exhibit a genteel social identity. Some goods like flowerpots and bird feeders certainly had strictly defined utilitarian purposes (i.e., to hold plants and bird feed), but potted plants and songbirds were themselves ornamental, much like ceramic figurines. Rather than cast a narrow definition of bric-a-brac, this chapter approaches bric-a-brac as a broad range of household goods produced expressly or primarily for ornamentation and accepts that most Victorians did not make a particularly clear distinction between function and ornamentation.

The stunning quantity of household material culture recovered during the Cypress Archaeology Project excavations provides a rare opportunity to study decorative objects discarded by a diverse range of late-Victorian urban consumers. The material culture of West Oakland's Irish, African Americans, Chinese, U.S.-born whites, and a broad swath of European immigrants provides a unique opportunity to examine how various middle- and working-class groups negotiated, reproduced, and/or ignored Victorian ideologies. In a nation increasingly defined by material consumption, the apparently mundane purchase of household material goods was a small yet meaningful way Americans positioned themselves both against and within class, racial, nationalist, regional, and materialist ideologies. Despite its apparent triviality a century later, Victorians regarded decorative material culture as a disciplinary mechanism that taught morality, fostered high culture, and confirmed American affluence. Yet these objects were themselves so symbolically enigmatic, and the discourses surrounding bric-a-brac so hotly

contested from the 1850s to 1930s, that the same object could accommodate a relatively wide range of meanings. Consequently, a single piece of bric-a-brac potentially could be an assimilative mechanism, an empowering symbol of resistance, a potent criticism of social inequality, or—more likely—all these things at the same time (Mullins 1999).

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

A sensitive understanding of how various consumers perceived their identities and positions within American society compels us to look systematically and creatively at household minutia such as that in West Oakland. This chapter begins by introducing the idea that seemingly innocuous objects can be seen as “politicized.” Objects’ symbolism is more complex than function or cost disclose, and their meaning is not imposed by elite or other dominant groups; instead, bric-a-brac’s meaning was contested, and this conflict harbors distinctive insight into consumer identities, social tensions, and systemic influences.

The second section examines the “morals” of household material culture. Commodities ranging from furniture to bric-a-brac were routinely consumed with the express intent of forging some morality that could focus on religion, high culture, class identity, patriarchy, nationalism, and any other number of facets of consumer identity.

The third section examines household decorative meaning and the ambiguous symbolism of bric-a-brac. Decorative-arts scholars and some archaeologists have championed a powerful attachment to material analysis that focuses on how objects fit within stylistic genres, but mass-produced minutia is difficult to pigeonhole within aesthetic categories. Schools of decorative art (e.g., Colonial Revival, Arts and Craft Movement) viewed object symbolism within well-defined philosophies, but mass production borrowed liberally from stylistic trends and looked to public space for its complex and oft-indistinct symbolism: Nationalism, classical history, imperialism, nature, faith, race, and gender were among the many highly charged social issues that found material form in decorative goods. The decorative fare produced by factories often did not have any concrete philosophical foundation: manufacturers simply reproduced popular symbols and left consumers with the most significant work of “making sense” of those symbols.

The fourth section probes the relationship between desire and bric-a-brac and assesses the rights and possibilities many Americans envisioned in commodities. The widespread conviction in American affluence is clearly reflected in the archetypal Victorian interior stocked with an eclectic clutter of exotic goods. This section examines how such decorative codes were reproduced and modified in a series of West Oakland households. The following section examines how consumers were provided models for household materialism in public spaces like department stores and Pullman railroad cars. Several West Oakland households were homes to Pullman porters, so the section probes how these families reproduced—as well as resisted—such ideological models. The chapter concludes by assessing how the West Oakland households negotiated the prominent thread of religiosity and domestic ideology projected onto household goods.

BRIC-A-BRAC'S SYMBOLIC "POLITICS"

The contestation of Victorian material meanings illuminates objects' subtle but significant politicized symbolism. "Politics" is traditionally viewed as a set of articulate societal or group goals that are strategically pursued over time, such as in the conventional form of partisan political factions or the political-economic sense of a conscious emancipatory politics (Lunt and Livingstone 1992:169). There is little evidence, though, that disparate consumers consciously set out to transform American society by shopping for bric-a-brac or any other commodities. Nevertheless, bric-a-brac and other apparently innocuous material objects were invested with symbolic significance that obliquely commented on broader social context, expressed consumers' individual and societal aspirations, reproduced various structural ideologies, and even criticized social inequality. Overwrought observers sometimes reduce the modern West to an Orwellian column of shoppers for whom meaningless material style has replaced substantial values, cultural identities, or collective politics (e.g., Ewen 1988; Packard 1957). In various times, Coney Island, the Montgomery Ward catalog, Disney World, or Toys"R"Us have indeed had a dimension of pure escapist detachment from objective inequalities. Yet it is shortsighted to imply that in the last century or so the masses simply have eschewed collective interests in favor of a trip to the mall. The meaning of even the most innocuous object reflects the tensions between producers and consumers, elite and disenfranchised, and many other contradictory social relationships. On the other hand, it probably is going too far to suggest that consumption has provided a concrete alternative to the existing polity; that is, despite the powerful, shared values reflected in widespread consumption, there is not a "consumer state" in which our collective social interests and values are derived from consumption. The postmodern suggestion that consumption is how people basically fabricate their own identities is even more problematic: if consumer goods did indeed provide the means to become whatever we wished, it is unclear why most of us chose these particular social circumstances.

Any object whose meaning is disputed has some "politicized" symbolism, so it is critical to probe the political consequence of various consumption patterns and illuminate the social conditions that consumers negotiated with particular sorts of things. Like all material culture, bric-a-brac from West Oakland shaped, reflected, accentuated, and raised its consumers' social consciousness in various recognized and unexpressed forms, providing a circuitous yet utterly politicized commentary on American society. This vision of material politicization assumes that household consumption is worth studying because its constant negotiation of conflicting personal, collective, institutional, and state interests has a broad social influence that often went unrecognized by individual consumers.

THE MORALS OF BRIC-A-BRAC CONSUMPTION

MORALS AND MATERIALISM IN THE PARLOR

From about 1850 to the eve of the First World War, the primary battleground over consumer morals was the "parlor" (Grier 1988:64). The parlor was a public household space designated for more-or-less orchestrated social activities ranging from visits to club meetings. Some antebellum and even colonial homes had similar spaces, but prior to the mid-19th century, few Americans stocked one room with expensive furnishings and then dedicated it to relatively

superfluous activity, so such formal spaces were uncommon. Unlike their predecessors, Victorian ideologues were almost uniformly dedicated to the notion that a showpiece social space was essential to genteel identity.

Ideologically the parlor was a material manifestation of a household's values, and this thinking was extended to the rest of the home. In this sense, the parlor is likely most important as an intellectual concept that stressed the implication of household material culture on values; a household was not compelled to have a dedicated space or universally subscribe to dominant parlor-decorating codes to be influenced by parlor-making ideologies. Indeed, most communities included diverse architectural forms that varied in their intent or capacity to accommodate a space expressly planned as a public room. West Oakland, for instance, was dominated by two basic types of modest wood frame homes that Paul Groth and Marta Gutman refer to as "Informal workers' cottages" and "Almost-polite houses" (1997:33). The workers' cottages were constantly modified vernacular creations that paid little attention to dominant design codes and instead answered their residents' specific utilitarian and spatial needs. These homes had no parlor room *per se*, but of course a room could be devoted to social activity. It was unlikely, however, that formal socializing was any room's sole function; most of these structures originally had only three rooms with little spatial specialization, and even with additions the homes remained cramped (Groth and Gutman 1997:44-49). The Almost-polite houses, in contrast, paid more attention to fixed styles and household spatial, decorative, and sanitary ideologies. Such homes borrowed from dominant Victorian codes for spatial specialization and first appeared in West Oakland in the 1870s (Groth and Gutman 1997:53). These five- or six-room homes ideally included a formal parlor space, though it sometimes served as a joint family room and parlor or even as a makeshift sleeping space.

THE AMBIGUITY OF BRIC-A-BRAC

Victorian household values were registered by material objects with varying degrees of symbolic clarity: for example, Bibles clearly evoked religious morals of some sort, but mass-produced bric-a-brac usually had considerably less clear associations. Consumers' attraction to bric-a-brac—and many ideologues' apprehension of the same trinkets—revolved around this ambiguous and evocative symbolism. The standard view of material symbolism is that an object represents some circumscribed meaning that is self-evident in a more-or-less shared social context. A Bible in a Victorian parlor represented religious values, even though there is some flexibility in the precise meaning of "religious values." Bric-a-brac, though, usually was not intended to represent anything socially or historically specific. Instead, these objects evoked ambiguous sentiments about many significant yet far-ranging and ill-defined social practices.

This notion of symbolism is somewhat at odds with the standard premise that goods are consumed because they publicly display social identity or standing. Thorstein Veblen's (1899) classic formulation of conspicuous materialism posited that things were consumed by a "leisure class" to publicly address society and display social identity, so a good's "use value" rested on its capacity to display social prestige or some clearly defined social identity. Obviously bric-a-brac was meant to be literally displayed, but it is critical to avoid the assumption that such goods were consumed so that such display would instrumentally "communicate" some distinct meaning about the consumer to others. In the case of the aristocratic figurine pictured in "Inchoate Sentiments" (see sidebar), for instance, precisely what was the clearly defined symbolism its

INCHOATE SENTIMENTS

Bric-a-brac extended the flexible symbolism of all material culture to its extremes. Knickknacks did this by featuring ambiguous motifs that were intended to be evocative, rather than straightforward representations. A typical example of this sort of evocative symbolic ambiguity is a figurine recovered at 830 Linden Street. This 2-³/₄-inch unpainted porcelain figurine depicts a stoic, mustached male who is wearing a cap and flowing outergarment with a powder horn draped over his shoulder. The outergarment is suggestive of a doublet and overtunic, apparel that was common in Europe from the 14th to 16th centuries, and the cap is loosely reminiscent of a



This porcelain figurine reflects the symbolic ambiguity typical of mass-produced bric-a-brac. Historical-themed figures such as this commonly featured elements like the cap, powder horn, and outergarment that did not clearly represent any specific moment, and the actual activity to which the figure refers is itself unclear. This figurine was recovered from an early 1880s home at 830 Linden Street (Privy 4281).

Renaissance-era Tudor cap. Yet the social symbolism of the figurine remains elusive because these design elements are at best only suggestive and idealized Renaissance renderings. A considerable volume of mass-produced bric-a-brac depicts historical motifs such as this that loosely refer to an idealized activity or romanticized period, rather than a concrete individual or event. Many figures like this one do not really represent any precise historical period: The figurine's garb, for instance, is sufficiently vague that he might well represent any moment from the medieval period to 18th century. The actual activity the figure represents is itself unclear, although the powder horn and finery intimates that he is an aristocratic hunter. His well-groomed mustache and obvious Western clothing imply that he is European, but beyond this relatively nebulous identity his specific ethnic and cultural reference—if there actually was one at all—is unintelligible.

Trying to simply “make sense” of such objects in the terms of actual historical referents, dominant styles, depicted activities, or original cost is problematic, because these trinkets usually were not intended to represent anything concrete. Certainly a Victorian consumer or contemporary archaeologist might articulately interpret the aristocratic Linden Street figure as, for instance, an evocation of European elite heritage, a celebration of now-lost male sport, or a display of consumer “taste.” Yet the basic attraction of such objects is that they did not necessarily represent any specific or clearly defined association; indeed, they could simply evoke pleasant yet inchoate sentiments about a romanticized past, Western cultural and racial roots, masculinity, aristocratic behavior, or any other number of things.

possessor expected visitors to grasp? Rather than assume its meaning to be public, self-evident, and defined by dominant stylistic mavens and viewers—which is how Veblen and many historical archaeologists tend to see goods, its symbolism was equally “private,” abstract, and shaped by its consumer. Many consumers certainly did wish to impart their “style,” “morality,” or “status,” but these terms were such malleable abstractions that they could entail quite different things to different people. Symbolically ambiguous objects allowed their parlor-making consumers to daydream about their own identities and society, not simply to showcase who they were (or wished to be) to others. Many mass-produced goods were consumed for such “private” household symbolism as much as for their ability to project some identity to outsiders.

Bric-a-brac sometimes featured quite familiar historical motifs (e.g., Robinson and Leadbeater ca. 1885), yet even these seemingly familiar faces and personages had somewhat ambiguous meanings. Perhaps the most popular of these historical figures, Abraham Lincoln, was represented by a Linden Street artifact that reflects the complex and dynamic historicizing that went on in America following the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln was among the most common characters reproduced in bric-a-brac ranging from chromolithographs to statuary to molds of his hands or death mask (e.g., Castelvechi 1885:6). Much like the intensively memorialized George Washington, Lincoln symbolized a vast range of America's most cherished values, but Lincoln had particular pertinence in the late-19th century wake of the Civil War and Emancipation. Chromolithographs of Lincoln depicted him in a range of quite charged roles as the Great Emancipator, the healer of the national rift, and an archetype of the self-made man. A vast volume of public Lincoln statuary was erected in the immediate aftermath of the war, yet these public, permanent, and monumental commemorations painted a somewhat more guarded civic picture of the President than the flood of Lincoln chromos. Kirk Savage's (1997:65) study of public statuary in 19th-century America recognizes that statues' intended permanence made them poor mediums to represent a given moment's most passionately contested subjects; instead, statues were intended to pose an eternal symbolic resolution and cast a subject in a timeless pose. Nevertheless, much like bric-a-brac, statues' aesthetics were designed to impart somewhat ethereal personality attributes like strength, wisdom, and achievement through aesthetic devices such as gesture, expression, adornments, and physical pose (Savage 1997:66). In the 1870s, for example, most public statues of Lincoln smoothed out his gaunt frame; they typically gave him more heroic garb than that he wore in his lifetime; and sometimes they placed him standing over a once-enslaved and now-deferent African American being freed by the Great Emancipator. Savage (1997:65) notes that in these guises Lincoln was the public symbol of Emancipation in the 1860s and 1870s, when most public statuary representing Emancipation's still-unfolding history depicted African Americans alongside Lincoln in subservient poses. Often Lincoln would be posed with props such as the Emancipation Proclamation or a pen, devices that alluded to his role in Emancipation and reflected how commemorators immediately after his assassination saw Lincoln's legacy firmly linked to Emancipation. This aesthetic underscored the wisdom of the great President and some Americans' optimism about the end of slavery, though it said little or nothing about African Americans' humanity or their own struggle for liberation. Yet when Reconstruction collapsed in the 1870s, Americans set to reestablishing conventional black-white racial relations and swiftly dispensed with the optimism that freedom augured an anti-racist society. This transformation in social and racial mood had an impact on subsequent Lincoln statuary, which dispensed with the figures of African Americans and aesthetic devices like scrolls; instead, Lincoln standing alone and unadorned became a symbol representing the Union's preservation, a wise moral compass that guided the nation through its greatest menace (Savage 1997:122-124). His role in Emancipation quite quickly became subsumed to other features of his biography that conformed more readily to Americans' prevailing mood.

A Linden Street figurine reflects this fresh post-Reconstruction vision of Lincoln. In the mid-1880s, Irish-born railroad collector Patrick Barry, his wife, Ellen, and a daughter lived at 818 Linden Street in a flat adjoining their tenants. The two households apparently shared a privy that was filled in about 1887 and included a black-glazed redware figurine of Lincoln broken just above the knees (Figure 4.2). The figurine's circular base contains a rectangular placard that reads "LINCOLN," and the figure's feet are slightly askew and knees bent in a conventional statuary pose intended to evoke dynamism in a forever-immobile object. The lost portions of the figurine may have had any number of gestures, poses, or accessories, but the

modest remaining portion of the figure says a surprising amount about its symbolism. The space around Lincoln's feet is simply molded ground; this Lincoln was not surrounded by a freed slave, suggesting that the figurine reflects shifts in post-Reconstruction Lincoln symbolism. The figurine also does not contain remnants of flowing cloaks or classical clothing, elements that post-war sculptors often added to Lincoln to render his haggard frame and inelegant attire "heroic" in the terms of 1860s-1870s aesthetic conventions (Savage 1997:69). The Linden Street Lincoln is apparently wearing modest trousers and boots, much as Lincoln himself actually did, and at least the remaining portions of the figurine do not refer to Lincoln's role in Emancipation. This was in keeping with 1880s statuary conventions that stressed "realism" and the power of personality over idealized characterizations and contrived physical representations.

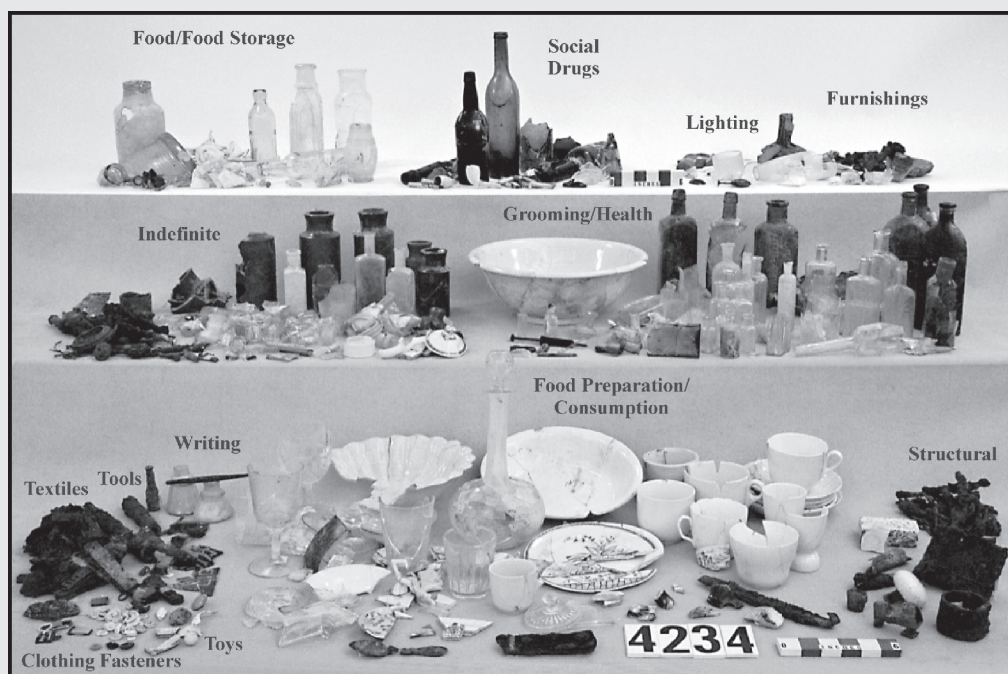
Such realism was reflected in a prominent Lincoln monument completed in Chicago in 1887 (Savage 1997:122). The Chicago statue depicted Lincoln standing alone before a chair, without accompanying devices such as scrolls, and it placed him in relatively accurate period clothing. This depiction suggested Lincoln had just risen to speak to the statue's viewers, his hair somewhat disheveled, his clothes rumpled, but his gaze solidly set forward: This sort of figure displayed no clear historical judgment but instead stressed ambiguous personality attributes that a knowledgeable audience could connect to their notion of Lincoln's symbolism and place in history. Discarded the same year as the Chicago monument was unveiled, the Linden Street Lincoln figurine appears to reflect a similar vision of Lincoln as a powerful personality more clearly allied with wisdom and morality than Emancipation.

Conceding African Americans a material representation in public space or a parlor was akin to confirming their newly won citizenship or even implying their genuine rights, and no consumers devoted to white superiority were likely to make either concession willingly. Newly arrived immigrants who were themselves subject to racism and xenophobia were among the most likely parties to object to public African American representations. For instance, in the 1880s a sculptor submitted a design for a New York statue that depicted a kneeling slave alongside Lincoln, but in 1890 the *New York Times* reported that the design had been rejected because "the figure of a negro in a public monument would arouse the resentment of the Irish citizens" (Savage 1997:81-82). Irish immigrants were marginalized by racism themselves and often associated with highly stigmatized blackness. Consequently, depictions of African Americans would seem particularly unlikely motifs among Irish Americans like Linden Street residents Patrick and Ellen Barry. Lincoln alone was a relatively "safe" symbol, but when depicted alongside an African American or some other highly charged motif the object posed more complicated historical and racial symbolism. The figurine of Lincoln as an ambiguous moral force and fount of American wisdom likely had allure to those immigrants who aspired to citizen privileges, and Lincoln was sufficiently ambiguous to represent anything from Republican partisanship to nationalist wisdom to their consumers' willing embrace of American history.



Figure 4.2. A Lincoln figurine. Abraham Lincoln was one of the most popular motifs in late-19th century bric-a-brac, including chromolithographs as well as figurines like this one recovered at 818 Linden Street (Privy 4234). This black-glazed redware figurine discarded about 1887 originally had gilding on portions of the placard. Its design is typical of post-Reconstruction depictions of Lincoln that focused on Lincoln's role in preserving the Union and his ambiguous character traits, rather than his role in Emancipation.

ASPIRATION, AFFLUENCE, AND PRESIDENTIAL TRINKETS



The Barry family's ca. 1887 refuse, found in Privy 4234 at 816-818 Linden Street, may reflect the material aspirations of this working-class family. Among the plain white ceramics, glasses, and tumblers are display items such as the fancy etched glass decanter and the large scalloped fruit bowl.

The redware Linden Street Lincoln figure suggests more about aspirations than genuine material affluence. By the 1880s, redware had long been a passé medium for virtually any ceramic production except flowerpots, and it was an uncommon and generally inexpensive form in decorative figurines. The Lincoln figure's cost was not necessarily a critical factor in shaping the object's meaning, but in dominant decorative ideology, redware was not a particularly desirable medium. The rest of the assemblage, however, does at least suggest some aspirations to the material trappings of gentility. The assemblage included four flowerpots, a partial porcelain figurine, table glass including an etched decanter, and a preponderance of white-bodied ceramics that presented a relatively uniform table

assemblage. Ultimately much of the bric-a-brac recovered from working-class and otherwise marginalized contexts like that on Linden Street suggests more about its consumers' aspirations for self-determination and citizen privileges than their actual social and material advance. Especially for newly arrived immigrants and Americans subordinated by racism or poverty, apparently innocuous household goods provided a modest but significant mechanism that situated them in relation to the ambiguous genteel mainstream. Household material culture was significant in Victorian eyes because it symbolically idealized consumer identity, and bric-a-brac's rich symbolism provided a foothold for many Americans aspiring to the social and material prospects of consumer affluence.

“THAT MIDDLE STATE”: DESIRE, AMBITION, AND BRIC-A-BRAC

The powerful desire for material things has long plagued and baffled consumer society's critics, yet most critics have attempted to impose behavioral codes and evade the thorny question of why people want goods at all. In 1860, for instance, Florence Hartley aspired to discipline the women gathered at window displays and suppress the hedonism supposedly unleashed by department stores. Without contemplating what drew Americans to consumer space, Hartley concluded that a “lady who desires to pay strict regard to etiquette, will not stop to gaze in the shop window. If she is alone, it looks as if she were waiting for someone else; and if she is not alone, she is victimizing some one else, to satisfy her own curiosity” (1860:112-113). Lelia Hardin Bugg's *The Correct Thing for Catholics* echoed that it was improper to “make a tour of the shops, pulling down and examining goods, pricing articles, and taking up the time of the salesmen, when there is no intention of buying anything” (1891:137). Neither observer could actually understand material desire, so they simply hoped to regulate it.

This sort of conservative counsel became quite exceptional in the late-19th century. As Hartley and Bugg vainly beseeched their readers to quell consumer desire, marketers introduced a variety of mechanisms that encouraged consumers' imagination, anticipation, and desire. Late-19th-century department store planners busily erected stunning plate glass window scenes to entice consumers to imagine the symbolic possibilities of goods, and they organized floor spaces so that consumers would wander and purchase goods from impulse. Theodore Dreiser's novel *Sister Carrie* described the distinctive experience such consumer spaces fostered: “There is nothing in this world more delightful than that middle state in which we mentally balance at times, possessed of the means, lured by desire and deterred by conscience or want of decision. When Carrie began wandering around the store amid the fine displays, she was in this mood” (1900:67).

Consumers like Sister Carrie negotiated the tensions between material desire and restraint, suspended in a “middle state” in which consumers weighed need and moderation against desire and pleasure. Colin Campbell (1987:86) traces the roots of this “desiring mode” to the 18th century, concluding that consumers experience a “state of enjoyable discomfort” in which wanting is itself as pleasurable as possessing an object (cf. Baudrillard 1988:24). Where Veblen posed the value of a good as its capacity to display identity, Campbell argues that use value resides in a good's capacity to accommodate a consumer's aspirations and imagination. It is essentially irrelevant whether or not objects satisfy their consumers' oft-grandiose expectations or inchoate daydreaming; certainly commodities rarely if ever produce radical changes in peoples' lives, but what is significant is the persistent belief that goods harbor or forebode such change. Rather than experience perpetual disappointment with goods, most consumers effortlessly project their imaginations onto new things.

Conservative ideologues rapidly reacted to the desires they believed were unleashed by consumer space and household goods. For instance, a chorus of physicians, religious figures, and authority types argued that women were particularly prone to psychological and medical conditions inflamed by shopping's intense emotional stimulation (Abelson 1989). Philosopher Max Nordau argued in 1897 that shopping's detrimental emotional arousal was common to most materialism: “The present rage for collecting, the piling up in dwellings, of aimless bric-a-brac . . . appear[s] to us in a completely new light when we know that [French psychologist] Mangan has established an irresistible desire among degenerates to accumulate useless trifles” (Saisselin 1984:63). In his sensationally titled tome *The Nervous Housewife*, Abraham Myerson sounded a similar warning that materialism posed a substantial threat to moral order, social

structure, and the personal discipline of both men and women. He observed that, "what a man considers riches in anticipation is poverty in realization. Here again we deal with the mounting of desire" (Myerson 1920:117). Myerson voiced a common apprehension of ever-burgeoning material abundance when he observed "That society of all grades is restless with the desire for luxury seems without doubt . . . Modern capitalism reaps great wealth by developing the luxurious, the spendthrift tastes of the poor. It would be a peculiar poetic justice that will make that development into the basis of revolution" (1920:124).

Myerson may well have been standing at the heart of a revolution in the 1920s, when American identity became more closely linked to material consumption than faith, nationalism, ethnicity, or other once-unchallenged seeds of identity (Agnew 1990; Susman 1984). In 1929 for instance, Robert and Helen Lynd were somewhat taken aback when the "Middletown" (i.e., Muncie, Indiana) newspaper decreed that "'The American citizen's first importance to his country is no longer that of citizen but that of consumer. Consumption is a new necessity'" (1929:88). The Lynds understood that this sentiment would have been quite remarkable a half-century before. Yet if Myerson and the Lynds were witnessing a "revolution," it was an oddly conservative one that focused Americans' "rights" on consumption, and not on civil, political, or material privileges that could only be secured through transformations in class structure, labor relations, or social inequality. Ronald Edsforth (1987), for instance, attributes 1920s autoworkers' labor activism to working-classes' desire to bolster their economic ability to purchase goods and preserve their leisure time, not a deep-seated zeal to unseat producer elite. In this sense, by the New Deal Americans were "fighting" to preserve their right to buy things, not to defend God, Country, and other ideological icons that stood at the heart of American identity a half-century before. Like many Americans, Abraham Myerson was apprehensive that unachievable consumer desires and unrelenting poverty threatened to produce class warfare, but the United States was not subsequently visited by class upheaval spearheaded by restless shoppers. If anything, the promise of consumer culture's impending economic and material bounty may well have subdued class unrest. Even in the depths of the Depression, marginalized Americans often submitted to staggering social and material inequality under the assumption that affluence was possible for any American with the appropriate discipline, ambition, morals, and good fortune.

The groundwork for such widespread faith in American affluence was laid in the late 19th century. Despite all the moral weight of late 19th-century material discourses, Victorian Americans celebrated affluence much more than they lamented it. The Protestant ideology that shaped most household philosophizing in the second half of the 19th century was not really opposed to consumption in the first place, although religious and consumer ethics were diametrically opposed. Many Americans cherished the ideological notion of "affluence," which in various quarters implied national might, industrial domination, widespread consumer prosperity, genteel middle-class culture, and white racial superiority. Affluence was satisfying to so many Americans because its proponents (especially in marketing) left the concept strategically undefined and simply evoked a wide range of hopeful but ambiguous emotions linked to consumption. Advertisers likely delivered the most resounding declaration of affluence, constructing a profoundly influential but completely distorted vision of American life and the power of material things. Much like bric-a-brac itself, advertising was what Roland Marchand (1985:xvii) calls a *Zerrspiegel*, a mirror that distorts and selectively represents its subjects' true image. Advertising seized upon salient popular ideologies—ranging from American industrial prowess to white superiority—and dramatized how such "values" were reproduced and affirmed by the consumption of particular goods.

The implications made by advertisers and other champions of affluence were made particularly believable by the genuine profusion of goods displayed in department stores, mail order wish books, and cities and towns where wealthy Victorians lived alongside scores of aspiring gentility. Department store magnates saw their new marketing spaces as “palaces” that provided a stunning architectural confirmation of bourgeois affluence, the onward march of democracy and Western civilization, and the educational role of consumption. John Wannamaker, for instance, built striking stores in Philadelphia and New York that included auditoriums, marble-columned courts, organ players, casts of classical sculpture, commissioned murals, and several hundred paintings purchased from the Paris salons (Saisselin 1984:45-46). Comparable department stores were in most American cities by the 1880s. In 1897, for example, English traveler George Steevens noted that the

Emporium—the Bon Marche of San Francisco, and one of the numerous biggest stores on earth that this country boasts—finds it conducive to trade to woo its patrons by a band of music perched on a pedestal in the midst of a restaurant, and under a dazzlingly illuminated glass dome. It also has the happy idea of setting up a balustrade in the midst of one of the important departments, over which you can watch golden-haired maidens receiving cash and popping back change into gilt pneumatic tubes [1897:231-232].

For those consumers who did not venture into such consumer palaces, bric-a-brac also was available in a score of “notion stores,” chains, mail order catalogs, and as gifts from merchants (on notion stores in Oakland, see Anthony 1939:7).

THE ABUNDANT INTERIOR:

AFFLUENCE, CLUTTER, AND ECLECTICISM IN BRIC-A-BRAC

Affluence certainly found a stunning material expression in the archetypal Victorian parlor replete with high-style furniture, mass-produced goods, art objects, and collectibles. Attacks on conspicuous luxury were not particularly common before the turn of the century, because many Americans began to entertain the notion of class mobility for the first time. An 1887 etiquette manual noted that a

. . . great deal has been written by interested parties on the corruptibility of riches; about money being the root of evil; that riches do not make happiness; that poor people are happier than rich; that gold is a curse, and the cause of crime, &c. Now all this looks very well in theory, but who among my readers does not know that the very opposite is the result, and those who talk so much and preach so persistently on the curse of gold, are themselves very anxious to secure as much of this root of evil as possible for themselves and their families. Money is not a curse, but a blessing. . . . Poverty is the curse of the world [Union Publishing 1887:12-13].

Margaret Sangster echoed this sentiment when she remarked that “It is the fashion now to abuse rich men, and nag at them, and it makes many who are rich afraid of making any display; but comfort yourselves with the thought that it is righteous and just and proper that you should have all the comforts and luxuries your riches can procure you, so long as they are not demoralizing luxuries” (1897:409). These bold celebrations of affluence created a fertile environment for marketers, consumers, and critics of bric-a-brac alike.

The boldest celebrants of consumer affluence pioneered the stereotypical Victorian aesthetic in which an eclectic profusion of goods covered the complete household space. In 1897 a writer in *The Boston Cooking-School Magazine* enthused that "There cannot be too many beautiful buildings, statues, or paintings in the world, nor too much real taste, ornamental design, or artistic furnishing in our homes" (Parker 1897:8). Two decades earlier, though, decorative writer Clarence Cook had criticized the material glut in such rooms, noting that the "New-York parlor of the kind called 'stylish,' where no merely useful thing is permitted, and where nothing can be used with comfort, is always overcrowded" (1878:100). Cook was an early censor of superficial style's victory over genuine functionality, yet he still argued that household spaces should be distinctive representations of the family's personality. The notion of a highly personalized eclectic interior would come under withering attack by the turn of the century and eventually transform household decorative ideology. In Victorian discourse, "eclectic" typically referred to interiors that evinced no clear decorative scheme, particularly spaces favoring decorative volume and texture over functional simplicity. In the 1880s and 1890s, a stream of style mavens became increasingly critical of objects like bric-a-brac that had no genuine functional utility. These thinkers promoted "rational" interior designs that hearkened back to sparer, symmetrically balanced colonial precedents. This and related backlashes against eclecticism became the dominant thread of household ideology after about 1900, when the notion of decorative "harmony," the resurrection of historical styles, and the rejection of superfluous ornamentation prompted sparer interior ideals (Brooks 1994:23-25).

A ca. 1885 privy at 654 Fifth Street provides one of the most ornate and eclectic examples of abundance in the West Oakland assemblages (Privy 900). The parcel containing a story-and-a-half residence had been owned by the Mann family since 1862 and included a variety of family members as residents until about 1885. New Hampshire-born brothers Benjamin and Frederick Mann were living in the home with Frederick's wife Eunice and her three children in the late-1870s, and the brothers tried their hands at various ventures including farming, mining, speculating, and banking. The 1880 U.S. Census recorded the 53-year-old Frederick as a miner and his brother Benjamin as a "capitalist," suggesting their similar entrepreneurial ambitions. By the time Eunice moved out of the house in about 1885 and discarded much of the house's contents into the privy, both Frederick and Benjamin had died (the former around 1883 and the latter on New Year's Eve 1884).

The Mann family privy contained a stylish assemblage of tableware including costly matching porcelains, decorated glassware, an earthenware candelabra, candlesticks, and specialized vessel forms such as spoonholders and gravy boats (Figure 4.3). The presence of a large matched set as well as coffee beans in the privy strongly suggests that the household entertained guests for both meals and coffee drinking. After eating at such a well-appointed dining table, the family likely retired to a parlor space decorated with Victorian bric-a-brac. The Manns' assemblage included a variety of cut, etched, and painted stemware, a rather distinctive cobalt blue candlestick holder with a dolphin-shaped pedestal, cut glass lampshades, and several figurines and vases. These were all stylish Victorian goods, but by the 1880s few decorative ideologues would have counseled the household to use this array of objects together in a single assemblage. In fact, when writers criticized "eclecticism" and over-filled Victorian parlors, they were reacting to consumers like the Manns who displayed a rich range of stylistically and colorfully discordant household goods alongside each other. The otherwise enthusiastic household decorator Clara Parker warned against such decorative incongruity when she concluded that "In all things—walls, carpets, chairs, sofa-pillows, bric-a-brac, fancy-work—let there be not

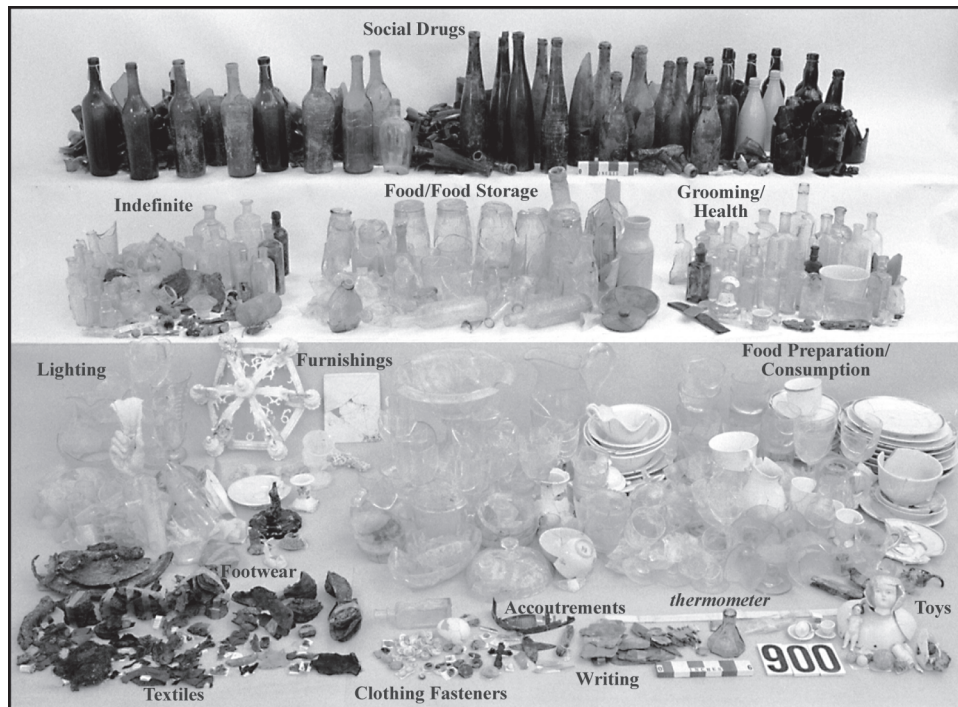


Figure 4.3. A collection of Victorian goods. The ca. 1885 privy at 654 Fifth Street contained a dense deposit of Victorian decorative goods (Privy 900). The Mann family's discards included matching porcelains, an earthenware candelabra, and several figurines and vases.

loud or startling effects, a jumble of striking combinations" (1897:9). In contrast, consumer champions like the New York store Sypher and Company more eagerly celebrated consumers' new prospects, concluding that "it is impossible that the old poverty of house-furnishing should ever come back. We shall no longer have rows of houses all alike inside. . . . Now we have individual tastes shown in our furniture, and they will be shown more and more as the means of gratifying them become more common" (1885:31-32). Designers and ideologues alike championed many specific models, but they agreed on the ideal of "uniformity"; i.e., the appearance that the room or house was furnished in a coordinated design (Grier 1988:30). This design scheme was ideally executed in one moment, which implied more expense than gradual, piecemeal decoration that covered several seasons or integrated passé items.

Much bric-a-brac was artistic or exotic, symbolism that was fundamentally a statement about consumers, not the place where the objects originated or the culture and time to which they referred. In the heady optimism of late-19th-century America, exotic bric-a-brac was a confirmation of nationalist power and affluence, a privately possessed verification of Western domination. The popular description of exotic peoples and places was itself ambiguous, ideological, and often racist: for example, American consumers' vision of "Turkish style" was recreated in numerous households' "Turkish corners" (cf. Brooks 1994:20), but that style had virtually nothing to do with Turkish history and culture. Typical of such exoticized decorative ideology was a 1903 household manual describing an "Oriental Scheme for [a] Smoking Den" that included a "cozy corner [which] has a Moorish crown" (Barnard, Sumner, and Putnam Company 1903:30). Few household ideologues actually plumbed the complexities of Westerners' attraction to objects from other cultures and time, instead representing it as Americans' distinctive curiosity. In 1885 the New York store Sypher and Company rhapsodized that Victorians

AFFORDABLE ART: PARIAN IN VICTORIAN PARLORS

The Manns' bric-a-brac included three objects of Parian ware, a popular decorative ceramic that was found in several West Oakland assemblages. In 1844 a technique was introduced that used alabaster or wax to mold statues more intricately than the molding process used to manufacture Staffordshire earthenware figurines (Briggs 1988:150). That year an English sculptor began to produce Parian ware, a bisque porcelain that used this molding process to render detailed and "lifelike" figurines and decorative objects. Parian had a look similar to marble, and a flood of English and American producers marketed it as "art" distinct from less detailed and cheaper earthenware or porcelain figurines. An 1846 English trade journal, for instance, noted that the potteries "attach very great importance to this material, as offering a valuable medium for the multiplication of works of a high order of art, at a price which will render them generally available" (Briggs 1988:150).

Parian was sufficiently expensive and uncommon that it would have been a distinctive object in an 1880s parlor. Parian had some symbolic distinction from most surrounding bric-a-brac because it was commonly marketed as an affordable objet d'art, rather than an indifferent commodity curio. Art in Victorian homes implied wealth and the elusive quality of aesthetic taste based on cultivation and education, but very few Americans could actually purchase or commission art for their parlors. Parian, though, blurred the boundary between art and commodity and provided a material means for aspiring gentility to apprehend art symbolically, socially, and as a collectible possession. Not surprisingly, the distinction between art and commodity was a distinction many genteel ideologues hoped to preserve rather than obscure. The snobbishness of artistic aesthetes was summarized in 1882 by Francis Marion Crawford, who concluded that "The eye, accustomed to the endless knickknack, bric-a-brac, and arabesque, can no longer follow the pure lines of a great statue, or grasp the drawing and the color of a master's painting" (1882:90-91).



The Mann privy included several examples of the popular decorative ceramic Parian, including this vase. Objects like this vase were marketed as art for genteel "middle-class" consumers, and their symbolism often borrowed from Classical art or more ambiguous and evocative motifs like this feminine hand.

Parian often reproduced classical motifs and paragons of Western art, and the examples featured in exhibitions often were truly artistic creations, but most mass-produced Parian included subjects that were little different from those cast in other ceramic types. The Manns' privy, for instance, included a striking 8-inch-tall vase molded in the form of a female hand grasping a lily-bud vase. Alongside it in the privy assemblage was a 6-inch by 5-inch Parian plaque depicting a well-dressed woman with a bundle on her head, rake over her shoulder, and a goat at her feet. A third Parian object in the privy appears to be a lid molded with a bird's likeness, but it is too fragmented to definitively identify the motif or form.

take a very great interest in other peoples and in other countries, an interest so great that it has affected our whole way of living; not only our houses show it, but our pictures, our amusements, our books, our newspapers, and our dress. In our houses we give our love of adventure free play, and like to be reminded at every turn, of the fact that America, big as is her territory, is but a small part of the world [1885:8].

Americans may well have had a “very great interest” in non-Western peoples, but little bric-a-brac contained substantially realistic references to contemporary colonized peoples. If anything, exotics from recognizable or still-living cultures posed some threat that an extinct, idealized, or utterly vanquished group (e.g., Native Americans) did not pose (cf. Stewart 1993:148). The hazard of the “Other” was neutralized by bric-a-brac that grossly caricatured or did not clearly refer to the realities of colonized peoples’ lives; i.e., bric-a-brac was intended to distance its American consumer from such realities and verify what they already “knew” about themselves and their society. Most American consumers only “knew” the foreign producers of exotics through popular culture, or they encountered these peoples in the caricatured representations in mass-produced goods, so exotic bric-a-brac was unlikely to foster any genuine appreciation of the late-19th-century colonial world.

The most common West Coast exotics came from China and Japan. Most Californians had some genuine exposure to Chinese immigrants (if not Chinese culture), but popular ideologues painted a powerful racist caricature of the Chinese. Popular caricatures of groups like the Irish, African Americans, and Chinese were sufficiently resilient, widely repeated, and advantageous to so many other groups that the racist caricatures often assumed the status of reality; for example, outsiders often assumed the veracity of depictions such as the happy, lazy black or the perpetually drunk Irishman.

The West Oakland assemblages contained a vast range of Chinese- and Japanese-manufactured objects, and some probably were consumed for functionality or price as much as their unspoken capacity to summon forth various visions of the Orient. Yet many of these goods were consumed for their decorative exoticism as much as their table utility or ready availability. The Chapman household at 828 Myrtle Street (Privy 3300/Pit 3301), for instance, discarded five Japanese porcelain vessels along with a Chinese porcelain vessel, a likely Oriental motif art pottery ware, and the two chamber-pot figurines introduced at the outset of this chapter (see Figure 4.1). Household writers

EXOTICISM

Exoticism was central to late-19th-century visions of affluence. Since the 18th century, collectors had accumulated assemblages of goods from throughout the colonized and natural world, ranging from traditional craft goods to items from nature. Such goods were of course rare and difficult to acquire, so their accumulation and display by an erudite collector was a powerful ideological statement about elite collectors and their class power. Yet as the colonial world opened up over the 19th century, increasingly more exotic goods reached American consumers of modest means, and eventually bric-a-brac manufacturers themselves would produce goods depicting a wide range of colonial motifs. By 1885 Spelman's Fancy Goods Graphic hawked a vast range of notions and reminded dealers, "Everybody wants a collection" (Spelman 1885:137). The Spelman's bric-a-brac catalog featured a typical range of exotic bric-a-brac from the colonial world, distant lands, and nature: Japanese and French fans, Egyptian Princess ceramic wall plaques, French Pug figurines, ceramic "Baskets of Darkies" (i.e., African American figurines), and 18-inch decorated alligators were among the curiosities gracing the massive catalog. By the second half of the 19th century, the consumption of exotic things was no longer the province of a small aristocratic elite, and unique, mass-produced, and foreign-made exotics alike were quite common in the archetypally cluttered Victorian parlor.

often counseled home decorators to use Japanese material goods; for instance, Clarence Cook decreed just 10 years after Japan was opened to foreign trade that

money is well spent on really good bits of Japanese workmanship. . . . A Japanese ivory-carving or wood-carving of the best kind, . . . one of their studies of animal life, or of the human figure, or of their playful, sociable divinities, pixie, or goblin, or monkey-man, has a great deal in it that lifts it above the notion of a toy [1878:102].

Cook's description reflected how many observers reduced non-Western aesthetics to whimsical artistic styles divorced of their cultural footing and easily integrated and reinterpreted within genteel homes.



Figure 4.4. The Chapmans' Asian ceramics. The Chapman household at 828 Myrtle discarded several brightly colored Japanese and Chinese ceramic items, some of which are pictured here (Privy 3300/Pit 3301).

Several of the Chapmans' Japanese vessels had absolutely no use-wear; for instance, one matching Kutani export cup and saucer show no clear saucer or cup base wear consistent with regular use. These vessels produced in northwest Japan feature colorful depictions of birds passing over leaning reeds, a traditional aesthetic representation of seasonal change (Figure 4.4). This illumination of Japanese tradition probably escaped the Chapmans, who more likely displayed these Oriental objects for their brilliant color, distinctive and exotic aesthetics, and insinuation of household worldliness. The bright Japanese palette

would have been unlike the staid molding and overwhelmingly white-bodied ceramics favored by most period household ideologues. Cumulatively, the Chapmans' distinctive chamber-pot figurines, bold but passé Rebekah-at-the-Well Rockingham teapot, and decorated table glass suggest that this house was decoratively eclectic. The Chapmans' Rose Canton bowl likely was also a decorative vessel, since its elaborate overglaze scene is well-preserved, and even the household's English vessels are elaborately decorated. For comparison, the Mann household at 654 Fifth Street was also eclectic and showy, but the Manns' ceramic tableware were overwhelmingly stylish white-bodied vessels, and they had only two Chinese porcelain vessels.

The Chapmans' attraction to this striking assemblage likely reflects a number of factors including the allure of exotic places and peoples. As a paperhanger Harry Chapman worked alongside house painters and likely developed a strong sense of decorative possibilities; so it is not surprising that he was attracted to the brilliant Japanese palette that was quite unlike the sedately white Victorian table. The Chapmans—in common with most American consumers—may have been attracted to exotic aesthetics in general, with no articulate interest in whether any given object was actually produced in a foreign place, had a cultural or historical story to tell, was displayed alongside similar sorts of items (e.g., Asian goods), and so on. For instance, a household at 1774 Atlantic Street discarded a stoneware dish in a molded lotus flower form, a typical motif in Japanese aesthetics (Well 7511). The vessel's base, however, contains an unidentified mark that reflects the vessel's probable origins in a West Coast art pottery

(Figure 4.5). This vessel apparently went unused and has hints of rim wear that may reflect its display on edge, so it was an ornamental item much like the Chapmans' bric-a-brac. It would appear that some households were less concerned with acquiring a "genuine" Japanese artifact than an object that incorporated exotic symbolism. A ca. 1906 feature at 812 Market Street contains a similar swath of colorful and exotic goods (Well 1703). Deposited in the wake of the earthquake, the Market Street assemblage includes colorful Victorian-style Majolica, a Chinese celadon vessel, a black-glazed refined redware teapot, and two Japanese ceramic vessels. While the assemblage did not include any figurines and only three flowerpots, it suggests a rich color palette and exotic styles similar to the Chapmans' assemblage.

The ultimate exotic was a unique object, and many Victorians collected objects from nature or antiquity to display alongside their mass-produced bric-a-brac. The best evidence for such consumption in West Oakland comes from a privy at 768 Fifth Street deposited by the household of John and Katie Taylor and their teenage daughters (Pit 1753). The privy was filled in about 1884 with a relatively unremarkable assemblage of household refuse that included a small tea service and an assemblage of typical patent medicines, but alongside these objects nine prehistoric groundstone net weights were recovered. Their recovery in a discrete deposit indicates that they were discarded together during the formation of the pit fill and were likely collected by a household member. Clarence Cook was among the household writers who advocated display of such objects. He noted that a Victorian

cabinet might be made a museum for the preservation of all the curiosities and pretty things gathered in the family walks and travels. The bubble-bottle of old Roman glass stirred in walking by one's own foot in the ruined palace of the Caesars, and not bought in a shop; the Dutch drinking-glass, with the crest of William of Orange; the trilobites found in a New burgh stone-wall, or the box of Indian arrow-heads, jasper, and feldspar, and quartz picked up in a Westchester County field; bits of nature's craft and man's, gathered in one of these pendant museums, may make a collection of what were else scattered and lost, and which, though of little intrinsic value, and of small regard to see to, will often find its use in a house of wide-awake children [1878:101].

Such objects certainly were collected by enterprising West Oaklanders. For instance, in 1939 resident Fred D. Realey asked his readers of the *West of Market Boys' Journal* if they remembered "when Shell Mound Park was an ancient village and when excavations were made of the mound. There were discovered numerous bones of Indians, shells, arrow and spear heads and other objects of interest that had been owned by the Indian tribes of other days" (1939:11). The park in nearby Emeryville became a well-known amusement center, and it is likely that some West



Figure 4.5. Exotic symbolism among the bric-a-brac. The household at 1774 Atlantic Street discarded a rich mix of bric-a-brac, including two porcelain figurines, a pair of blue bud vases, and this Japanese-style stoneware dish. Deposited in the early 1890s, the plate likely was one of many decorative goods that featured "Oriental" motifs adapted by European and American producers. The mark on this vessel suggests that it was produced in a West Coast art pottery (Well 7511).

Oakland residents collected objects at this and other regional sites for their household assemblages. These net weights may well have been displayed alongside shells and similar objects taken from nature.

A ca. 1875 pit at 817 Market Street included several pieces of bric-a-brac and contained one of the project's most unusual exotic items (Pit 3382). At the time the pit was filled, the residence was home to Charles Lufkin, a white Massachusetts-born lawyer and police inspector. Lufkin's family and their boarders discarded a range of quite stylish decorative goods, including a Parian lid molded with the likeness of a sleeping cherubic figure, as well as two brightly painted porcelain figurines in colonial-style clothing. Alongside these items was recovered 150 beads that may have been discarded by dressmakers boarding with the Lufkins. These beads included three large translucent white beads known as "crackled white" that were made in 19th-century east and south Africa. Whether these beads were consumed as decorative curios or within normal beadwork is unknown, and their origins may well have been a mystery to the household members. Nevertheless, in a stylish genteel household that was sensitive to exoticism, such objects likely attracted some notice, even if they did not secure a spot in the parlor.

The bounds of exoticism stretched into prehistory and distant lands, and they also reached into nature. Victorian interiors often included a variety of goods taken from nature, such as unusual sea shells, dried wood, or taxidermed animals, and potted plants and flowers were customary items in genteel space. Much like the collection of goods manufactured by "primitive" peoples, Victorians' consumption of natural objects was self-referential and likely reflects apprehension over the seemingly ever-widening divide between culture and nature. For some collectors, the placement of a strange shell under glass was verification of the Western world's transcendent ability to explain the world, if not its triumph over nature. A flowering plant in their parlor essentially confirmed Man's mastery over nature and a genteel householder's cultivated ability to appreciate natural beauty. Other observers were apprehensive of a Victorian world of convoluted social conventions, hypnotic mass advertising, and ever-increasing social complexity, nostalgically seeing the nation ripped from its orderly traditional past and once-intimate relationship with "nature." Their attraction to shells and flowers was more clearly based in an ideological sentiment for simplicity.

The West Oakland assemblages contained a vast quantity of shells, but most were either imported as food, like eastern oysters, or locally available, like abalone. The archaeological assemblages contain clearer evidence for the "display" of live animals. Some Victorians decorated their homes with taxidermed animals, but for those decorators unable to obtain a stuffed animal, live animals were a common alternative. The West Oakland assemblages included a minimum of 22 bird feeders or bird baths and at least one fish bowl. Fish bowls and glass bird feeders are atypical vessel forms that are often highly fragmented, and archaeologists rarely if ever expect to recover such objects, so these usually go unrecognized unless they are recovered intact, which is quite uncommon. The presence of marijuana seeds in a privy at 1774 Atlantic Street likely also reflects the presence of birds; bird feed often was laced with marijuana to induce more boisterous songbird performances. Bird feeders and cages clearly had symbolic significance. For instance, one woman remembered that in the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake "all of a sudden we saw all these people coming, with no clothes on, bird cage and whatnot. See, San Francisco was burning" (Schwerin 1981:5). Naked San Franciscans fleeing the city with their birdcages was not likely a common sight, but it does suggest the significance of such goods.

MODELING PARLORS: DECORATIVE AESTHETICS AND PULLMAN CARS

Victorian aesthetics were dynamic and eclectic, yet irresolute parlor-makers did not want for public spaces modeling appropriate decorative codes. Katherine Grier (1988:23) argues that dominant parlor aesthetics found their most influential expression in commercial spaces such as hotels, steamboats, and railroad cars that modeled the arrangement of goods in private household parlors. Between about 1830 and 1880, consumers could mull over and assess idealized parlors in public commercial spaces (e.g., hotels), exhibition models (e.g., the 1876 Centennial Exhibition), and department store displays. A string of exhibitions in Europe and the United States provided one of the most significant catalysts for elite Victorian decorative codes. After the Paris Exhibition of 1878 (Williams 1982), for instance, West Oakland's stunning McDermott estate added exhibition goods to a high-style Victorian interior (Figure 4.6). The 10 August 1878 *Oakland Times* reported that

The rooms are beautifully frescoed in oil colors, and have elegant French furniture. The windows all have elegant silk hangings with rich curtains to match. In the parlor may be seen a Watteau painting of great value . . . [and] bric a brac from the Paris Exposition. . . . In another room a pair of screens, Chinese work, embroidered on white silk . . . birds, nearly a hundred in number are represented flying about and at rest among flowers [cited in Olmsted and Olmsted 1994:126-127].

For those consumers who could not venture to Paris, Wannamaker's department store included 44 furnished period rooms designed to "enable architects and homemakers to study and select proper furniture and home adornments, and to enable them to individualize their homes from the mere commercial furnishing way" (Saisselin 1984:47). Perhaps the most interesting difference between these public and domestic parlors was that the former rarely included much bric-a-brac and almost never integrated photographs (Grier 1988:38). This suggests that many ideologues understood bric-a-brac to be a personal expression distinct from the dominant codes set out to regulate, for instance, furniture selection or carpet decoration in public spaces and household parlors alike (Figure 4.7). Some ideologues aspired to eliminate bric-a-brac altogether because of its eclecticism, but most model spaces apparently steered clear of this personalized dimension of household decorative ideology.

Railroad cars numbered among public parlor spaces in which many Americans experienced ideal parlor schemes. Many West Oaklanders worked for the railroads, so they likely worked and traveled in elaborately decorated Pullman railroad cars. Luxurious railroad cars became quite common by the 1850s, providing well-appointed men's and women's parlors as well as sleeping quarters that were adorned with the most stylish window curtains, paintings, upholstered chairs and benches, woodwork, and carpets (Grier 1988:47). George Pullman's Pullman Palace Car Company was founded in 1867, and Pullman and his fleet of well-appointed cars became symbols of American luxury, affluence, and monopolism. In 1897 English traveler George Steevens wrote that the American "sleeping car is a miracle of luxury. All the wood is mahogany—or looks like it—and all the cushions are velvet. It looks as rich and solid as the British dining-room of the old school" (1897:258). Steevens rhapsodized that some trains had dining cars with "tables and comfortable seats ranged down it" at which "you are well served, well fed, and not heavily charged" (1897:259). Pullman cars also had "a drawing-room car with easy-chairs" and "the observation car," providing a traveler a model Victorian household on the



Figure 4.6. The front parlor: an affluent Victorian public space. In the late 19th century, West Oakland's own McDermott house provided a clear model for the exoticized and affluent Victorian parlor. Described as a "front parlor," this room was likely the household's public social space, and it contained choice examples of most of the standard parlor goods. The room had, among other features, oil paintings, a grand piano, silk drapes, Chinese silk screens, and one quite prominent figurine of an eagle or bird of prey standing watch over the room. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)



Figure 4.7. The rear parlor: a more familiar space. The McDermott House's rear parlor contained numerous references to domesticity and family in the form of photographs, craft work, well-behaved dolls, flowers, and a bookcase from which an appropriately genteel patriarch might read to his family around the fire. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

rails (Steevens 1897:260). In the early 1890s, Pullman suggested that the introduction of luxurious material culture to lowly rail cars was intended to have the same “civilizing” effect as domestic parlors: “Take the roughest man, a man whose lines have always brought him into coarsest and poorest surroundings, and the effect upon his bearings is immediate. The more artistic and refined the mere external surroundings, in other words, the better and more refined the man” (Grier 1988:61).

Any well-appointed Victorian home had servants, and Pullman cars had a universally African American service staff that included many West Oakland residents. The cars had lavish material outfitting and were graced by efficient and cultivated African American service, but African American laborers faced many of the same daily personal and social indignations people of color faced throughout the country. Porters received good pay in comparison to most working-class labor, but the position consumed long hours, the work was difficult, and porters were subjected to standard anti-black racism (Spires 1994:207). For instance, George Steevens was loathe to share his passage with class “inferiors,” but he was willing to accept some modest amount of working-class interaction in the dining car: “At the passengers’ table they eat quite correctly—except, of course, the blacks; it would be going too far to admit them” (1897:263).

DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS OF SOCIAL ASPIRATION

Two Fifth Street households were headed by Central Pacific Railroad porters who certainly would have been well-acquainted with the decor of Pullman parlors. Between 1877 and 1882 porter Abraham Holland lived at 662 Fifth Street with widow Lucinda Tilghman, two of her children, and an African American domestic who, like Holland, was also boarding with the Tilghmans (Privy 900). Born about 1840 in Pennsylvania, Holland had served as a porter for the Central Pacific Railroad since at least 1874. Documentary evidence paints a

DOMESTICITY IN THE PARLOR

The material factors that made Victorian parlors and bric-a-brac consumption are relatively clear: by the mid-19th century, cheap mass-produced furnishings had flooded the market, and an ever-expanding and newly moneyed “middle class” confirmed its new affluence by purchasing such goods. The social factors that made parlor-making possible or desirable, though, are more complicated than the objective economics that permitted factory growth, market expansion, and increasing disposable incomes. Fundamentally, parlor-makers’ consumption negotiated a basic tension between material affluence and social conservatism. Consumers were torn between, on one hand, an often-powerful desire to celebrate expanding American affluence and, on the other, a somewhat conservative and contradictory desire for a stable social order and domestic value code (cf. Grier 1988:2). Gentility and domesticity were a pair of ill-fitting ideologies: the former implied a household’s awareness of worldly high culture, affluence, and Victorian style, yet the latter evoked deep-seated familial ideology and the home as the fount of conservative values. In the face of such contradictions, objects were intended to show that a consumer could be both affluent and morally disciplined, both genteel and domestic.

The discrepancies in such ideology yielded predictably contradictory behaviors. Henry Ward Beecher, for instance, cautioned readers in 1853 that riches and goods were not the fount of satisfaction, a common lament of observers who were concerned that an embrace of materialism necessarily entailed a rejection of moral discipline and spirituality. Beecher, however, was loathe to admit that his own store debts were so high during the 1850s that he was compelled to go on the lecture circuit and preach frugality to settle the earthly damages of his own consumer hedonism (Horowitz 1985:11). Underneath the veneer of conservative moralism, many Americans like Beecher nurtured an apparently inconsistent material desire that complicated their puritanical rhetoric.

convincing picture of Holland as aspiring African American gentility. Holland apparently was part of the African American managed Sweet Vengeance Mine that was active in Brown Valley between 1848 and 1854. The operation persisted throughout the Gold Rush period and survived a host of white claim-jumpers to make some genuine claim to profitability: a local newspaper reported that in one week of April 1852 the mine produced "rich dirt, we have taken \$1200," and less than a month later it yielded another \$1142 in a good week. The miners reportedly sent a significant share of these profits South to purchase the freedom of enslaved relatives.

Like many African Americans in the West, Holland may have been more devoted to personal material advance than the social climbing that typified the African American elite in the East. Genteel African American circles in the East were highly structured hierarchies defined by factors such as ancestry, rigid behavioral codes, education, and skin color. In the West, family heritage counted for little because no family could make a claim to long-term community status; likewise, Eastern color lines had far less consequence in the West (Gatewood 1993:138). East Coast African American newspapers devoted extensive attention to socializing among the "upper tens," but West Coast papers spent little ink on such matters. Instead, these West Coast African American newspapers focused more on individual initiative and personal wealth, which are stereotypical Western values. Willard Gatewood (1993:138) suggests that African Americans in cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle were generally more firmly committed to the notion of a self-made man and class mobility than Easterners.

Nevertheless, there still remained quite aristocratic sentiments among African Americans in the West, and Holland may well have entertained these. At the end of the Civil War, California was among the 16 states with African American Masonic lodges, and by 1874 Holland had become a Mason. The Masons were among the most class-conscious, well-educated, and elitist of African American fraternal organizations, but San Francisco's African American community was so small that class lines were much more fluid than in the East (Gatewood 1993:131, 212). Holland eventually ascended to the position of local Grand Master in 1878-1880, and he added to his Masonic membership a standard inventory of genteel African American social activities. In 1886, for instance, he was the president of Oakland's Literary and Aid Society. This likely was a typical African American "culture club" whose educational and social missions ranged from reading classical literature to promoting Republican candidates (Gatewood 1993:214). Literary societies were by far the most common African American clubs, and most were directed by local elite. By 1891 Holland also was serving as director of the Colored Colonization Society of Fresno County, but the specific function of this organization is unclear. Holland also sent a son to college, which would have been routine among East Coast African American elite.

The material assemblage at 662 Fifth Street does not suggest the ostentatious materialism commonly associated with genteel Victorians. Abraham Holland certainly was a prominent figure in his community, and Lucinda Tilghman was financially comfortable if not wealthy, but their early 1880s privy contains a somewhat restrained genteel assemblage. The privy does not contain any bric-a-brac with the exception of two flowerpots. The household's genteel ambitions are suggested by porcelain and white-bodied ceramics that were the height of 1870s table styles, as well as a host of grooming objects (e.g., combs, toothbrushes, and hair-tonic bottles), a French porcelain brush holder, and several pieces of jewelry. At least 57 glass chimney lamps were represented in the assemblage, as well as two porcelain candlesticks, a very high number of lighting artifacts compared to other West Oakland assemblages. The household had stylish material culture, but unlike the vastly more eclectic Mann privy at 654 Fifth Street, the Tilghman/Holland assemblage does not have a preponderance of objects that are stylistically mismatched.

Even the ceramics that were not purchased as parts of matching sets were the same color and basic shapes, so they could easily have been used together. The Mann privy would have presented a more eclectic appearance in colors, motifs, and shapes and likely contained more “clutter” of typical parlor goods.

Pullman Palace Car Company porter James William Carter and his wife Nellie lived nearby at 668 Fifth Street (Well 953). Between 1889 and 1896, the household filled a 14-foot deep redwood-lined feature that likely was a well. The feature contained men’s, women’s, and children’s shoes, suggesting that a range of ages was included in the household. Like the Tilghman/Holland assemblage deposited roughly a decade earlier, the Carter assemblage does not reflect particularly pretentious parlor materialism. The Carter assemblage contains a ceramic assemblage dominated by relatively inexpensive white-bodied earthenware, a wide variety of decorated glass table vessels, and 50 saucers that include examples of almost every conceivable decorative type. While the assemblage included six redware flowerpots, several vases, and a clock, it did not include any figurines. Like the Tilghman/Holland household, the Carter household apparently favored a somewhat spare and coordinated interior.



Figure 4.8. Matching bud vases. These bud vases were found in the abandoned well at 1774 Atlantic Street, a household occupied by African American and Irish railroad workers (Well 7511).

Southern Pacific Railroad employees at 1774 Atlantic Street apparently had a considerably more eclectic and exoticized interior than that favored by the two porters’ households on Fifth Street. The Atlantic Street residence was home to several African American families and one Irish immigrant’s household who lived in the structure over short successive periods, so the assemblage cannot be reliably attributed to a specific household (Well 7511). The African American men living in the home were all Pullman porters, and the Irish family was headed by a Southern Pacific laborer and a laundress. Unlike the more restrained Fifth Street assemblages, the early to mid-1890s Atlantic Street assemblage includes a wide range of decorative goods. The assemblage contains five vases, including two 4-inch matching blue glass bud vases (Figure 4.8), a lotus motif stoneware dish, and two porcelain figurines, one of a colonial figure and the other apparently a jester.

This Atlantic Street assemblage’s visible household aesthetic may reflect one of many different material forms taken by class aspiration. Archaeologists tend to assume that class achievement takes the form of costly material assemblages, sidestepping the significant social dimensions of class and communal status. Class status was often secured through social relationships, such as fraternal memberships or church standing, and in Eastern and Midwestern African American circles such affiliations typically carried more status than wealth or materialism. Abraham Holland’s entrepreneurialism, Masonic membership, and social position in community culture societies strongly suggest aspirations to social mobility and some communal status. The Atlantic Street residents likely had similar ambitions, but they may have chosen to express those aspirations more visibly in objects than social networks. Willard Gatewood (1993:138) suggests that West Coast African Americans were more individualistic and materially ambitious than their peers in the Midwest or East, so African American status in cities like San Francisco was less vested in social networks and genteel performance than wealth. The Atlantic Street residents

may reflect this more visible West Coast material aesthetic, which certainly was not unique to African Americans. The Atlantic Street residents were marginalized by both racism and economic marginalization, like many of their West Oakland neighbors; yet subordinated consumers like these households sometimes purchased costly or distinctively showy material goods to distance themselves from the material realities and social stigmatization of penury. The son of a West Oakland grocery store owner pointed out that his father would “always have black people who liked goods things. . . . Everybody has priorities. You’d see poor Mexican people come in here, and they’d buy a good bottle of Spanish brandy. Everybody wants something they want once-in-a-while” (Mousalimas 1980:18). This marketer’s son recognized that economic determinism often does not explain consumer behavior, and he at least alluded to the often unspoken assumption that poverty and racial stigmatization go hand-in-hand. Bric-a-brac actually provides a relatively imprecise mechanism to evaluate class standing, but its presence often provides a sensitive insight into class aspirations. This visible material aesthetic does not reveal any self-evident ethnic “pattern,” but it is significant that African Americans entertained these ambitions at all. Certainly many African Americans went West precisely because they believed they might escape strenuous everyday racism and stand an improved chance of securing their own share of American affluence. What may be most critical about these African American bric-a-brac assemblages is not that they necessarily stand out from the remainder of the community but that they instead look quite similar. Ultimately these African American consumers were still subject to persistent and dehumanizing racism, but in the face of racism they used a range of social networks and material assemblages to secure some share of American affluence that was supposedly denied to them by blackness (see also Chapter 10).

RELIGION AND DOMESTICITY IN THE VICTORIAN PARLOR

In the mid-1880s, Daniel and Adelaide Robinson apparently secured a sewer connection for their home at 1814 Atlantic Street and began to gradually fill their privy with discards including glass tableware, tea or coffee equipage, and two figurines (Privy 6325). The Robinsons’ roughly 1,700-square-foot home included a parlor and dining room that suggest some pretensions to gentility, and the Nova Scotia-born Daniel Robinson eventually ascended from a carpenter to foreman with the Central Pacific Railroad. One of the Robinsons’ figurines was a 2-3/4 inch glazed porcelain figurine of a praying character now missing its feet and head (Figure 4.9). The figure has its hands clasped to its chest in prayer and is wearing a skirt tied off at the waist, a pious Victorian curio typical of the broadly religious imagery reproduced in bric-a-brac. A vast range of Protestant or ambiguously religious bric-a-brac was marketed to Victorians, and the moral discourses surrounding household material culture were saturated with various tenors of spirituality, but this figurine is the sole evidence of religious-themed bric-a-brac in the West Oakland assemblages.

Objects’ spiritual connotations figured prominently in many material discourses, reflecting the commonplace Victorian conjecture that a materialistic (and increasingly non-Protestant) society lacked a spiritual center. Between about 1840 and 1900, a host of ideologues championed an ostensibly unchallenged and universal Bible-based religion that Colleen McDannell calls “domestic Protestantism” (1992:172-173). These thinkers de-emphasized denominational divides and focused on the home as the social and material framework for Christian morals. Gothic Revival architects, for instance, emphasized the structural and disciplinary parallels between church and home design (McDannell 1992:162). Gothic Revival designers believed that the

home itself could shape Christian morals even if its inhabitants did not recognize the architecture's influence. A vast range of mass-produced Christian material culture could be purchased to adorn pious Victorian homes, including paperweight crosses, ceramics with molded or printed religious scenes, and a variety of figurines of Biblical characters. Such material culture was intended to fortify deteriorating religious authority over the second half of the 19th century, and that erosion of church domination certainly had a direct relationship to the consumer culture that was simultaneously emerging (Curtis 1991). Consumer culture destabilized organized religion in the late-19th century, when many Americans began to see their individual (if not national) hopes invested in the material world more than the church. T.J. Jackson Lears (1983:6) argues that in an increasingly complex world that fostered feelings of "unreality," Americans became absorbed in the immediate pleasures offered by consumer space and disillusioned by the deferred gratification promised by religion. In many quarters, the influence of the church deteriorated as Americans became disenchanted by the moral and personal self-discipline that religion demanded.

The paucity of self-evident religious objects in West Oakland is not necessarily a sign of eroded spirituality, rather, it may reflect a typical turn-of-the-century vision of a broadly defined spirituality that was not focused on conventional church discipline. In a community that included many different ethnic collectives, churches remained among West Oakland's most important vehicles of class and ethnic identity. Nevertheless, some Oakland churches apparently followed the common trend to broaden their service to the community and become vehicles for community as well as individual morality. Several area churches, for instance, ran schools, and most orchestrated a full calendar of events like bingo, bake sales, clubs, and bazaars with varying degrees of charity and service involved (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994:129; Hattersley-Drayton 1997:196). In the face of a transforming church, many moralists fashioned a broadly based spirituality that loosened churches' traditional rigorous discipline. Charles Richmond Henderson, for instance, was a Baptist clergyman who served as both the university clergyman and sociology professor at the University of Chicago after 1892 (Malone 1932:524). Henderson attacked pretentious materialism, noting that to "the student of history and economics the insulting excuses and praises of extravagance and barbarian ostentation are as exasperating as the spectacle itself is revolting when placed in contrast with the misery which is near it" (1897:259). In this vision, the morality of genteel Americans—indeed, their spiritual well-being—was itself blemished by their willing evasion of material inequality. This notion of morality cast all social and material practice as spiritually significant, extended the purview of faith beyond narrowly defined church activities, and threatened to erode the divisions between society's elite and disenfranchised.

The ideological definition of women as nurturers and guardians of family morality was among the most prominent themes in 19th-century material discourses. New England moralists, for instance, were quite influential in championing the notion that the home was a familial, Christian space appropriately controlled by women (e.g., Beecher and Stowe 1869, 1873). The dilemma of constructing home as a separate feminine sphere after the mid-19th century was



Figure 4.9. A pious figurine. The household of Daniel and Adelaide Robinson discarded this loosely religious-themed figurine into their 1814 Atlantic Street privy in the mid-1880s (Privy 6325). The porcelain figure suggests its owners' pious morality, but West Oakland households did not discard any examples of mass-produced Christian decorative goods.

that women were securing new and significant powers as household consumers in public space; to undermine that power, many patriarchal ideologues aspired to limit women's' roles to parenting, spousal support, and household labor. Consequently, consumer space offered women the opportunity to instill sound morality by appropriately furnishing their homes; however, that same consumer space offered up a host of inappropriate if not degenerate goods, as well as the alluring enticement of unbridled material desire (cf. McDannell 1992:172-173).

A chorus of moralists stubbornly aspired to convince women to willingly remove themselves from consumer space. For instance, *The Household* noted in 1887 that

Mothers . . . will do your family and the world in general much more good by saving your strength and precious time for the improvement of your higher faculties, than by using them to furnish your table with fancy dishes and ornament your house with fancy work. . . . If we realize the true insignificance of worldly things compared with spiritual, it will probably not be spent in pursuit of worldly pleasure [1887:23].

Promoting flight from consumer space was at best naively romantic. Household authors generally sounded exaggerated warnings of the dangers posed by commodities, but popular writers typically hyperbolize concrete dilemmas to accentuate their threat. Americans have never been warm to the idea of utterly forsaking consumption, but eloquent writers recurrently summon forth long-standing anxieties about the social, personal, and spiritual effects of materialism (e.g., Ewen 1988; Frazier 1957; Packard 1957; Patten 1907; Thoreau 1854; Veblen 1899).

Many conservative ideologues believed that familial morality could be fostered by women who manufactured their own household decorative goods. Mary Elizabeth Sherwood (1881:120), for instance, advocated that women purchase a few modest commodities and place them alongside homemade craft goods. This was a common counsel by thinkers who viewed commercial space and home life as separate realms and were troubled by the use of mass-produced goods to symbolize domestic values (cf. Grier 1988:8). Sherwood, for instance, noted that "The poorest woman can now with very little money make a pretty room. . . . Good engravings, a little

SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS BRIC-A-BRAC

West Oakland families may well have seen their homes as spiritual spaces, despite the paucity of religious objects. As with all bric-a-brac, curation itself likely was quite rigorous, so few of these goods were actually discarded. It also is likely that some households had religious prints or objects such as Bibles that do not appear in archaeological assemblages. Robert and Helen Lynd (1929:100), for instance, noted that pictures were found in most 1920s working-class homes in Middletown. A household's prints could have popular motifs, be hand-drawn by a family member, or, "if the family is of a religious bent, [include] colored mottoes: 'What will you be doing when Jesus comes?' or 'Prepare to meet thy God.'" Jewelry crosses, rosaries, and religious symbols were recovered in West Oakland (see sidebar Chapter 6 "Crosses and Witch Balls"), but

archaeological material culture suggests that Oakland's residents expressed conventional religion in social and material forms other than household decorative goods. Excavations in comparable turn-of-the-century sites reflect a similar paucity of mass-produced religious bric-a-brac. For instance, archaeology in middle- and working-class Los Angeles households included no explicit religious motifs in mass-produced decorative goods (Costello et al. 1998; cf., Gums 1998; Mullins 1999; M. Praetzellis and A. Praetzellis 1990, 1992b). Chinese sites in the region include objects with mythical symbolism (e.g., Greenwood 1996:123-124), and secular artifacts certainly could have been invested with mythical or spiritual significance of some sort, but the flood of mass-produced religious trinkets available to Victorian consumers apparently did not find its way into West Oakland's refuse.

cretonne, some knick-knacks made by herself, a few grasses, a growing plant, and an open fire are all that are needed to make a room pleasant and refined." Such rooms fashioned from household handiwork were typically understood as the appropriate spaces for feminine expression. In 1898 Margaret Sangster argued that a home was fundamentally feminine because women had intensely emotional feelings for objects:

Does a man live who understands how a woman clings to her "things," her furniture, her chairs and tables, her carpets and her curtains? . . . A woman knows how fond she grows of the old desk where she writes her letters, of the rocking-chair in which she sang lullabys to her babies, of the old clock which has ticked away the happy hours of all her life. Inanimate things, but so interwoven with the very woof of our emotions and very fibre of our hearts, that they seem as if endowed with sense and emotion [1898:304].

In contrast, George Santayana's novel *The Last Puritan* described such a space in a Newport, Rhode Island, household from the disparaging perspective of a patriarchal Boston Puritan:

The room was littered with little sofas, little armchairs, little tables, with plants flowering in porcelain jars, and flowers flaunting in cut-glass bowls, photographs in silver frames, work baskets, cushions, footstools, books and magazines, while the walls were a mosaic of trivial decorations (not the work of deserving artists like those in his own house), but etageres with knick-knacks and bric-a-brac, feeble watercolours, sentimental engravings, and slanting mirrors in showy frames [1936:34].

In contrast to Margaret Sangster, Santayana's character favored a "masculine" space expressed in less emotional works of art (Saisselin 1984:65-66).

The evidence for such idealized feminine parlors in West Oakland is, at best, very scarce. Some objects fashioned from fabric or otherwise fragile mediums would not survive archaeologically, but the West Oakland assemblages contain no clear evidence of homemade craft objects. Some mass-produced commodities in the assemblages do suggest a measure of creativity beyond simply arranging store-bought goods. For instance, among the material goods Sherwood and like-minded thinkers recommended were plants and flowers. It is infeasible to attribute all the material evidence of plants in the West Oakland assemblages to domesticated female homemakers, but the sites do contain numerous flowerpots and wall vases that indicate the presence of houseplants and flowers. The sites also contain a handful of picture frames that likely held family photographs. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to indicate that these householders were busily fashioning a stereotypical moral space from their own craft goods, and it is not clear how many consumers anywhere embraced such counsel. Indeed, Sherwood herself was unable to take her own advice, and her ostentatious lifestyle produced a terrible debt by 1890 (James, James, and Boyer 1971, 3:284-285). She was compelled to sell the stunning furnishings in her Manhattan home and retreat to a hotel while her husband was in Europe, and upon his return John Sherwood suffered a swift psychological decline and died in 1895.

Conservative domestic ideology never disappeared, but it also was never universally embraced. In 1910, for instance, Bertha June Richardson's volume *The Woman Who Spends* proclaimed that "the time has come when women feel the need of study and training in the economics of consumption, otherwise known as the spending of money. . . . Today it is the woman who spends, and upon her rests the responsibility for the standards that govern the spending for the home and community" (1910:21-22). This was a vision of women's position in public consumer space as empowering, not one of hysterical shoppers overcome by marketplace fervor.

"REAL" BRIC-A-BRAC



This ginger jar, found at the bottom of Annie Brady's abandoned well at 812 Castro Street, may have been a decorative item (Well 968).

The consumption of "real" exotic goods (or quality craft objects like the Atlantic Street lotus dish) was sometimes considered an important antidote to the crudely executed flood of mass-produced goods. In 1898, for example, *The House Beautiful* noted, "if a poor man's taste demands a statuette, he is unable to purchase one of Rodin's marbles, and so attempts to satisfy his want by securing a [mass-produced] 'Rodgers group.' It would have been far better, for example, for him to have used an empty ginger jar for decoration" (*The House Beautiful* 1898:61-62). This comment augured the tone of many early-20th-century critics of mass-produced commodities; in this instance, *The House Beautiful's* editors insinuated that the Chinese vessel was more "artistic" because the Chinese craft producer was not divorced from the object in the way mass-produced goods were detached from living craftspeople. The Brady household at 812 Castro Street may well have taken *The House Beautiful's* advice. Terrence and Annie Brady had a four-

room house that included a formal parlor; the "Japanese cabinet," 23 "pictures" (probably chromolithographs), and 18 vases in Annie's 1917 probate suggest the household still contained prototypical parlor furnishings long after parlors had become passé. The family's circa 1889-1902 assemblage did not include any figurines, but it did include a Chinese ginger jar like that recommended by *The House Beautiful*. For most consumers, "the Orient" was a popular concept that evoked splendor, art, wisdom, despotism, and sensuality—concepts whose meaning was based more upon their tacit contrast to rational Western society than genuine understanding of the Far East (Said 1978). When Americans purchased Asian material goods they were consuming an idea about the contrast of East and West that was suitable for display in a genteel parlor where rational people could make sense of the Orient. Like all bric-a-brac, Asian material culture typically ends up saying vastly more about its consumers than the subjects it abstractly caricatures.

CONCLUSION

In the 1880s Jacob Riis trekked through New York City documenting Gotham's "other half," the impoverished masses of immigrants, people of color, and various other Americans forcefully excluded from affluence. Riis' subsequent account, *How the Other Half Lives*, had a spectacular impact on the once-untroubled Gilded Age elite who consciously tolerated—if not condoned—profound poverty and marginalization in many places like New York. Yet, like many Victorians, even the morally indignant Riis was unable to subdue his own cultural xenophobia and racism and appreciate the complex aspirations that lurked beneath the surface of poverty. For instance, Riis seemed perplexed over why the "typical" African American

looks at the sunny side of life and enjoys it. . . . His home surroundings, except when he is utterly depraved, reflect his blithesome temper. The poorest negro's room in New York is bright with gaily-colored prints of his beloved "Abe Linkum," General Grant, President Garfield, Mrs. Cleveland, and other national celebrities, and cheery with flowers and singing birds. In the art of putting his best foot foremost, of disguising his poverty by making a little go a long way, our negro has no equal. When a fair share of prosperity is his, he knows how to make life and home very pleasant to those about him. Pianos and parlor furniture abound in the uptown homes of colored tenants and give them a very prosperous air. But even where the wolf howls at the door, he makes a bold and gorgeous front. The amount of "style" displayed on fine Sundays on Sixth and Seventh Avenues by colored holiday-makers would turn a pessimist black with wrath [1890:118].

Riis reduced African American materialism to a contrived "front," implying that even genteel objects like chromolithographs and parlor furniture failed to conceal the essential realities of poverty and racial identity. The well-heeled Riis knew many of New York's most prominent Progressive citizens, so he was certainly well aware of the symbolism of Victorian material goods, but he was unable to fathom what such objects meant outside utterly genteel spaces. Riis expressed a paternalistic amusement at African American materialism and social ambition, even though he conceded that the African American was "loyal to the backbone, proud of being an American and of his new-found citizenship" (1890:118). Like many of his social reformer contemporaries, Riis was convinced that essential racial and class "traits" were substantial if not unyielding, and he determined that only transformations in objective housing conditions would create a disciplined working class. Riis was unable to comprehend that Victorian goods were genuinely significant to this "other half," much less that they could mean many things to various citizens. Nevertheless, such goods were often one of the mechanisms marginalized consumers used to secure some small but significant foothold into consumer abundance.

Like many subsequent commentators, Riis apparently could not fathom how consumers might project personally significant symbolism onto apparently inconsequential things. He seemed unable to even wonder why marginalized consumers would seek out goods that were intended for vastly more lavish and ceremonial contexts than those in which they were eventually consumed. Thinkers like Thorstein Veblen who did directly confront these questions were prone to reduce it to "emulation" of the powerful by the powerless. Yet what bric-a-brac suggests is that emulation is more complex than the instrumental copying of elite behavior with the assumption that such parroting will secure elite privilege. It is unlikely that many consumers were sufficiently naive to believe that their consumption of ceramic figurines or Victorian table settings would transform them into robber barons. Victorian consumption instead makes a

very powerful statement about the profound conviction many Americans have had in affluence, even when they were marginalized by that very society because of classism, patriarchy, racism, xenophobia, regional prejudices, and a host of other ideologies that always ensured that opportunity was not readily available to all Americans. Marxians have often reduced this apparent paradox to commodity fetishism, concluding that consumption is simply the masses' way of unwittingly participating in their own oppression. There is indeed a genuine measure of oppression that is reproduced by consumption and its reproduction of wage labor. Yet it might just as well be argued that when consumers transform the meaning of mass-produced goods they are using those goods as vehicles of social critique as much as self-inflicted oppression.

The reality, of course, lies somewhere in between. For instance, just as the Linden Street redware Lincoln figure proclaims its Irish-American consumers' ambitions to citizenship, it also reproduces an anti-black historical vision and risks ignoring the prejudices inflicted on Irish arrivals. These contradictions were already in public space, but objects like this figurine served to evoke the complexities of topics like riches, racism, and American identity that were difficult to otherwise articulate. For those scholars who hope objects will provide a clear reflection of 19th-century society's most pressing social dilemmas, bric-a-brac instead provides a fragmentary, selective, and distorted reflection: rather than deliver a resounding symbolic resolution of profound social quandaries, bric-a-brac in most cases evoked generally inchoate and pleasant associations. Like most popular culture, bric-a-brac was a self-possessed reflection of American society that attempted to present back to consumers their deeply held preconceptions of themselves and others. While these West Oakland objects clearly could be understood to mean a wide range of things, they could not mean "anything": for instance, there was an ambiguous but still restricted scope of symbolism that might convincingly be attached to Abraham Lincoln around 1880. The challenge is to identify what specific ambitions various consumers were most likely to connect to such symbols.

Bric-a-brac was, on one hand, an imaginative vehicle of personal and social ambition; yet, on the other hand, none of these desires were simply hatched from consumers' imaginations, disconnected from dominant social structure. Bric-a-brac's material forms were not provided by producers who were intent upon fomenting revolution through the sale of household curios. Instead, householders selected goods that symbolically "situated" the consumer within the world by appearing to secure the opportunities of consumer culture without threatening the social and ideological foundations upon which it stood. Because there was such a reasonably wide range of experiences of such ambition and ideology, it is not surprising that the meanings of household material culture would be so rich and complex.



OUTSIDE THE MARKETPLACE: ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES AND SELF-RELIANCE, MAKING IT AND MAKING DO

MARY PRAETZELLIS AND ADRIAN PRAETZELLIS

West Oaklanders did not purchase everything they ate or used. Archaeology shows that they hunted, fished, and scavenged the local bay and marshes; gathered wild fruit and vegetables in season; maintained backyard gardens and livestock; canned food; brewed wine; and fashioned and refashioned clothing, toys, and household objects. For some middle-class households, these activities constituted gender-appropriate recreation; for many poorer families, they probably spanned the gap between available income and current needs; while for many marginal households these activities would have been the only means of acquiring some of life's necessities. Oaklanders also adapted their residences over the years to accommodate growing or shrinking families, to house boarders and lodgers, to support economic ventures, to park vehicles and equipment, and to create new living spaces for rent. New arrivals to Oakland also refashioned their homes in culturally appropriate ways to ease their transition.

This chapter uses archaeological, architectural, documentary, and oral-history datasets to traverse this complex realm, to view where individual householders made decisions outside of the direct-market–consumer network. Our sources span faunal remains, including bones, seeds, and shells; sewing, hunting, and gardening artifacts; artifacts that have been repaired, refashioned, reused, and recycled or discarded; literature and reminiscences that date from the 1890s through the 1940s; and documentary data collected by a variety of government and private agencies (such as Sanborn insurance maps) through the decades. Short essays cover the adaptation of buildings in West Oakland by Greek Americans, household-canning practices, insights from archaeologically recovered seeds, and the development of local sewage-disposal practices. The size of the archaeological database has made for some unwieldy tables in this chapter; we have tried to help the reader navigate through them by providing continuation references where necessary.

GAME AND FISH FROM THE OAKLAND ESTUARY

An early view of West Oakland (Figure 5.1) reveals the neighborhood's large wooded lots and footpaths running through orchards—a perfect setting for enterprising urban homesteaders, who could grow their own as well as glean from the community. At the same time, it was only a short walk to the nearby estuary and open fields, where both staple meats and specialty foods could be acquired.

Hunting has been a contested domain of the high and low born for hundreds of years. In England, kings established hunting preserves and royal lodges where they romped in great



Figure 5.1. The early semi-rural neighborhood. This 1857 U.S. Coast Survey map shows the early neighborhood, with its large tree-filled lots and empty parcels, perfect for roadside gleanings—all just a short walk to the estuary’s shellfish, fish, and waterfowl. Later, families continued to use their smaller home lots and the available open space for grazing cows, raising chickens, and harvesting wild foods—both for sustenance and culinary variety. (Courtesy of Map Room, Doe Library, University of California at Berkeley)

splendor and ceremony with their peers both figurative and literal. Foraging for wild game by commoners (aka, folk hunting)—generally defined as poaching—existed alongside this aristocratic hunting. These practices quickly became established in the New World, where they continue to the present (Yentsch 1994:247-255). In 19th-century California, the hereditary aristocracy was replaced by land-rich ranchers, who established hunting clubs where wealthy, powerful politicians and businessmen could enjoy the chase in season, while enhancing their future prospects through good contacts. Deer and duck were much sought-after game. Wealthy residents from the San Francisco Bay Area traveled to hunting clubs in places such as Sonoma County for their rustic retreats (Figure 5.2), while the less affluent probably took their sport closer to home in Oakland’s rich marshes.

Just under half of the Cypress Project features contained ammunition or firearms. These artifacts did not cluster in any one block or feature; the majority of features had only one cartridge or shell casing. The relatively affluent Morgan/Mullen household (Privy 3346) had the most ammunition: 3 .38-caliber cartridge casings with lead bullets, 6 .50-caliber rimfire cartridges, and 19 .38-rimfire cartridges. Remains of four game birds—two large ducks, a marsh/dabbling duck, and a merganser—were further possible evidence of hunting, although they would have been recovered with a shotgun not a rifle. Inexplicably, a sheep tibia with a bullet hole and a

sheep rib with a pellet mark also indicate the use of ammunition. Bartlett Morgan worked as a druggist and served as a county supervisor, while Oren Mullen, a relative, was the deputy county clerk. Morgan's well-attended funeral included prominent politicians and businessmen; he would have qualified for membership in a hunting club. Whether the sheep bones represent his hunting or his curing remains unknown.

The Railroad Exchange Hotel on Block 29 was very near to the bay. The 141 pieces of size 6 leadshot, one gun part, and 19 other shell fragments of various calibers may relate to the local hunting activities of its residents or proprietors (Well 4600). The hotel served game birds on occasion. The lead shot, however, may also have been used as weights for ladies' hems or draperies.

Elsewhere, 27 bullets in a cloth bag were disposed of by tenants on Block 2 (Privy 1301), 13 pieces of ammunition were associated with tenants on Block 3 (Well 1700), and 17 .12-gauge shotgun shells, 1 .38-caliber center-fire shell, and 1 primer cap were found in the refuse of New York carpenter William Vogt on Block 6 (Privy 4236+). The hammer mechanism from a gun was excavated from a feature on Block 31 (Pit 2524). The only identifiable firearm found in the project area probably once belonged to Samuel P. Tate, a farmer from Virginia who had served as a Captain in the Missouri home militia during the Civil War. His loaded .32-caliber revolver found in a privy on Block 6 (Privy 3828) was probably a family heirloom (Figure 5.3).

Deer or elk remains showed up in eight households, two of which were occupied by African Americans who had fled the South prior to the Civil War (Table 5.1). Many African-born slaves were proficient hunters and passed this skill on to their descendants; hunting, fishing, and gathering provided a significant portion of the plantation diet (Yentsch 1994:250). We cannot know whether these Oakland families continued this hunting tradition or purchased their game from a butcher supplied by market hunters, but a preference for wild game does appear likely.



Figure 5.2. Gentleman hunters. From the 1870s until the present, northern California ranchers used the excellent hunting opportunities on their large properties to attract tourists, generate income, and control pests. George Matthews established the Elk Creek Gun Club in Sonoma County in the 1880s; members eventually included a judge, an attorney, and the district attorney and county assessor of Marin County, among other influential San Francisco Bay Area residents. A photo opportunity with one's prize provided the high point of the trip. (Photo courtesy of Betty Snyder)



Figure 5.3. A revolver from West Oakland. Archaeologists found a loaded .32-caliber revolver in the privy at 831 Myrtle Street. The only firearm found during the Cypress Project, this one probably once belonged to Samuel Tate, who served as a captain in the Missouri home militia during the Civil War (Privy 3828).

Table 5.1. Game Meat by Feature

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Number	Meat Weight	Comments
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	24	27.5 lbs.	Quail, duck, phalarope, pintail
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman/Holland household	1880	6	9 lbs.	Duck, grouse, pintail
				5	NA	Elk, ground squirrel, cottontail rabbit
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	8	7 lbs.	Quail, duck, band-tailed pigeon, rock dove
				8	NA	Mule deer, ground squirrel, cottontail rabbit
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	4	6 lbs.	Hooded merganser, duck
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit
1	Privy 993	Judell store and household	1880	2	NA	Deer, rabbit
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	2	2 lbs.	Squirrel
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	5	8 lbs.	Duck, gull
				1	2 lbs.	Cottontail rabbit
1	Privy 951	Paddock/Swain household	1878	2	5 lbs.	Quail, goose
				1	NA	Elk
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	3	5 lbs.	Quail, duck
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	1	.5 lbs.	Quail
2	Privy 1376	Newell renters	1880	5	8.5 lbs.	Quail, bay duck, Canada goose
				5	NA	Deer, elk, rabbit
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880	1	1 lb.	Dove
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	3	3.5 lbs.	Quail, duck
				1	2 lbs.	Ground squirrel
2	Privy 1321	Holland renters	1885	1	2 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
2	Privy 1358+	Cox renters	1880	10	18 lbs.	American widgeon, ring-necked duck, wood duck, band-tailed pigeon, duck
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel
2	Pit 1387	Cox renters	1880	3	2 lbs.	Quail, duck
				2	4 lbs.	Ground squirrel
2	Privy 1452+	Stewart household	1880	2	4 lbs.	Duck
				2	NA	Elk/deer, rabbit
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	1	2 lbs.	Pigeon
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit

(continued on next page)

Table 5.1. Game Meat by Feature (*continued*)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Number	Meat Weight	Comments
3	Privy 1785	Curtis family	1874	2	4 lbs.	Mallard, canvasback
				2	2 lbs.	Ground squirrel
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
3	Well 1700, II	Curtis renters	1890	2	6 lbs.	Snow goose, mallard
3	Well 1700, III	Curtis renters	1911	4	10 lbs.	Canada goose, mallard, rudy duck, American coot
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906	4	6 lbs.	Geese, canvasback
				1	2 lbs.	Ground squirrel
4	Privy 3106+	Renters	1880	1	2 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880	2	6 lbs.	Duck, goose
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	2	4 lbs.	Bay duck, duck
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	1	2 lbs.	Diving duck
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880	1	1 lb	Duck
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	10	21.5 lbs.	Quail, duck, goose, common loon, ring-necked pheasant, diving duck
				1	NA	Mule deer
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890	4	6 lbs.	Duck, dabbling duck, merganser
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	4	13 lbs.	White-fronted goose, Canada goose, snow goose, bay duck
6	Privy 4220	Broderick family	1880	1	2 lbs.	Duck
6	Privy 4239	Corbett renters	1880	7	10 lbs.	Duck, wood duck
6	Privy 4243	Corbett renters	1880	2	4 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel
6	Privy 4281	Coleman renter	1880	4	2 lbs.	Duck
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880	3	6 lbs.	Duck, loon
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
6	Privy 4236	Vogt family	1890	1	2 lbs.	Grey squirrel
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1887	2	2.5 lbs.	Duck, quail
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	1	4 lbs.	Goose
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	1	2 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	14	21 lbs.	Duck
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
				6	13.5 lbs.	Pheasant, diving duck, bufflehead/goldeneye, duck, goose

(continued on next page)

Table 5.1. Game Meat by Feature (*continued*)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Number	Meat Weight	Comments
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	4	5.5 lbs.	Quail, duck, diving duck
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit, jackrabbit
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885	2	2 lbs.	Band-tailed pigeon, bay duck
20	Privy 628-	Scoville renters	1870	2	4 lbs.	Duck
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	3	6 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
21	Well 7175	Schrock renters	1900	1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895	3	3 lbs.	Mourning dove, duck
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit
22	Pit 5200	Buhsen Hotel	1900	1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
24	Well 559+	Pullman Hotel	1905	1	2 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	3	8 lbs.	Duck, goose
27	Privy 2784+	McLaughlin rental	1880	2	6 lbs.	Duck
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	1	2 lbs.	Duck
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895	1	4 lbs.	Duck
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	1	4 lbs.	White-footed goose
				4	8 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1880	2	6 lbs.	Snow goose, goose
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
29	Well 4600, II	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1895	4	9 lbs.	Snow goose, goose, duck, diving duck
				2	4 lbs.	Jackrabbit, rabbit
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	56	83 lbs.	Goose, duck, scoter, coot, wood duck, diving duck, pheasant, quail, pigeon, sea gull, loon, cormorant, pullovers/surfbirds, sandpipers
				3	6 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel
29	Privy 4731+	Gohsen renters	1880	2	4.5 lbs.	Goose, quail
				4	9 lbs.	Deer, cottontail rabbit, rabbit
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	3	5 lbs.	Duck
				1	2 lbs.	Rabbit
37	Privy 100	Huddleson household	1880	3	6 lbs.	Jackrabbit, rabbit, ground squirrel
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	12	23 lbs.	Quail, duck, goose, bufflehead, ruddy duck, red phalarope
				2	4 lbs.	Rabbit, ground squirrel

It is clear from the archaeology that Oaklanders served rabbits and, to a lesser extent, ground squirrel, on occasion. Although rabbits by the “tens of thousands” came into the market, they were destined for French and German restaurants and well-to-do families; the “poor rarely buy them” (*SF Morning Call*, 9 April 1876:8). Oral histories document that West Oakland families commonly raised rabbits for food in the early 20th century and the practice probably stretches back well into the 19th, when wild rabbits had become scarcer and harder to capture. Recipes for rabbit and hare can be found in most every 19th-century cookbook. The Oakland Club’s *Domestic Science Monthly* went further, tying recipes to “seasonable dishes” available each month. In June 1900, for example, they recommended squirrel stew: “Fat, ground squirrels are the best and to use only the legs” (*Domestic Science Monthly*, June 1900:76).

Prior to the 1880s, market hunting of wild birds provided Californians with a significant portion of their poultry. Professional hunters took ducks, geese, and quail in great numbers, as well as swans, rails, coots, cranes, shorebirds, bitterns, grouse, wild pigeons, doves, and various passerine birds. As the chicken and turkey industry in northern California developed in the 1880s, domestic birds became increasingly available and competitive in price. By the early 20th century, the two were essentially equally priced; game birds became a luxury item for city dwellers later on, as over-hunting decreased their numbers (Simons 1980).

Duck and quail, and to a lesser extent goose, were a part of the diet of most households in the West Oakland sample, probably reserved for special occasions. Living so near the bay marshes, the residents could have hunted the birds themselves, purchased them from the butcher, or bought them directly from the hunter. Novelist Jack London noted that neighborhood boys commonly enjoyed their expeditions twice: once in the doing and once in the selling.

The earliest feature excavated for the Cypress Project is associated with the Gohsen family in the early 1870s. Charles Gohsen, a Prussian merchant, listed considerable wealth on his 1870 census—\$5,000 in real estate and \$2,000 in personal property. He lived in a large two-story house with his wife and three children, not far from the San Francisco Bay. The faunal collection from their privy (4714) is remarkable for the quantity and variety of game birds. In meat weight only beef (at 92 pounds) outnumbered wild bird (at 83 pounds), with domestic poultry at 36 pounds. Game birds included goose, duck, scoter, coot, wood duck, diving duck, pheasant, quail, pigeon, seagull, loon, cormorant, pullovers/surfbirds, and sandpipers; other non-food birds included owl, meadowlark, and blue jay, along with 1,458 bird bones that could not be identified. Gohsen may have shot these birds himself, or his wife may have made regular purchases from a local hunter. Although the Gohsen family appears to be one of the wealthier in the project area, the lack of this variety in other feature assemblages is probably due more to the Gohsens’ early tenure, prior to the decline in local hunting conditions, than to a lack of purchasing power in other households; the bay and marsh remained an easy walk or train ride and hunting was not regulated.

The Mann family lived at the eastern extreme of the project area on the corner of Grove and Fifth streets. At one time, the household had been relatively comfortable; Fredrick Mann was variously a miner, speculator, and warehouse owner, while brother Benjamin owned considerable local real-estate, an interest in a steamboat, and worked as a banker. A combination of bad investments, age, and sickness eventually exhausted the family’s fortunes. The faunal remains from their privy (900) show a preference for poultry over beef, mutton, and pork, with bones representing 110 pounds of domestic and 27.5 pounds of wild poultry, including quail, duck, phalaropes, and pintail. Purchased in the marketplace, these would have been relatively

expensive meals. The wild birds, however, could have all been hunted locally in season and the presence of chicken bones from juveniles, roosters, and an old, sick, or malnourished bird suggests that the family raised poultry. The poultry from this feature probably represents a combination of expensive purchases made in the market and low-cost meals from the family's own backyard poultry-raising efforts.

The refuse generated by the family of William Long, a German butcher, at 1726 William Street contained the third highest quantity of game birds at 23 pounds, including quail, duck, goose, bufflehead, ruddy duck, and red phalarope. Unlike the Gohsens' diet, however, wild game made up only a small portion of the Long family's diet—less than 4 percent by meat weight. Dating to nearly a decade after the Gohsens' privy was filled, bird remains in the Longs' privy (156) show that this family ate a greater variety of poultry, including 57 pounds of turkey and chicken, which would have been more readily available to the general public as well as to the family of a butcher.

In 1900 Frederick Wagner, a 64-year-old hunter, lived in a small house within a few hundred feet of the bay just around the corner from the Gohsens' former residence. Wagner owned his own boats, wharf, and a home with numerous outbuildings adjacent to "Death's Curve" on the railway tracks. "Old Wagner" was vividly remembered as "one of the best characters" in West Oakland by a West of Market Boy. By this time, probably the 1890s, Wagner was a duck hunter who specialized in diving ducks and loons; he sold the birds for their feathers, which were used to make the boas that were fashionable at the time. "Fred was a good shot and always waited until the birds went to dive and always placed his shots so the feathers were not ruined" (*West of Market Boys' Journal*).



Figure 5.4. A long history of food-getting. The local fisheries and flyways had long provided food for local inhabitants, as shown by this stash of nine Native American groundstone net weights recovered from a pit behind 768 Fifth Street. The Taylor children may well have collected the items while exploring a neighborhood prehistoric site or on a trip to Shellmound Park in nearby Emeryville. Collecting "arrowheads" and other "natural" items was a common childhood pastime (Pit 1753).

West Oaklanders also consumed fish that could have been caught from the local pier by family members, hawked to them by the fisherman/peddler, or purchased from a merchant (Table 5.2). Angling in the bay for smelt, perch, and tomcod was reportedly excellent and "a favorite amusement of clerks and others who cannot go to the salmon rivers of the north" (Bouncer 1881, cited in Schulz 2000:5). Fish bones are small and tend not to survive archaeologically; therefore, the absence of fish bones from a deposit cannot be inferred as evidence that the associated household did not eat fish. In fact, all of the archaeologically recovered fishing implements came from features that contained no fish bones: a sinker from Block 3 (Well 1700), a fishing reel from

Table 5.2. Recreational/Noncommercial Fish Remains by Feature

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Number	Meat Weight	Comments
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	12	7.4 lbs	Topsmelt, jacksmelt, tomcod, rockfish, white surfperch, black surfperch, starry flounder
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	3	2.5 lbs	Topsmelt/jacksmelt, rockfish
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	9	2.6 lbs	Jacksmelt, surfperch, Pacific tomcod, brown rockfish, rockfish
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880	4	1.6 lbs	Black or striped surfperch, rockfish
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	5	.5 lbs	Surfperch, rockfish
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	4	2 lbs	Jacksmelt, Pacific tomcod, black rockfish
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	5	1.7 lbs	Jacksmelt, rockfish
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	7	2.4 lbs	Tomcod, jacksmelt, white croacker, black surfperch, starry flounder
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	18	4.8 lbs	Tomcod, topsmelt, jacksmelt, rockfish, brown rockfish, shiner surfperch
21	Well 7175	Schrock fenters	1900	5	2.3 lbs	Tomcod, rockfish, shiner surfperch
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895	1	.7 lb	Black or striped surfperch
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1880	1	.1 lb	Shiner surfperch
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	23	7.9 lbs	Jacksmelt, staghorn sculpin, rubberlip surfperch
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	3	2.1 lbs	Barred, redtail surfperch, black, striped surfperch, white, sharpnose surfperch
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	10	2.6 lbs	Barred, redtail surfperch, jacksmelt, shiner surfperch, black, striped surfperch, rockfish
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	3	1.5 lbs	Topsmelt, jacksmelt, rockfish

Block 4 (Privy 3300), and two fish hooks from Block 37 (Privy 100). Evidence of more ancient fishing was also recovered: a stash of nine groundstone net weights, probably gathered in the historic period from a nearby site (Figure 5.4).

The Gohsen family's refuse at 1868 Seventh Street contained evidence of the greatest quantity of fish that could have been caught noncommercially: 23 fish weighing nearly 8 pounds, including 21 jacksmelt, 1 staghorn sculpin, and 1 rubberlip surfperch. "Smelt" was a very common fish in the San Francisco Bay and enormous quantities were eaten, particularly in the spring; it was the "staple boardinghouse fish," and was good "fried with eggs and cornmeal, or pounded crackers." Smelt were angled from nearby wharves with long rods (Schulz 1999). In 1876 an angling enthusiast described the smelt catch in season (spring) from the Long Wharf in Oakland as "enormous"; they "bite so ravenously at the bait offered them that it often happens that the angler hooks and lands three, or even four of them at one time... In the height of the 'take,' when there are a hundred rods plying at once, the scene is a very lively and interesting one" (Hooper 1876, cited in Schulz 2000). The staghorn sculpin once was one of the most common fish in the bay; however, there is no evidence that it has ever been used as other than fish bait due to its small size. The presence of bait and local fish indicates that Charles Gohsen may well have been a recreational fisherman.

Henry Hansen, a German professional fisherman, lived with his wife in a small duplex on William Street at Oakland Point in the early 1880s; the family of Henry Hales, an English railroad man, lived next door; Hale's teenaged stepson also worked as a fisherman, probably with his neighbor. The privy (6239) associated with the duplex contained the greatest variety and quantity of fish remains, representing a minimum of 31 fish weighing over 30 pounds. Seven of these fish, weighing 2.4 pounds, could have been caught from a local pier or commercially: tomcod, jacksmelt, white croaker, black surfperch, and starry flounder. The fishermen clearly exploited the range of species that were available seasonally in San Francisco Bay and in other nearby fisheries. The remains of commercial fish available within the bay included herring and Chinook salmon; the split tail was available within the Sacramento/San Joaquin river system, the California halibut came from commercial fishing south of Monterey Bay, and the English sole would have been commercially caught from outside the bay. The mackerel and cod could have been caught within the bay or exported as salt fish from the East Coast, while the anchovy was probably a baitfish (Schulz 1999).

Remembering their boyhoods around 1890, West of Market Boys recalled great duck hunting and fishing from a dirt road in the mudflats near the Oakland Pier. Especially during a storm, the ducks would fly low over the mole; one just had to be careful that the birds dropped on the road or the tide would carry them off. At times the fish were so thick in these mudflats that one could just wade out in the shallow areas and beat them with a club. Men would fish from the rocks; "it saved many a poor family from going hungry in tough times" (Anthony 1939, September). Not everyone was so enthusiastic about the Oakland fishery, a local ichthyologist, decrying commercial over-fishing wrote: "No wonder the patient angler, standing all day on Long Bridge or Oakland Wharf, takes only a few sculpins and 'shiners,' with a few small 'silver perch' and perhaps a rock-fish or two. He must be thankful for small mercies—probably in a few years he will have to be satisfied with the sculpins" (Lockington 1880:262 cited in Schulz 2000:5). Nevertheless, fishing remained good through the 1930s. Many men interviewed for the Cypress Project remembered fishing in the bay as boys: "I would always have my fishing line in my pocket. We'd go off to the bay and catch fish. We'd go to the Oakland Pier and we'd go down underneath the pier and we'd scrape off the pile rims, they'd become the

bait. And we'd catch fish. Just drop the line and catch a fish. And then walk down Seventh Street, somebody would say, 'Hey man, want to sell those fish?'" (Cumbelich and Cumbelich 1996:34).

The residents of West Oakland also consumed quantities of shellfish that were available from the bay and estuary. Like the Native peoples who preceded them, they collected oysters, clams, and mussels from the bay mudflats. The Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) and the soft-shelled clam (*Mya arenaria*) were introduced in the 1870s to San Francisco Bay, where they were grown commercially. Meanwhile, dredging, filling, and pollution reduced the natural habitat of the native Pacific oyster (*Ostrea lurida*).

The majority of Cypress Project features contained shellfish remains, primarily Eastern oysters, Pacific oysters, Bay mussels, cockles, and soft-shelled clams that were locally available. Abalone and other ocean varieties appear only occasionally within the deposits and, as luxury items, may reflect meals for special occasions. The Railroad Exchange Hotel at the end of Seventh Street, billing itself as a "First Mechanic's Hotel," catered to skilled workingmen, whom they provided with excellent meals. Shellfish remains from deposits dating to the 1870s and 1880s included 18 Eastern oysters, 99 bay mussels, 3 crab claws, and 1 soft-shelled clam. Deposits from the next decade included 10 Eastern oysters, 10 bay mussels, 110 soft-shelled clams, 2 gaper clams, and 1 abalone, indicating a shift away from the local mussels (Well 4600). While the bay mussel was cultivated extensively for food in Europe, it never gained great popularity in 19th-century California. John Frese, the proprietor of the hotel until 1887, was a native of Germany and may have been more familiar with this species than the Scandinavians who replaced him. Additionally, the bay mussel can become toxic during the summer, perhaps posing too high a risk for dining establishments.

Although shellfish were recovered throughout the project area, the greatest quantities were found in the Oakland Point neighborhood south of Seventh Street, an area closest to the mudflats where the families of skilled and unskilled workers lived in close quarters. The remains of 62 soft-shelled clams are associated with the family of Frederick Holderer, a machinist and sewing-machine salesman on Wood Street adjacent to the Southern Pacific railroad tracks (Privy 8445). Around the corner, German painter John Weisheimer and his wife disposed of the remains of 72 soft-shelled clams, 15 Eastern oysters, and two cockles (Well 7500); and a few blocks away the families of fishermen Hansen and Hales consumed a minimum of 75 soft-shelled clams, 68 Bay mussels, 1 Pacific oyster, and 1 Eastern oyster (Privy 6239). With the exception of the oysters, we suggest that these were scavenged from the local mudflats.

As a boy, Jack London lived in this neighborhood at 807 Pine Street, a location which features prominently in his novel *Valley of the Moon*. While her husband languished in jail, London's heroine Saxon fell on very hard times and took to wandering on the marshes and the "Rock Wall":

Everything was free. Firewood lay for the taking. No man sold it by the sack. Small boys fished with poles from the rocks, with no one to drive them away, catching fish... And here was food, food that was free. She watched the small boys on a day when she had eaten nothing and emulated them, gathering mussels from the rocks at the water, cooking them by placing them among the coals on a fire she built on top of the wall. They tasted particularly good. She learned to knock the small oysters from the rocks [London 1913b:252].

Later, Saxon was rescued from a high tide and resulting stampede of rock rats by a small boy, clearly Jack London, in a small skiff. He taught her to fish, talked of books and adventure, and spoke those pregnant words: "Oakland's just a place to start from, I guess. Now that's adventure..." (London 1913b:267). After a night's fishing, he dropped Saxon off at a dilapidated wharf at the foot of Castro Street and she walked home. It was only when the local doctor told Saxon to throw out the clams she had dug from the marsh—"they're death and destruction. Typhoid—I've got three cases now, all tied to the clams and the marsh"—that she decided to flee Oakland: "Oakland, the man trap that poisoned those it could not starve" (London 1913b:286).

Jack London was a master of hyperbole and clearly had some longstanding bitterness toward the town where his family had fallen on hard times. Nevertheless, the connection between typhoid and the mudflats was a longstanding one. The construction of a major trunk sewer leading to the bay in the late 1870s had created "a stinking bed of sewage on the mudflats around the Southern Pacific pier" (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994:92). Public-health workers defined typhoid as a zymotic disease—a primarily preventable illness caused by unsanitary conditions: bad drainage, defective sewage, crowded habitations, and water from shallow contaminated wells (Woolsey 1881:6). Typhoid epidemics broke out occasionally and appear to have sparked community reaction and improved conditions for many years after. The epidemic of June-July 1893 sickened more than 4,000 Oaklanders, killing 42. Numbers of this magnitude were not seen again until 1906, in connection with the devastation caused by the great earthquake and fire (Oakland Health Department 1916).

Jack London's memories cover approximately the same time period as those of the West of Market Boys, who remembered things a little less grimly. One recalled that you could see the clams squirting on the mudflats, where boys dug for clams to sell to housewives or to take over to the Fire House on Eighth Street, where Charley O'Gara made clam chowder for the men (Anthony September 1939).

Boys continued to fish in the bay well into the 1930s. One son of Italian immigrants remembers building a rowboat and sailing into the estuary from Market Street well out into the bay, where he would catch crabs near the present Oakland Army base. He shared these with the hobos, who boiled them in 5-gallon cans (Albanese and Cosy 1995b:34).

BUILDING WEST OAKLAND

Marta Gutman

The Cypress Project blocks are full of examples of the many and varied strategies small-scale property owners used to alter, expand, and otherwise improve residential buildings in West Oakland. The incremental changes to these buildings—which included ordinary cottages, Almost-polite houses, middle-class dwellings, flats, and lodging houses—substantiate that the "overturn, overturn" approach to urban history offers only a partial explanation of city building in the United States (Gutman 2000b). Philip Hone used the phrase "overturn, overturn" to describe the culture of building that he perceived shaped antebellum New York City: purpose-built construction and its subsequent erasure and recreation (Hone 1936:729-730). Many years later, Joseph Schumpeter referred to "the perennial gale of creative destruction" in the urban landscape, meaning by that phrase the waves of construction (and destruction) taken in response to swings of the business cycle (Schumpeter 1939). Yet another mode of modern urban building



Figure 5.5. “Seventh Street, North Side,” in the 1890s. (Source: *Illustrated Directory of Alameda County*, 1896)

prevailed on the Cypress Project blocks and lots: incremental, process-driven, urban construction. Although not as well-studied as “overturn, overturn” building culture, incremental building shaped the landscapes of modernizing American cities, as small-scale builders gave heterogeneous shape to ordinary neighborhoods. In West Oakland, where wood-frame construction was common, everyday builders, carpenters, homeowners, and even tenants employed alterations, additions, and changes in use (Figure 5.5) to make residential, commercial, and public architecture work for them (Gutman 1997, 2000a, and essay in Chapter 6, this volume). This essay focuses on changes made to residences after initial imprints and investments established a framework for building in the western part of the city.

Building by building, lot by lot, and block by block, incremental building practice in West Oakland stretched across class, ethnic, racial, and gender lines as a small frontier town of 10,000 people became a modern industrial metropolis of 100,000 residents. As other essays in this volume describe, West Oakland catapulted into urban development after 1869, when the Southern Pacific Railroad decided to terminate the transcontinental line at the far western edge of the city. Initially, a thinly developed part of town, dotted with orchards, farms, and elite residences erected on large lots, the neighborhood became a magnet for working men and women after the Southern Pacific Railroad erected a vast terminal and enormous ferry dock in Oakland Point (Bagwell 1982; Deverell 1994; Olmsted and Olmsted 1994). With the opening of the railroad and with each subsequent wave of migration, all sorts of people—men and women; common laborers, artisans, and skilled workers; immigrants, migrants, and African Americans—bought residential property and built and improved small and medium-sized houses in West Oakland, usually located near the railroad yards and other sources of employment. By 1900 the residential fabric in West Oakland comprised a startling variety of buildings that had been altered and changed over time (Groth and Gutman 1997; Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey 1988, 1990a, 1992b).

As was the case elsewhere on the North American continent, buying an affordable house played a central role in the daily lives of West Oakland residents from the 1860s to the 1910s—the timeframe studied in the Cypress Project (Harris 1996; Thernstrom 1964; Zunz 1982). So too, did improving residential property, through amending building form and use. What strategies did small-scale property owners and builders use?

- Alterations (interior, exterior) and additions to buildings: Most often, owners chose to make additions that ranged in scale from porches and bay windows to rooms, new “wings,” and entire floors. During the period under study, owners usually added new

rooms to the backs of buildings, where the deep lots, characteristic of 19th-century American urbanism, offered room for expansion; additions that intruded into side yard were also built. Lifting buildings was also common, making it possible to turn a one-story building into a two-story residence.

- Addition of new buildings to lots: As the number of people living in West Oakland increased, owners responded by subdividing lots and constructing new buildings, usually designed to house more than one family. Very often, this kind of “densification” occurred on double or triple plots, although owners could erect sheds, barns, and new dwellings on a single lot.
- Adaptive reuse: Changing the use of a building offered a property owner an affordable, practical means to cope with on-going social and economic change. In West Oakland, owners turned residential buildings into commercial or public buildings; they also transformed single-family homes into more profitable rental real estate—flats or lodging house, as the case may be. By this latter means, the density of inhabitation on a lot increased, without an owner incurring the expense of erecting new buildings.
- Erasure and replacement: Owners cleared and replaced outmoded buildings with new structures. This occurred in West Oakland in the period under study, but rarely on project blocks during this period. The situation changed after the World War I, when large-scale interventions began to alter radically the district’s landscape. New owners cleared working-class housing and replaced it with purpose-built warehouses, factories, and other uses associated with manufacturing and industry. Later in the 20th century, the government also demolished small-scale buildings to make way for the construction of public housing, government buildings, transportation, and highways (Lym 1967; Solari 2001).

Very often, owner-builders, owner-occupiers, neighbor-owners, and other small-scale property owners in West Oakland used several of the means just mentioned, rather than one or the other, to make improvements to residential property. In the main, these additive methods of construction permitted property owners to accommodate changes in family needs and practices; to respond to large-scale change in the community (social composition, patterns of employment, and thus housing needs); and to cope with the fluctuating real-estate economy of industrial capitalism, based on land speculation and the private ownership of property. Roughly speaking, it seems that many residential properties were altered in conjunction with a transfer of ownership or when major life-cycle events occurred in a family, such as death or major illness. In this manner, owners treated buildings as they did other (smaller) forms of material culture (Brown 1987), discussed throughout this volume.

Owners took into account other considerations at the same time that they determined the timing and extent of improvements to real property. An owner or tenant who would toss out usable goods, seemingly without much thought as to their economic value, seems to have been more circumspect in his or her decisions about property improvements. This is not surprising: the costs involved were far greater and, more often than not, owners undertook upgrades when they could expect to realize some financial gain from their investment. Siting factored into decision-making, as did size or design of dwelling. The available data suggest that owners were more willing to improve residential property that was located at some distance from the railroad yards, and less interested in investing in upgrading residential property in settings close to Oakland Point. Changing land values and land uses, principally from residential to industrial

uses, made improvements to private residences impractical by 1900. Rather, the dwellings, which deteriorated over time, were replaced by other forms of land use.

INCREMENTAL BUILDING

To track that point, we will move from east to west (and principally from large lots to small ones), as we turn to examine the impact of methods just described on buildings located on Cypress Project blocks. Our principal data will be information gleaned from Sanborn maps, building records, city directories, the U.S. population census, and other archival and archaeological information included in the Block Technical Reports (BTRs). (The BTRs are not cited individually in the discussions that follow; but the addresses may be used to find the relevant documentary material and sources). The buildings themselves are long gone, cleared for the most part to make way for the now-demolished Cypress Freeway, and information included in these sources is of a general sort with respect to building form. Yet, the available data tell us that incremental building practice empowered builders and small-scale property owners from the 1860s to the 1910s, as West Oakland changed from a thinly developed suburb to an ethnically and racially diverse, mixed-use, industrial community, and malleable woodframe buildings were well-suited to the task. During this period, owner-occupiers and neighbor-owners upgraded and updated single-family homes and densified adjacent property holdings to maximize investment dollars and accommodate changes in the housing market as more renters moved into the community.

Large Lots: Incremental Change over Time

Some of the largest lots on the Cypress Project blocks are located on Block 1, where well-off owners turned single-family homes into rental housing and otherwise capitalized on changing land values, as renters and lodgers moved into their community. The multiple strategies used to develop large lots on this block—adaptive reuse, interior alterations and exterior additions, new construction—offer in microcosm a picture of the effects of incremental change to property across the entire community. In the examples below, owner-occupiers (or their families) left spacious homes on large lots following a death in the family. This prompted a change of use (although not of ownership), as single-family homes were turned into lodging houses or other forms of rental housing. New construction occurred after the initial owners sold their holdings to people living outside of West Oakland.

Mary E. Mann owned almost an entire block in the early 1860s. Although the Mann family sold off much of the property in the 1860s and 1870s, they retained a large plot (three lots wide) at the northwest corner of Fifth and Grove streets. In 1869 Benjamin and Frederick Mann, most likely Mary Mann's sons, lived at 654 Fifth Street, probably in the building shown on the corner property in 1870 and again in 1889: a one-and-one-half story dwelling with a front bay window, a rear addition, and front and rear porches. A one-and-one-half story stable sat at the back of the lot (Figure 5.6). The well-off Mann brothers (Frederick was a miner; Benjamin was the vice-president of a bank) shared the house with members of Frederick's family—his wife, Eunice, their three children, and her mother—until illness and death claimed in short succession the lives of Eunice's mother, her husband, and her brother-in-law (Privy 900).

In 1890, sometime after Eunice Mann remarried and moved elsewhere in Oakland, the Mann children's guardian petitioned the court to sell the property. He argued that the lot was "vacant" and "unimproved," except for the small house (the Mann family home) that stood on

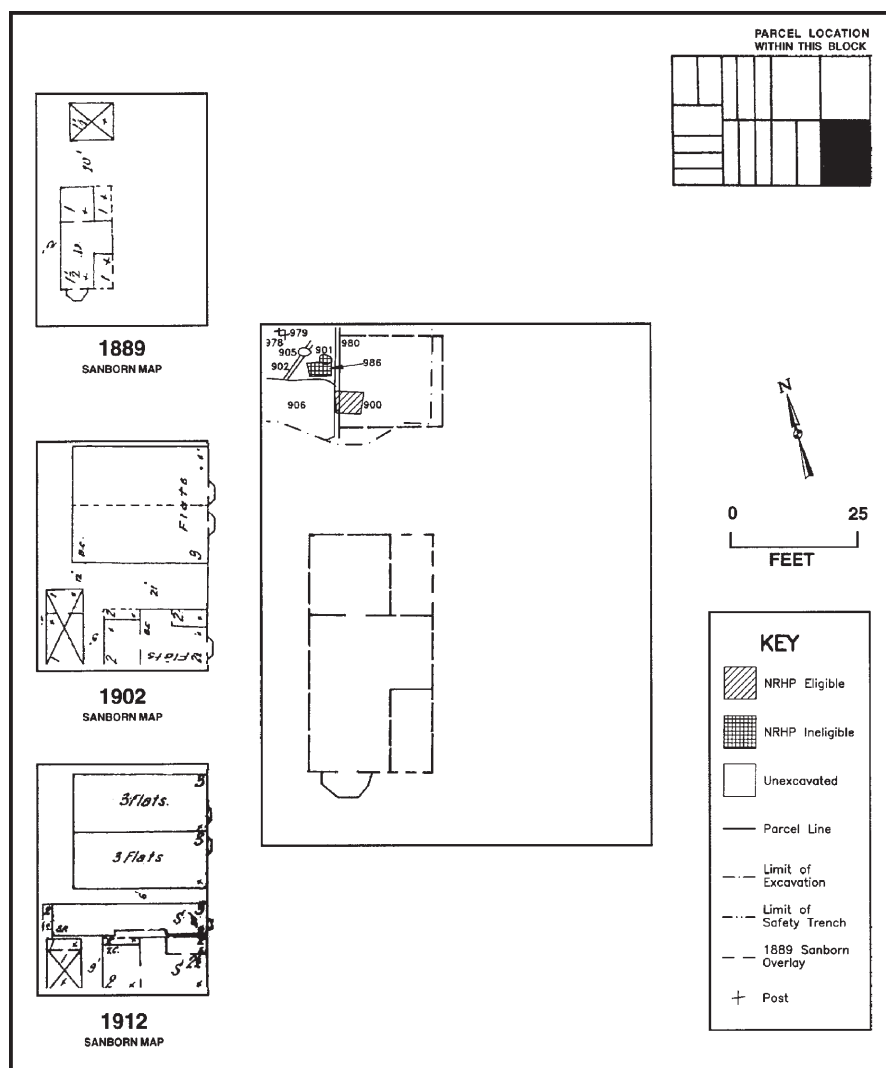


Figure 5.6. Parcel plans, 654 Fifth Street, Mann household. (Block 1 BTR)

the land. The guardian also maintained that the “income from the house rental,” \$16.40 a month, was “insufficient to pay the taxes, street assessments and cost of repairs upon the real property.” Apparently, the Mann children’s former home had been turned into a lodging house: Bishop Brayton, a bookkeeper from New York, Hiram Hoflin, a merchant from Vermont, and Samuel McBride, a nailmaker from New York, rented rooms in the house in the early 1890s.

By 1902 the property had changed hands twice, and new improvements filled out the lot. The owners did not live nearby. The extent of the development gives a clear sense of the increased value to this large corner lot, in large measure due to its siting: Grove Street had developed into a major cross-town street. The Mann family home had been lifted and raised to two stories in a new location on the lot, and the interior was altered into flats. Turned 90 degrees, it abutted the corner of Fifth and Grove streets, with the front door facing Grove. A stable, facing Fifth Street, and two new three-story buildings containing flats and facing Grove Street had been constructed. By 1910 the Manns’ former home had been converted into a store, the stable modified, and a narrow new store (the fifth building on the lot) slipped into the last available site, facing Grove Street. No longer could this piece of property be called “vacant” or “unimproved”; rental housing and commercial property established a virtually continuous frontage along Grove Street.

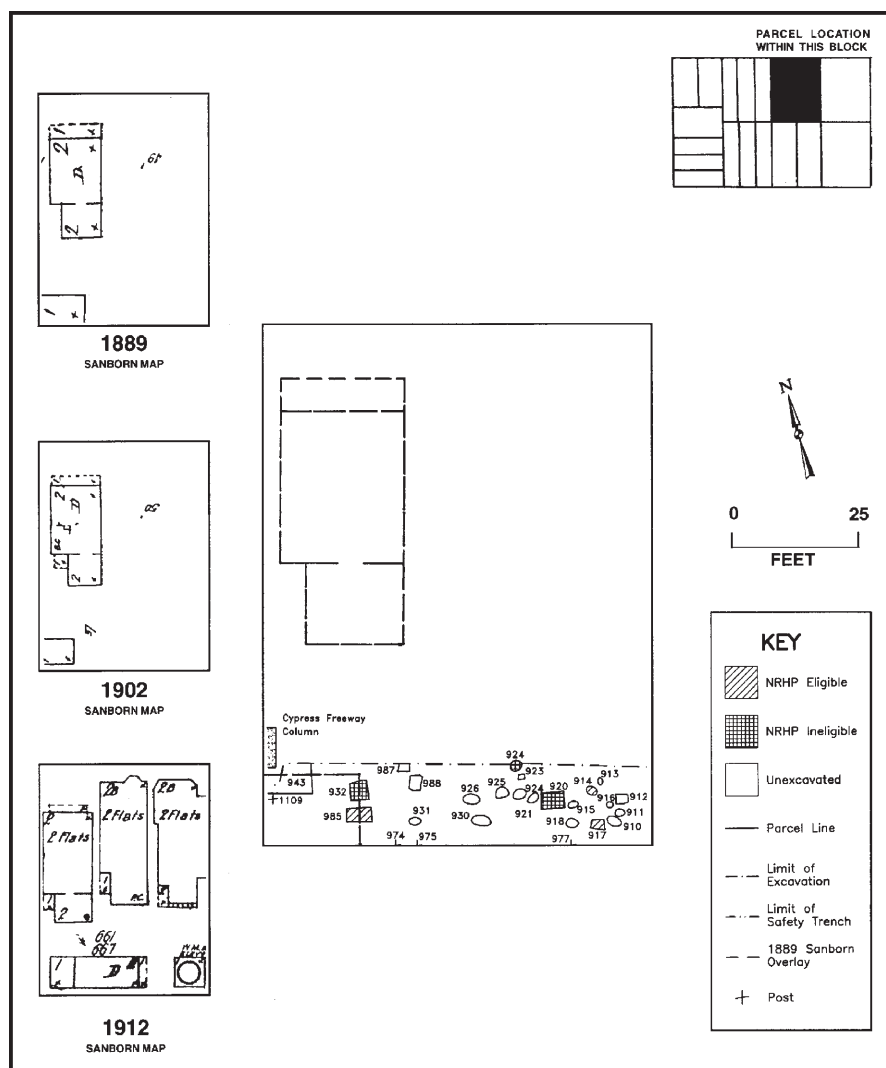


Figure 5.7. Parcel plans, 663 Sixth Street, Bredhoff residence and rental. (Block 1 BTR)

Other owner-occupiers on Block 1 used multiple strategies to develop residential property. In 1875 Charles Bredhoff bought a two-story dwelling and outbuilding at 663 Sixth Street (between Castro and Grove); the buildings had stood on the triple, mid-block lot for about five years (Figure 5.7). In 1880 seven people lived in the house (shown with a front porch and a two-story rear addition on the 1889 Sanborn map): Bredhoff, proprietor of the Washington Brewery, his wife, Margaret Bredhoff, her three sons, and two boarders (one a saloon keeper, the other a servant). The house had more than enough room to accommodate the residents. Bredhoff died in 1881 and the probate papers describe in detail the home of this relatively wealthy man: it contained a parlor, sitting room, kitchen, four bedrooms, and a servant's room. The parlor, sitting room, hall, and stairway were carpeted, while the sitting room contained a library, a sewing machine, and a piano (Privy 985).

Following Bredhoff's death, the family moved out of the house, although the heirs retained ownership of the property, which had become a rental property. To begin with, the density of occupation did not increase, although the social class of the occupants changed. Tenants included James Whitaker and his son: the father was superintendent at Oakland Nail Factory; his son,

also James, worked as a nailer at another factory. By 1900 the picture changed considerably. Slight modifications to the home (the addition of a back porch) simplified movement of tenants in and out of what was called a dwelling, but was used as a lodging house. The census reports that the six-member Reichert family lived in the building in 1900, along with two single male lodgers and a family of five people. By 1912 the property had been redeveloped. The residence had been converted to flats; two two-story flats had been constructed, and the outbuilding was converted to a dwelling. Like the Mann family around the corner, the Bredhoffs used a mixture of strategies—new construction, alteration, addition, and adaptive reuse—to extract profit from the parcel that held their former home.

Adding Value to Small Lots through New Construction and Change of Use

Elsewhere on Cypress Project blocks, owner-occupiers and neighbor-owners used singular, not multiple, means to improve property, with the size of the lot, as well as access to capital affecting development strategies. James Holland, for example, was an Irish laborer who came to own several lots on Block 2; in total, he owned about as much land as the Mann and Bredhoff families. Since his properties were not contiguous, but were scattered across several blocks, it makes some sense that he employed a different strategy to improve each lot. For several years, Holland and various members of his family lived in the one-story residence at 812 Brush Street—a house with a front porch and rear additions. There were several outbuildings at the back of the property, as well. In 1885 Holland became a neighbor-owner, moving into one of his houses on a nearby block and turning 812 Brush Street into a rental property. This change of use required no major modifications to the dwelling, but may have entailed some changes to the privy (see short essay, this chapter). In 1890 he sold the building to Noel Pannard, who quickly sold it to Kate Tierney, an unmarried Irish domestic servant (Privy 1321, Pit 1469).

This transaction brought change to the building form and use. Tierney, an owner-occupier, turned the dwelling into a small, owner-run lodging house, probably because she needed (or wanted) to augment the meager salary she received as a domestic servant. Commonly, working-class women ran lodging houses (or took in boarders) to earn a living or to contribute to the tenuous family economy that prevailed in working-class, immigrant households in late-19th-century American cities. In this case, Tierney headed her own household, and she may have needed income from tenants to assist with mortgage payments. By 1902, according to the Sanborn map, her building had been remodeled, with the attic converted to a second floor flat and a smaller entry porch replacing the former one. Tierney lived in one flat; John and Elizabeth Brown rented the other one. The Browns, who were African American, had three lodgers, also African American, living with them. The one-story building, designed as a small, single-family house, had become a two-story dwelling, with income-producing capability. It would retain that form and use, until cleared for freeway construction in the 1950s.

Holland held on to other rental properties that he owned on Block 2, including 802 Brush Street. The small house, located on a corner lot, resembled the dwelling on this block, just mentioned, that served as the Holland family residence for about 10 years. The earliest visual documentation shows it to be a one-and-one-half story house with a front bay window, a rear one-story addition, and a side porch. A stable and small outbuilding sat at the rear of the lot (Well 1300, Privy 1301). From the late 1870s through the 1890s, Holland rented the dwelling to working-class Irish immigrants, including Matthew Breen, a laborer, his wife, Mary, and their son; Benjamin Collins, a builder; and the Maguire brothers (peddlers and traders). By 1900 many more people crowded into the house: the Moody family, principal tenant (three people);

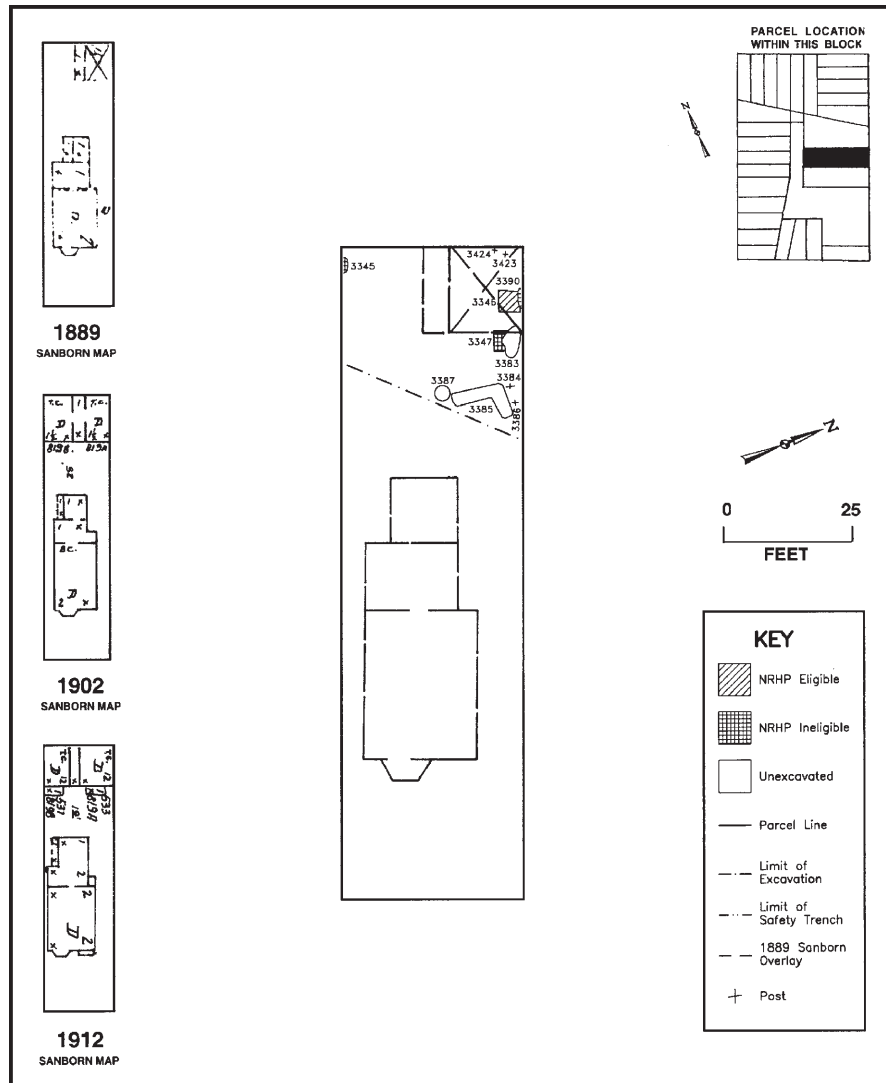


Figure 5.8. Parcel plans, 819 Market Street, Morgan/Mullen residence. (Block 4 BTR)

the Rosa family, lodgers (three people); and two male lodgers. Very likely, changes shown on the 1902 Sanborn had already been made: the house had been lifted, making it possible to turn the basement into habitable space, and the back stable and outbuilding had been combined into one structure (with a separate address). In 1905 Edward Holland inherited the property from his father and made further changes to the building, shown as a two-story structure with a basement on the 1912 Sanborn map. The outbuilding was called a shed and would shortly become a garage. The house, turned into two flats, would be used as a rental property until the 1950s.

On Block 4 owner-occupiers used new construction to increase the density of inhabitation. By 1880 Bartlett Morgan, a widowed druggist and county supervisor, lived in the vicinity of 819 Market Street, sharing his home with his daughter, Gracie, his niece, Katie, and his cousin, Lydia Wade (also widowed), who was Morgan's housekeeper. The county supervisor had purchased this property by 1889, depicted on the Sanborn map as a two-story residence, with a front bay window, two one-story rear additions, and a back porch (Privy 3346). A stable and an outbuilding had been erected in the rear corner of the mid-block lot (Figure 5.8). In 1899

Oren Mullen, a deputy county clerk, assumed ownership; he probably inherited the property after the death of Morgan, his wife's uncle, the year before. Mullen quickly sold the building to James Fields, an African American railroad porter, and his wife, Abbey.

The transfer of ownership prompted new construction. Probably the Fields family, rather than the Mullen family, decided to modify the back of the main house and convert the back shed into two, very small, one-and-one-half-story dwellings—each one shown with a separate address on the 1902 Sanborn. These houses were rented to boarders, all African American, in 1902: the Leavys (Edward was a railroad porter); Bessie Bose, a teenager, living on her own; and Frederick Laccelle, a young male porter. The density of inhabitation increased during the next 10 years, as James Fields' life took a turn for the worse. His wife died and he lost his job as a porter; in 1910, he likely needed rental income to help pay the mortgage, since he now worked as a street laborer. His tenants included an African American woman, who took in washing, and a Japanese American family, also involved in domestic service.

Interior Alterations and Exterior Additions

On other Cypress Project blocks, neighbor-owners erected the first imprints, used them as rental properties, and then sold the properties on a lot-by-lot basis to owner-occupiers, who were usually recent immigrants. The new owners made small-scale changes to dwellings through altering interiors and constructing small additions, which extended deep into backyards. For example, in 1882, Dennis and Margaret Manning bought a small house on Block 3 from Marshall Curtis, who owned the entire block in the 1850s and 1860s and developed most of the lots into working-class housing (Figure 5.9). The dwelling at 762 Fifth Street and its twin next door were one-story houses with basements and back porches—Almost-polite houses that were three times as large as the cottages that Curtis built elsewhere on the block. In the 1880s many railroad workers and their families lived in the Curtis dwellings; for example, the Tighe family, tenants at 762 Fifth Street (Privy 1858), and the Mannings, who made some investments in the property soon after purchase. The scope of the improvements is not known, but it was likely considerable, since the Mannings' tax assessment almost doubled in about a year's time.

The Mannings lived in the building until 1890, when they sold it to Isaac and Rebecca Jacobs, who altered it slowly to suit the needs of their large, German-Jewish, immigrant household. The family may have been related to Samuel Jacobs, the fruit peddler, who lived one block to the west (see "Becoming Jewish Americans," this volume). In 1900 three generations lived at 762 Fifth Street: Isaac and Rebecca Jacobs; Sarah, their teenaged daughter; Rae and Max Levin, their daughter and son-in-law; and the Levins' infant daughter, Bernice. With six people in residence (and three working for wages as glazier, cashier, and tailor), the Jacobs family slowly accrued the capital needed to improve the property. By 1902 a new shed had been built, abutting the rear property line; by 1912, it had been replaced by a new stable, with a separate address from the main house. The Jacobs also added a new bay window to the front of their house and added one room, perhaps more, to the back. The family sorely needed more space: Rae and her husband moved out, but Sarah, who had married in the meantime, still lived at home with her new family. The multi-generational family lived at 762 Fifth Street until 1921, when the property was sold. The house retained its form through the 1950s, although the stable was cleared in the intervening years.

Owner-occupiers could take even more time to make smaller-scale improvements than in the example just discussed. Terence and Bridgit O'Brien, a carpenter and his wife, moved to Oakland in the 1860s; they bought four lots along Goss Street, between Cedar and Pine (on

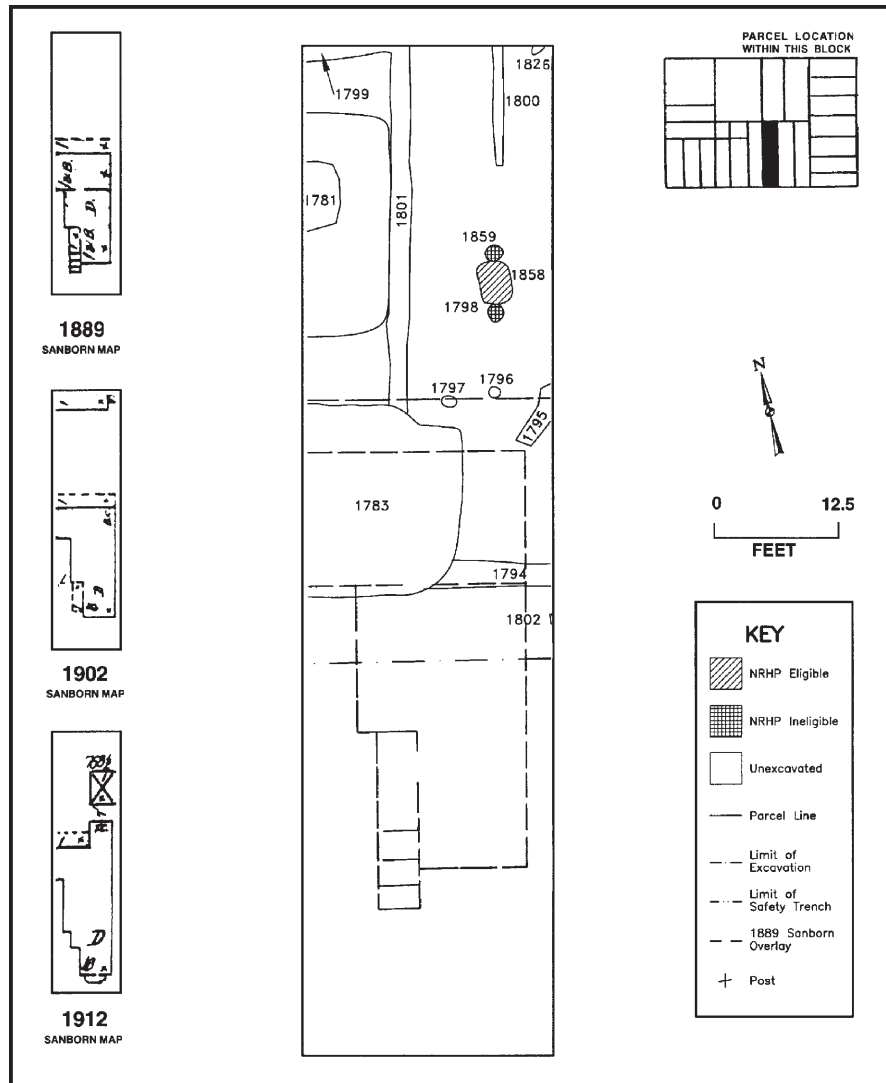


Figure 5.9. Parcel plans, 762 Fifth Street, Tighe/Jacobs residence. (Block 3 BTR)

Block 24). Between 1865 and 1870, O'Brien erected two houses, one at 1817 Goss, the other at 1823. Bridgit O'Brien inherited both houses in 1871, after her husband's death from tuberculosis; 1817 seems to have become her principal residence (Well 300). She and various children (15 born, 11 survived) lived in the two-story dwelling, with a one-story rear addition and a small shed, until her death in 1899. Her son Edward, recently widowed, inherited the property and moved in with his two sons. Within a year or so, he had remarried and reconfigured the front porch and backyard, replacing the old shed with a new one. Thus, in this example, as in others discussed in this essay, transfer of ownership caused by a major life-cycle event prompted a change in building form, although the scale of the change in the O'Brien residence is less dramatic than many others we have seen. O'Brien's second wife continued to live in the house with several children after his death, although his passing occasioned no change to the building form. The O'Brien family owned this property for more than 50 years, making minor changes to this property, over time.

**ETHNIC AND GENDERED SPACES:
THE GREEK-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN EARLY WEST OAKLAND**

Adapted from Karana Hattersley-Drayton (1999) by Robert Douglass

By 1900 West Oakland was a heterogeneous mix of social classes, ethnic groups, land uses, and building types, with little space for additional housing. Numerous ethnic groups, including Portuguese, African Americans, Greeks, Italians, Slavs, and Asians, continued to settle in the area, replacing the earlier Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians. Incoming ethnic communities were interested in preserving their cultural heritage while becoming American. Expressions of ethnicity were largely private, with some public exceptions, such as the Portuguese-Azorean procession of the Holy Ghost each Pentecost or

the games of bocce (*palla di formaggio*) that Calabresi men played in the gutters along Market Street (Hattersley-Drayton 1997).

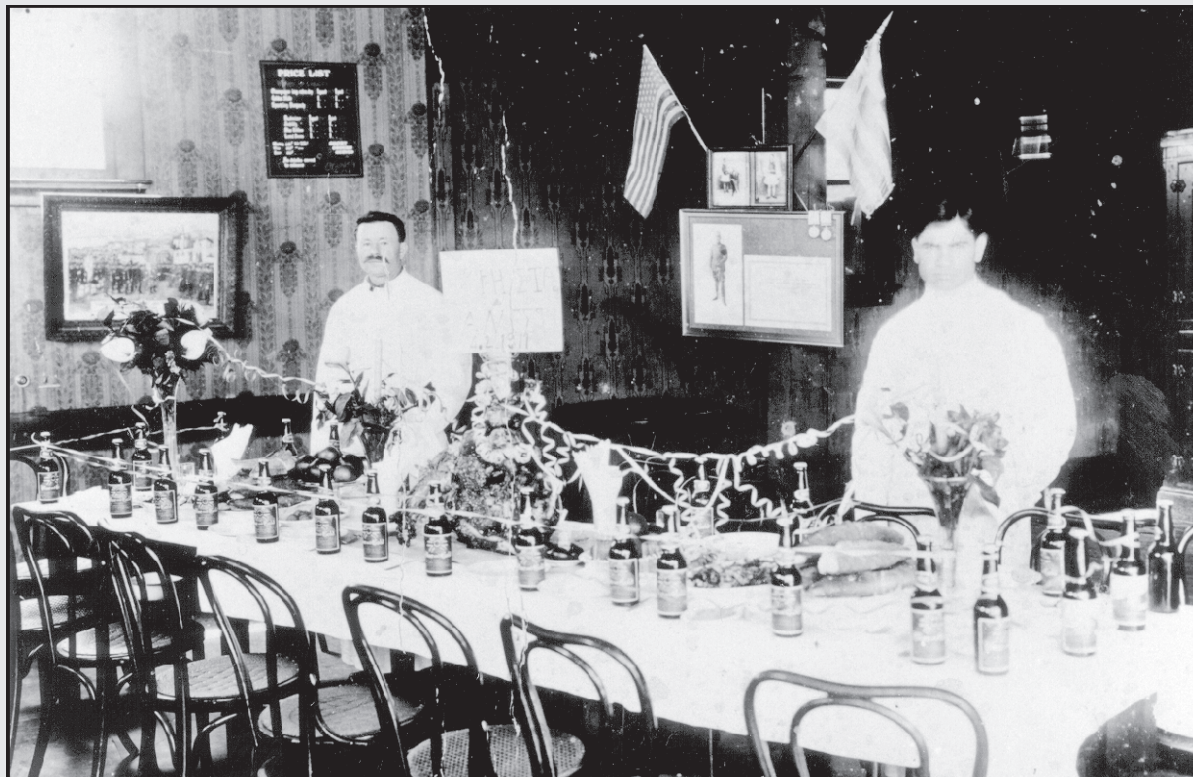
Urban studies suggest that immigrants had minimal impact on the built environment, adding little more than window dressing, signage, and local color (Conzen 1990:234-235). Study of West Oakland's small but vibrant Greek-American community shows that its members adapted both domestic and commercial buildings to reflect traditional aesthetics, gender roles, and floor plans. In one case, an entire traditional building—the 1921 Byzantine-plan Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption—was built.

Significant Greek communities did not appear in the United States until the early 20th century. The collapse of the Greek economy made 1907 a pivotal year for Greek immigration (Kopan 1990:76; Papanikolas 1974:104). That year, 46,283 Greek immigrants arrived in the United States. By 1908, 5,000 had come to live in the Bay Area, with 450 officially reported living in Oakland (Georgas 1951:6). In 1910, 100 newly arrived Greek workers were living in boxcars in the Southern Pacific yard (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994:114). Many Greeks initially took up residence in the Oakland Point district, working for the railroad or as produce peddlers and bootblacks. Some opened restaurants and candy stores, and by the 1920s, a thriving Greek business community had sprung up along Seventh Street between Pine and Chester.

One of the most important business enterprises for any Greek-American community was the *kafenion*, or coffeehouse. By 1923 there were 23 coffeehouses in San Francisco (Georgas 1951:40) and several in Oakland. As in Greece, the *kafenion* was a gendered space: a men's club, political forum, and labor center (Balabanis 1970:37; Dubisch 1986:39-40). Men of all economic strata met to drink Turkish coffee, eat pastries, gamble at *tavli*, smoke the *narghile*, and read Greek American newspapers like *Kalifornia*, first published in San Francisco in 1907. Local coffeehouses looked much like those in other Greek enclaves, with bare tables and chairs, and prints of the 1821 Revolution and Greek flags on the walls



Sotirios (Sam) Mousalimas in traditional dress, circa 1910. Sam arrived in West Oakland in 1901 after working his way across the country on the railroads. This posed picture was taken in Fresno to send home to the relatives in Greece. There were few opportunities to don traditional dress in West Oakland. (Photo courtesy of Andrew and Mary Mousalimas)



Interior of the Olympic Café on the corner of Wood and Seventh streets (Cypress Project Block 23) in 1917. The table is set for Greek Orthodox Easter, with traditional hand-dyed eggs as the centerpiece. The flags of Greece and America are prominently displayed on the wall along with the medals and discharge papers of Sam Mousalimas, who returned to Greece to fight the Turks in the Balkan Wars in 1912. (Photo courtesy of Andrew and Mary Mousalimas)

(Mousalimas and Lalatonis 1997; cf., Daskarolis 1995:32-33; Kopan 1990:80-81; Papanikolas 1974:118-119; Saloutos 1964:78-82). Oakland's *kafenion* owners, however, made concessions to their adopted culture by installing pool and billiard tables, and by occasionally admitting women to puppet shows staged by the itinerant *Karagiozi*.

Early Greek immigration to America was almost exclusively male. As Greek women began to arrive, families were established and the patriarchal, patrilineal social structure was reinstated. The presence of women improved living conditions for men (Kopan 1990:73, 77), and traditional notions of building and space, with some adaptations, were reasserted.

A 1920 Greek household at 392 Wood Street illustrates the kinds of difficult circumstances that some project-area immigrants endured: Mr. and Mrs. Georgakopoulos and their two daughters shared what was originally a one-bedroom house with up to five adult male boarders. The house had a toilet in the basement, but no bathing

facilities. Mrs. Georgakopoulos cooked and cleaned for everyone. While conditions in West Oakland were often far worse than traditional norms or domestic-reform-movement ideals (cf., Cohen 1986), they were never as bad as those in the dismal Greek slums around Chicago's Hull House (Kopan 1990:70).

As with other American immigrant groups, the kitchen became the center of the house (Cohen 1986:269-270), reflecting not only the lack of an available parlor or living room but also a continuity of experience from Greek traditional social patterns (du Boulay 1974:24-25). Even after families moved into larger quarters, the kitchen remained the heart of the home. Yards in West Oakland were important social spaces as well, where holidays might be celebrated with dancing and lambs roasted over an open fire (Friedl 1964:40; Kosmos 1995:6).

As household economies improved, Greek-Americans began to rent or buy single-family homes, allowing differentiation of space and restoration of ethnic and gendered values. West



The Sam Mousalimas family barbecuing lamb on Greek Orthodox Easter; backyard of 717 Willow Street, West Oakland, ca. 1929. Although immigrants usually dressed alike and lived in houses that looked alike, they continued to celebrate their particular cultural heritage. As an example, Greeks in West Oakland gathered to barbecue lamb and dance and drink wine together on Easter following church. (Photo courtesy of Andrew and Mary Mousalimas)

Oakland's raised one-story Victorian cottages were easily modified into a variant of the typical rural Greek Summer House/Winter House (*apano* [upper]/ *kato* [lower]). Basements were converted to include a large space for socializing and a kitchen used for heavy frying and canning (Karnegis 1996:11; A. Mousalimas and M. Mousalimas 1996a:27, 1996b:10,13; cf., Friedl 1964:39-41). During the summer, families might set up cots to sleep in the basement (Kosmos 1995:15). As in Greece, outdoor stairs were the only link between upper and lower "houses" (cf Friedl 1964:12).

The upper house contained the winter room or family kitchen, bedrooms, and the *saloni*, or living room. This "best room" was a formal space that mediated between the outside/public sphere and the inside/private sphere of the family, a place to receive strangers and celebrate rites-of-passage like name days, weddings, and baptisms. The *saloni* was a showcase for family memorabilia and bric-a-brac and, in poorer households, may have also been used for sleeping (Dubisch 1986:20; Du Boulay 1974:22-24, 27; Friedl 1964:39-41).

While the *saloni* remained, in theory, a public reception area, it was seldom used. Second-generation Greeks describe the rooms as museums or shrines, off-limits to children. The *saloni* contained the family's best furnishings (usually draped in protective white sheets), family photos, and pictures of Greek revolutionary heroes, with handmade lace and doilies everywhere (Kosmos 1995). Although it is tempting to see these rooms as a response to Victorian values and "parlorization," in fact the *saloni* is Greek and ultimately Greek-American (cf., Cohen 1986:263, 269-70; Spain 1992:123; cf., Teske 1979). Cohen (1986:268) suggests that working-class immigrants may have lavished attention on home interiors as a response to the unpleasant urban exterior environment, over which they had no control.

In West Oakland, the *saloni* became further differentiated as a ritualized part of a gendered landscape. In Greece the public/village world belonged to men, and the private/home world to women (du Boulay 1974:33; Friedl 1964:12, 42, 90), patterns that were brought to America. Here,

unlike in Greece, women could shop in public, but some areas like the many *kafenias* remained off-limits. For the most part, women were not allowed to work outside of the home (cf., Kopan 1990:100; Saloutos 1964:87). Seating within the Greek Orthodox Church was also gender-segregated. Greek-American women eventually developed a richer social life through volunteer and church groups, but the home remained both their fortress and a sanctuary.

The woman safeguarded family religious and moral values through the home, lighting the votive *kandili* each evening at the shrine, often kept next to the preserved crowns (*stefana*) from her wedding. The purity of the home contrasted with the pollution of the outside world. Many Greek-American women guarded those spatial boundaries by barring non-Greeks from the home.

Houses were spotless, kept in perfect order, and their boundaries often extended into the street in front. On Saturday mornings, women scrubbed down the sidewalks with buckets of hot water and soap: "Man, those gutters on Saturday, you could eat off of them" (Kosmos 1995:10).

While the rural architecture of ethnic America has been richly documented, little study has been directed toward its urban counterpart (Upton 1986:9). In the city, spaces architecturally redefined by both ethnicity and gender lie just under the veneer of the row house or Victorian cottage. In West Oakland's Greek community, this redefinition includes the transplantation of a traditional Greek house-type, the preservation of traditional room and garden use, and the adaptation of gendered spaces.

WINNERS AND LOSERS IN URBAN REAL ESTATE

As the examples just discussed suggest, incremental construction empowered small-scale property owners and investors in West Oakland, offering owner-occupiers and neighbor-owners a range of mechanisms to cope with rapid, ongoing change in their community. The question remains: Did this method of urban building hold within it the seeds of democratized building practice? By way of answer (and conclusion), I offer a comparison of properties on Block 29, where owners from different social classes and of different ethnicities bought adjacent properties and developed them in the 1860s and 1870s. The proximity of the sites—side-by-side and back-to-back on Block 29—makes the different consequences of investment decisions, taken in response to the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, that much more apparent over time. On this block, as on others in West Oakland, social position and access to capital contributed to an owner's ability to extract profit from residential property. In other words, in West Oakland, class, gender, and ethnicity counted in small-scale, owner-driven residential property improvement, as well as in commercially or industrially driven large-scale development. So, too, did building location, the physical character of property (buildings and lots), and development strategies, especially those taken about land use.

The mixture of uses that developed on Block 29 is astonishing even for West Oakland. Bounded on three sides by railroad tracks, Block 29 sat at the western edge of the Oakland Point commercial row, with Seventh Street trains to the south, the Cedar Street freight line to the east, and "Death Curve"—the link between the northern line and the Oakland Mole (pier)—clipping the block's northwest corner. The proximity to the railroad yards and workers must have appealed to John Frese when he opened the Railroad Exchange Hotel on the corner of Railroad Avenue (later Seventh Street) and Bay Street in 1863. Skilled railroad workers, principally piledrivers and bridge-builders, rented rooms in this hotel, where the Frese family lived until the property was sold in the late 1880s (Well 4600). Over time, Frese made modest improvements to the hotel, guarding carefully his resources; as a consequence, he seems to have made a considerable profit when he sold the West Oakland establishment to a Norwegian hotelkeeper and his wife: the assessed value of the Railroad Exchange Hotel increased from \$700 in 1864 to \$2,000 in 1886 (for further discussion, see "Landscape of Lodging," this volume).

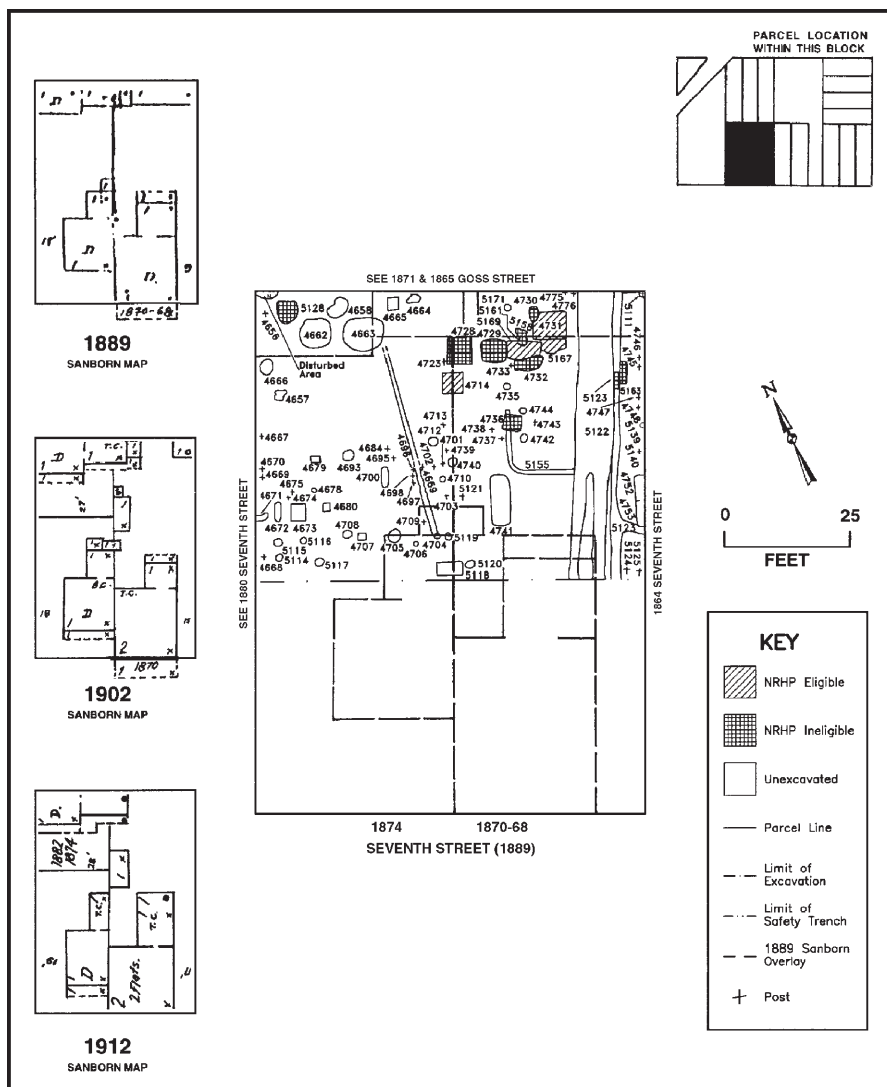


Figure 5.10. Parcel plans, 1868-1874 Seventh Street, Gohsen residence (1868-70) /rentals (1874 and backyard). (Block 29 BTR)

Other owner-occupiers (and some owner-builders) who joined Frese in developing property on Block 29 were not as fortunate. By the end of the 1860s, Charles and Madeline Gohsen, well-off Prussian immigrants, lived with three school-aged children on a triple lot facing Seventh Street, directly east of Frese’s hotel. In Oakland city directories, Gohsen advertised his trade as “house and sign painting”; he seems to have accrued considerable wealth immediately before and after the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, when the building boom turned Oakland Point into a bustling working-class community. According to the 1870 population census, the family possessed \$2,000 in personal property and owned \$5,000 worth of real estate (Figures 5.10 and 5.11). On Block 29 the Gohsen holdings consisted of their family home, a large two-story dwelling (2,200 sq. ft.), and a small one-story rental property, both facing Seventh Street, plus outbuildings and a backyard cottage (Privy 4714/Privy 5167/Privy 5169).

In the 1870s the Gohsen property on Seventh Street held its value, with improvements assessed (for tax purposes) at \$2,250 in 1878/79. Yet, the family seems to have run into financial difficulty by the early 1880s, when the property was put in Madeline’s name and the value of the plot started to decline. County tax assessors put the value at \$1,700 in 1881/82; one year



Figure 5.11. Looking west from Cedar Street towards Bay Street in 1925. The first two-story building with its false third-story facade is the former Gohsen residence. The next building is the Railroad Exchange Hotel addition built by Olaf Anderson in 1890, while the peaked roof of John Frese's original rooming house for railroad workers is only barely visible at the end of the block. (Photo reproduced with permission of Vernon J. Sappers)

later, it dropped to \$1,500, when Dennis Kane bought the property from Mrs. Gohsen. The family moved, but Charles continued to use the Seventh Street address for his business address until the early 1890s, probably renting space from Kane and subsequent owners. That privilege ended in 1892, when Frederick and Christine Woest, German immigrants, purchased the property and turned the former Gohsen family home into a lodging house. After Frederick's death in 1896, Christine and her children inherited the property, which the family owned through the 1920s. Although the property value declined (to \$1,000 in 1896), the family invested in improvements aimed at increasing income. Another rental dwelling was constructed in the rear yard (bringing the total number of houses on the site to four), and the main lodging house was turned into flats, perhaps to separate the Woest family residence from that of their tenants. In making the decision to improve the property (through densification and change of use), it is very likely that the Woests took some clues from Olaf and Hanna Anderson, the Norwegian hotelkeepers next door. As West Oakland's population began to swell around the turn of the 20th century, the Andersons responded by doubling the size of the Railroad Exchange Hotel.

Like John Frese and Charles Gohsen, the railroad brought Michael McNamara, an Irish immigrant laborer, to Oakland Point. Sometime in the early 1870s, McNamara purchased three adjacent building lots on Block 29, directly behind (to the north of) the Gohsen family plot. By 1875 he lived with his wife, Catherine, and three children in the single-family home at 1865 Goss Street (the easternmost lot) (Privy 4724/Pit 5112). McNamara either built the house on this property or purchased one that had been erected in the vicinity in the late 1860s or early 1870s (Figure 5.12). During the 1870s McNamara, who worked as a laborer for the Central

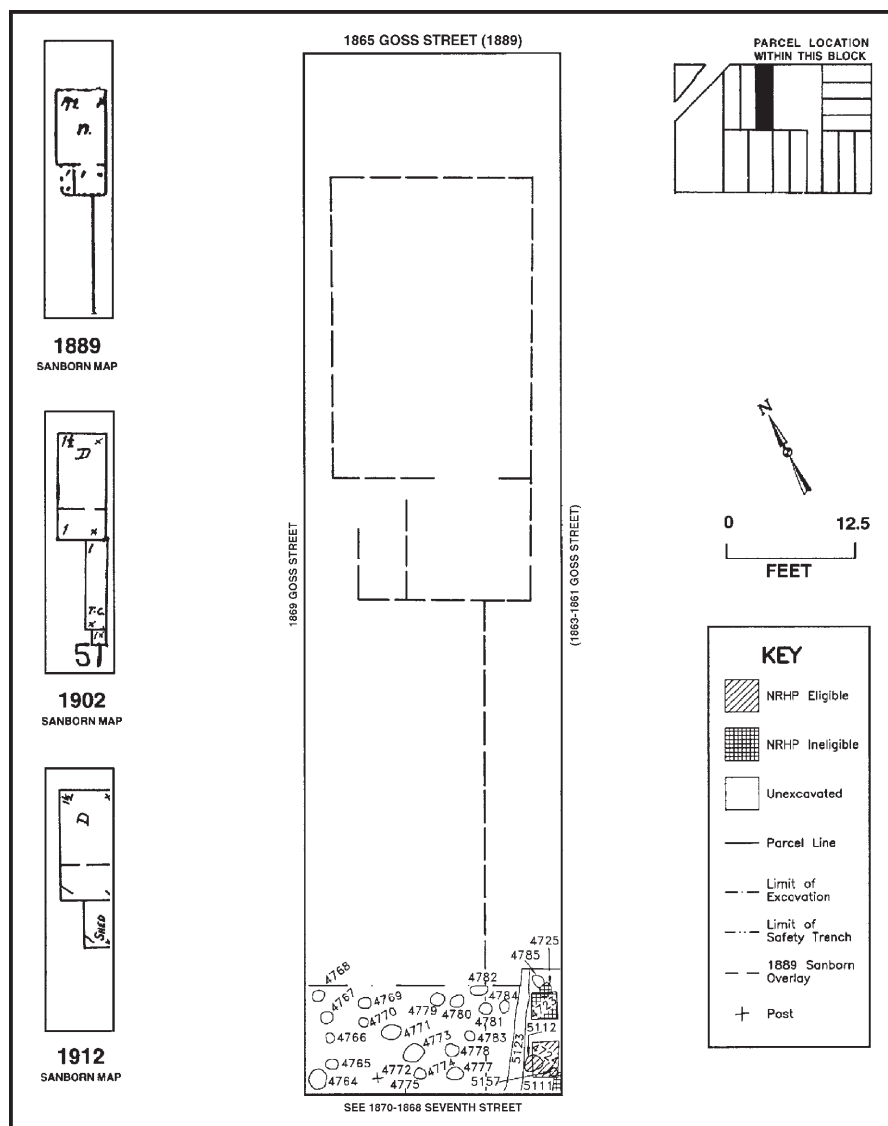


Figure 5.12. Parcel plans, 1865 Goss Street, McNamara residence. (Block 29 BTR)

Pacific Railroad, managed to accrue enough capital to invest in small-scale property in Oakland and Vallejo; after Michael's death in 1880, from heart disease at age 45, Catherine inherited the property, which included seven lots in Oakland. Five had been improved with small cottages or tenements capable of producing rent. The real estate was appraised at \$4,320 and estimated at being able to produce \$200 a year in rental income. Catherine also inherited cash, worth \$31.00 and other personal property, which showed that this Irish immigrant working-class family lived in comfortable circumstances, as the McNamaras owned a range, spring mattress, double bedstead, four mattresses, chairs, carpets, table and wash stand, crockery, and a parlor set.

It took some time to settle Michael McNamara's estate, which supported Catherine until her death in 1894. In terms of material goods and real estate, she possessed the requisites for respectable widowhood, but she died in financial straits. Two children and one grandchild predeceased her and she needed to borrow money from friends and neighbors for food, medical care, and other goods at the end of her life. Since Mrs. McNamara possessed no capital to make improvements to the real estate she owned, the description in the probate papers of the Goss

Street lots is not surprising: “they are improved, having thereon small cottages or dwellings which are in a dilapidated state for want of repairs, paint, etc.” While in probate, the estate administrators tried to rent the dwellings and had difficulty doing so. As the court papers reported, “said cottages or dwellings have been rented part of the time and part of the time they have been vacant on account of inability to obtain tenants. Only a small income or rental has been received from said improved real property.” One of the Goss Street lots sat directly adjacent to “Death Curve.” The sale of Catherine’s personal property helped to clear her debts, and her son-in-law inherited the balance of the estate, appraised at about \$2,000, which he proceeded to sell.

In 1897 Christopher Kane, a naturalized Irish immigrant who worked as a ferryboat fireman, bought the McNamara home for \$650. As was typical, tax assessors assessed the value at \$250, about one-third less than market value. Kane and his family, who lived in this building until 1910, made a few modest alterations (enclosing a rear porch); they retained the long narrow addition, attached to the back of the building, which was possibly used for animal husbandry. In 1910 Manuel Perry, a Portuguese immigrant who worked as a railroad laborer, purchased the property to use as his family’s home. This family removed the long narrow building, replacing it with a smaller shed. Like the other working-class, immigrant, owner-occupiers who preceded them as owners of 1865 Goss Street, the Perry family made modest alterations to their home. These improvements seem to have focused on meeting family needs rather than on extracting profit from urban real estate.

In conclusion, the families who lived on Cypress Project blocks did not often adopt the “overturn, overturn” approach to property development, that is, erasing standing buildings and replacing them with new structures. They turned to incremental construction, choosing to improve residential properties through interior and exterior alterations, making additions, lifting buildings, moving them, erecting ancillary structures, and reconfiguring the social uses of existing buildings (principally turning single-family homes into flats and lodging houses). Across a growing community, this approach to building practice empowered individual owners and their families; from the Manns and the Bredhoffs to the Freses and the McNamaras, incremental building offered owner-occupiers and neighbor-owners diverse mechanisms for property improvement. Even though incremental building practice helped West Oakland’s residents cope with change, it did not democratize the residential landscape, which became threaded with the effects of social inequalities and privilege over time. As we have seen, values intrinsic to specific properties (especially geographic location), changing economic conditions (shifts in the real-estate market and thus changes in the value of land), and social privilege (access to capital for improvements), affected who became a winner or a loser in small-scale property development. In the everyday houses that lined West Oakland’s streets—the “small things forgotten,” to paraphrase James Deetz (1977)—we may read the changing effects of these big structures on the urban landscape, as well as the actions taken by individuals to cope with change.

RICHES FROM THE BACKYARD AND OPEN SPACES

The residents of West Oakland used their small yards to grow fruits and vegetables, and to raise poultry, rabbits, goats, sheep, and cows. They also grazed their animals and collected berries on vacant lots and public thoroughfares.

Brothers John and Louis Taylor lived in a tiny workers' cottage measuring less than 600 square feet on a 2,500-square-foot lot in a densely built-up block near the center of Oakland. The brothers hailed from Indiana and worked as carpenters during the building boom of the 1870s. Louis had a wife, four daughters, and a son. He also had a cow that died of hollow-horn disease and was buried in the backyard in the late 1870s (Pit 1815). The cow probably helped to feed the large family in the early 1870s, when they first arrived in Oakland. A refuse-filled pit (1753), dated to the mid-1880s, provides further insights into this family. Ammunition indicates hunting, canning jars represent the preserving of foodstuffs, and shellfish provides evidence of gathering from the marsh. The presence of nine groundstone net-weights, presumably collected from a local prehistoric site, also show the family's exploration and use of local resources. It is unlikely that the Taylors replaced the family cow. They did educate their daughters and sent them out to work, with Miss Lillie achieving the skilled position of compositor at the *Oakland Times*. It may have been her extra income that enabled the family to set a pleasant table in their small cottage; she probably spent her disposable income on items to maintain a professional

appearance, such as the "Beautiful Snow for the Complexion" and the tooth product found in the pit (1753) associated with this family.

While the Taylor family dug a hole in the yard specifically for the deceased cow, the Lewis family living adjacent to the railroad tracks in Oakland Point disposed of their dead calf in the bottom of their privy (2786+), along with household refuse and unwanted personal items. The fully articulated skeleton showed no fractures to indicate an accident, and it is assumed that the animal died of a disease (Figure 5.13). E.F. Lewis's household numbered five individuals, including his sister-in-law, who lived in a tiny workers' cottage measuring 440 square feet on a lot of less than 2,000 square feet that they rented from their next-door neighbor. Their back fence line was within about 40 feet of the main rail-line nicknamed "Death's Curve," and they may have grazed animals in the open space along the railway corridor. E.F. worked as a railroad brakeman, a skilled and relatively well-paid occupation. Nevertheless, the Lewis household appears to have been more self-sufficient than many of their neighbors. They kept a calf and probably a horse on this small lot; they collected shellfish and hunted

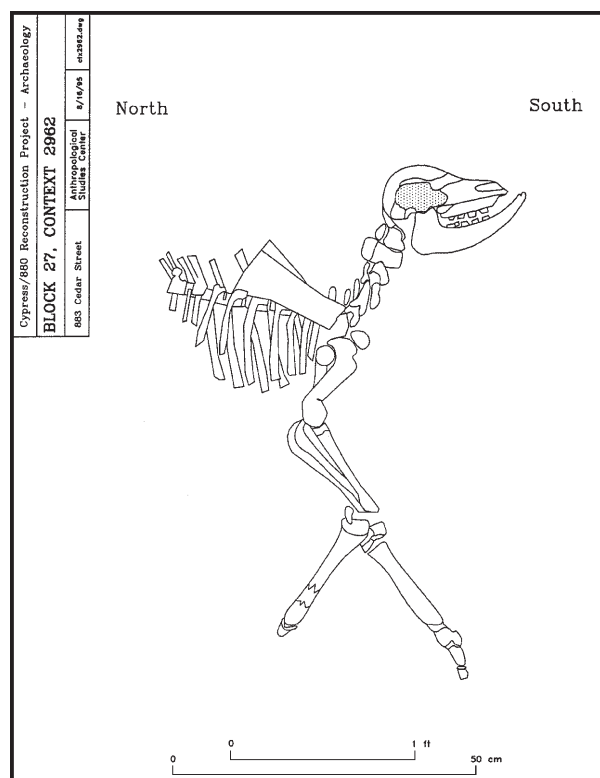


Figure 5.13. A stock-raising failure. Archaeologists found the fully articulated skeleton of a calf at the bottom of a privy behind 883 Cedar Street, adjacent to the railroad track known as "Death Curve." The animal presumably died of a disease, as there were no fractures or other marks indicating an accident (Privy 2786).

CAN IT! FOOD PRESERVATION – FROM HOUSEHOLD ART TO DOMESTIC SCIENCE

Regina George

The preservation of food is an ancient art that helps lessen the threat of starvation and allows better nutrition throughout the seasons. Every culture has preferred preservation techniques developed to suit the climate and available materials, including drying; smoking; salting; fermenting; freezing; covering in oil, vinegar, honey, or alcohol; and, in recent times, canning and freeze-drying. Some techniques stabilize food for a few days, while others preserve its nutritional value for years, even millennia (Shephard 2000:11).

A side benefit to food preservation is the creation of new food types, such as cheese, aged meats, and smoked sausages, as well as highly-flavored condiments—sweet jams and jellies, sour pickles, spicy relishes—that are prized for their ability to wake-up dull, but nutritious, dietary basics such as rice, corn, beans, or wheat. The distinct flavors of these preserved foods are the basis for many regional cuisines. The techniques by which these preserved foods are produced and the social events at which they are consumed also help preserve ethnic identity (Shephard 2000:19-20).

The Industrialization of Food Preservation

Historically, food preservation was done on a small scale. As the mechanics were poorly understood until relatively recently, the ability to produce a consistent product was considered a skill, learned either under a family member's watchful eye or through a lengthy apprenticeship (Shephard 2000:25-27). In the early 19th century, responding to the challenge of feeding Napoleon's large army, an enterprising Frenchman, Nicholas Appert, applied scientific rigor to the arena of food preservation. By combining techniques of heat-treating foods to kill the microorganisms inside, covering the foods with a heated liquid to force out the air, and then sealing the foods in aseptic containers, he preserved food with a high degree of success and in large quantities (Bitting 1937). Appert's techniques were later improved upon by Louis Pasteur (Shephard 2000:25; Thorne 1986) and were quickly adopted by emerging industrial manufacturers of processed foods, who saw that a profit could be made by providing nearly immortal food in large quantities to urban centers

and frontier outposts, as well as to military forces (Bitting 1937; Thorne 1986). The growth of the manufactured food industry was furthered by an improved understanding of nutrition (Shephard 2000), and the development of tightly linked international rail and maritime distribution systems (Cronon 1991).

Despite the widespread availability and affordability of such convenience foods, interest in home food preservation continued. Many consumers were suspicious of the quality of industrially manufactured foods, the adulteration of which had been documented since the 1880s and was famously chronicled by Upton Sinclair (1906) in his novel, *The Jungle*. Sinclair's depiction of manufacturing abuses led directly to the passage of both the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906 and the Meat Inspections Act of 1906. Customers also disliked the altered texture and taste of processed foods, especially after the switch from glass jars to the more easily transported metal cans (hence the pervasive use of the term "canning"), which often left the food with a metallic aftertaste (Shapiro 2001; Thorne 1986). Innovations in home food preservation included the development of cookery books with standardized preservation recipes and the mass marketing of glass jars for home use from such manufacturers as Mason, who patented his version in 1858. Food preservation was touted by the new "home economists" of the late 19th century as a way to stretch the household food budget and strengthen the health of the family. Popular foods readily preserved at home included jams, jellies, relishes, whole fruits, and vegetables, often made using homegrown or locally collected produce.

Archaeology of Food Preservation in West Oakland

The essay on seeds in this chapter demonstrates the ubiquity and usefulness of examining archaeological seed remains, but there are several problems with identifying home-processing activity by the presence of large deposits of edible seeds alone. Preservation conditions must be just right to preserve plant remains. Many types of seeds do not preserve well (e.g., cucumbers, citrus), even under the most

favorable conditions (Hirn 1999:13). Preserved meats would only rarely leave any trace in the archaeological record. And only certain types of processed products—jellies, strained sauces, wines and cordials—require the maker to remove the seeds from the finished product, resulting in a mass disposal of seeds, while the seeds are retained in other types of processed products, such as jams, preserved whole fruits, and tomatoes.

Another source of large quantities of seeds is the disposal of a large amount of rotting fresh fruit (Hirn 1999:89). The San Francisco Bay Area was home to a large agricultural industry and many fresh fruits and vegetables were available year-round. Eight archaeological features, for example, contained large concentrations of tomato seeds—two (the Holderer family Privy 8445 and the Huddleston/Stryker Privy 100) contained more than 15,000 and 20,000 seeds, respectively. According to period recipes, tomato seeds were retained during preservation processing, and were only removed at the time of use, when the tomatoes are rubbed through a sieve to create a smoother sauce (Acton 1855:411; Farmer 1896:241). Given that, it seems unlikely that this quantity of tomato seeds would have been produced during one food-preparation event. Rather, it is likely that they represent the disposal of several pounds of fresh tomatoes.

In addition to commercially available products, native fruits could be harvested for free. All 10 archaeological features that contained large seed assemblages yielded blackberry seeds, which are native to the Bay Area and were easily harvested in late August and early September. Eight features contained concentrations of grape seeds, which had been naturalized in the Bay Area from mission grapes and would have also been available in the fall.

To address the possibility that seed concentrations represent the disposal of a quantity of fresh fruit instead of household food processing, we must also look for the presence of food-storage vessels, such as canning jars and crocks, as well as other kitchen tools that would have been used in the home for food preservation. Among these are strainers, food-mills, and enameled pots and pans, which are non-reactive with acidic foods such as tomatoes and better preserve the color of processed fruits (Acton 1855:411; Farmer 1896:473; Rorer 1902:640-650).

Households

The two largest deposits of edible seeds were located in features associated with the Holderer and the Huddleston/Stryker households, both headed by American-born skilled laborers. Privy 8445, deposited in 1895 and associated with the Holderer household at 793 Wood Street, held over 210,000 edible seeds—mostly berry, tomato, and fig. Privy 100 (ca. 1880-1881), associated with the Huddleston/Stryker household at 1708 William, held nearly 280,000 edible seeds, including a large number of berry, grape, tomato, and fig. In addition, approximately 1,800 coffee seeds were found, which can be accounted for by Huddleston's job as coffee mill-hand. Between the two households, however, only two large glass jars, three jelly jars, and one crock were recovered archaeologically.

Privy 985 (ca. 1880), associated with the household of the German brewer Bredhoff at 663 Sixth Street, had nearly 152,000 edible seeds—the third largest seed assemblage in the Cypress Project. Among the more pedestrian berry, grape, tomato, and fig seeds is a concentration of nearly 34,000 elderberry seeds. Elderberry is popular in traditional German cooking and can also be used to produce elderberry wine.

No edible seed remains were found in Well 953, associated with the household of the Carter family at 668 Fifth (ca. 1889-1896). Carter was an African American railroad porter, an occupation that paid well and held some esteem in the local community. Despite the lack of seeds, it seems likely that the family was preserving food: Several glass jars, lids, liners, and crocks were found, as well as fragments from an enameled pan and a conical wooden food-mill pestle. The same can be said for the contents of Well 7500, deposited in about 1905 and associated with the Weisheimer household, the family of a German painter that lived at 1768 Atlantic. This feature lacked seeds but had a large quantity of jars and enameled pot and pan fragments. Privy 4239, associated with the Corbett renters at 817 Filbert (ca. 1880), again lacked seeds, but had the remains of several glass jars and a conical copper strainer. In fact, the clear and puzzling pattern is that features that held a significant number of food-storage containers tended to lack seed remains.

One notable exception to this pattern is the disproportionately large number of jelly jars that were found in deposits associated with the Mann household at 654 Fifth (ca. 1885). Mr. Mann was

an American capitalist who spent several months ill before his death. Fanny Farmer (1896:494) suggested seedless jelly, diluted in water and sugar as an easily digested, refreshing treat for the ill, especially for fever patients. This feature also contained a significant number of larger glass jars, as well as a large quantity of berry, grape, tomato, and fig seeds, which could indicate that extra care was taken in the invalid's diet.

It is unclear why households with the most seeds had neither sufficient numbers of storage containers to hold these preserved products nor the kitchen tools that would have been used for preservation. Perhaps the reuse of glass jars by thrifty households until their eventual breakage cut down on the number of food-storage containers discovered in these deposits, and it is equally possible that prized kitchen tools from these households may have been curated and passed down to the next generation.

An Unexpected Outcome

At the start of the Cypress Archaeological Project excavations, we expected that most evidence for home-based food-preservation activity would be associated with lower-income households, who might be inclined to preserve surpluses as a buffer against financial hardships (Hirn 1999:87; Praetzellis 1994:240). The archaeological deposits, however, showed no evidence for this; in fact the reverse pattern emerged. Thrift does not appear to have been the principal motivation behind the desire to preserve fruits and vegetables in the home. With all of the forces in play and considering the small sample size, firm conclusions are problematic. Our supposition, however, supports the possibility that the subtle influence of Victorian domestic ideology may have been at work, wherein food preservation was valued less for its nutritional and economic benefits than as a statement of household morality and personal satisfaction.

Recipes:

Blackberry Brandy (Cordial)

1 lb blackberries
4 oz. sugar
2 fluid oz. 70 proof brandy
6 1/2 fluid oz. Vodka

Pick over berries, removing stalks, stemcaps, and unsound berries, and wash thoroughly in cold water. Put into a bowl and crush berries with back of a large spoon. Stir, cover with a clean cloth

and put in a warm place for 24 hours. Transfer the puree into a saucepan and bring to a simmer. After puree is warmed, place in a sterilized jelly bag or strain through several thicknesses of fine muslin, pushing the puree against the sides of the strainer to get as much juice as possible. Let the juice sit for an hour or so, allowing the sediment to settle. Pour off only the clear juice into a small saucepan (hoping for 15 fluid oz.). If juice is less, add enough red wine to make the difference. Add sugar and warm mixture in saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Allow to cool before mixing in the brandy and vodka. Age for one month or longer. Keep refrigerated.

Simplified recipe from *Making Inexpensive Liqueurs*, by Ren Bellis (1984:136).

Grape Jelly

2-3 lbs grapes or 1-pint juice
14 oz turbinado sugar

Strip from their stalks some fine ripe grapes and stir them with a wooden spoon over a gentle fire until all have burst and the juice flows freely from them. Strain it off through a jelly (cheese) cloth or bag. Measure, and to each pint of juice allow 14 ounces of sugar. Put the juice on to boil for 20 minutes; then stir in the sugar and boil 15 minutes longer, keeping it constantly stirred and well skimmed. Cool slightly. Pour into jars and seal.

From *Great Oldtime Recipes* by Beatriz Maria Prada (1974:266).



An assortment of canning jars and lids from the Weisheimer family well at 1768 Atlantic Street. The jars, typical of the time, represent some of the biggest names in the business, including the Mason Fruit Jar Company, the Consolidated Fruit Jar Company, and the Hemingray Glass Company. The variety of lid types shown include an all-glass hinged lid patented in 1882, the glass Crystal Jar Lid with three lugs patented in 1878, Putnam's glass lid with metal yoke, and glass lid liners for zinc lids (Well 7500).

locally, and they ate moderate to low-priced meals that required substantial effort in the kitchen to prepare.

Although Sanborn maps of 1889 show a few study-area parcels with stables in their rear yards, the only physical evidences of stabling was found near the rail line at the Lewis residence (Privy 2786) and at the Gohsen residence (Privy 4714). Other evidence of backyard livestock was found on Block 1, where African American Lucinda Tilghman raised rabbits, chickens, and possibly a goat (Privy 933+), and Kentuckian Mrs. French raised chickens and possibly rabbits. The remains of 10 dogs, mainly puppies, and 3 cats were also recovered from Mrs. French's privy (954), along with several chickens. Bones of the latter showed evidence of healed fractures and other trauma, indicating altercations between the chickens and pets kept on this small lot. The remains of two piglets were found in a privy (4281) associated with a small rental cottage on Block 6.

The raising of cows and pigs within the Oakland city limits was technically illegal at this time, but evidently not all that uncommon. Jack London's hero Martin Eden roomed with a poor Portuguese widow, who kept two cows to supplement her income. Her cows grazed on vacant lots and public thoroughfares attended by one or more of her brood of seven children, who kept a watchful eye for the "poundman" (London 1909:151-152).

Descendants of Greek families who lived in West Oakland in the 1930s and 1940s remembered being raised on goat's milk. As families had done for decades, they grazed their animals on the vacant lots near the railroad tracks (Kosmos 1995:9; Rydman 1981:17).



Figure 5.14. Backyard poultry-raising. Mrs. Georgakapoulos poses with her daughters and a chicken in the backyard of 392 Wood Street in around 1921. (Photo courtesy of Trula Karnegis)

In the late 19th century, urban householders throughout California practiced chicken production on a small-scale, "barnyard fowl" basis. According to a family-oriented poultry how-to manual, "equipment for rearing chicks or maintaining a small laying flock can be very simple or it can be as elaborate as you wish. With a little ingenuity and close attention to the fundamentals of good management, many people are successful in rearing chickens or in getting good egg production with little more equipment than that found in the average home" (Florea 1944:33). A backfilled feature in Santa Rosa dating to the 1870s contained the remains of more than 20 young chicks, only one or two weeks old (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1989:13). This deposit represented a single catastrophic event. Chicks are notoriously liable to such disasters brought about by a variety of culprits,

Table 5.3. West Oakland Poultry-raisers by Feature

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Eldest Child	Generations	In-laws	Boarders	% Low-cost meat
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	14	3	Yes	No	34.0
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	22	2	No	Yes	28.1
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	16	2	No	No	21.7
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	11	2	No	No	29.6
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	19	2	No	Yes	22.0
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	26.1
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	19.1
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	15	3	Yes	No	16.0
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	4	2	No	No	32.1
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	4	2	No	No	19.6
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	9	2	No	Yes	37.3
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	Adult	2	Unknown	Unknown	24.9
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	Adult	3	Yes	No	13.1
37	Privy 156	Long household	1882	3	2	No	Yes	45.9

including disease; parasite infestation; predation by animals such as dogs, cats, rats, or skunks; excessively hot, cold, or wet weather; drowning; poor nutrition; overcrowding; or trampling. A Sacramento hen house dating to around 1900 contained evidence of a backyard chicken-raising scheme, concocted with resources on hand—old saucers, Mason jars, kerosene lamps, and scissors, as well as inexpensive poultry items—chicken fountain and “blood cup,” common items sold by mail-order catalogs to feed and bleed chickens, respectively. The feature was associated with the large household of German Peter Newman, who owned a cigar shop with his son. It was suggested that the raising of chickens in urban settings was a transitional activity, associated with large multigenerational households during times of financial insecurity (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992a). When the children were grown, the wife had more time to explore other tasks of benefit to her family. This may have been particularly important as the head of household aged and became less able to support the family, while the next generation, although in the workplace, had not reached their potential as wage earners. West Oakland oral histories suggest that the backyard raising of poultry was part of the female domain (Figure 5.14).

Archaeological data on the raising of poultry is presented in Table 5.3. It must be remembered that only the positive information may be interpreted; the absence of evidence does not mean that the household did not raise poultry, only that we did not find anything that they discarded related to that activity. While there is some support for the thesis of chickenraising functioning as a transitional activity, it also appears to have been something that the families of skilled and professional workers undertook in their backyards regardless of need.

Information from archaeological seed assemblages, historic documents, and artifacts indicates a wide range of backyard landscapes within our study area. Some untended yards were a tangle of tall weeds, such as red-root pigweed and star thistle, which were occasionally cut, burned, and discarded into available spaces. Other yards sported shorter ground cover of sturdy weeds, such as lambsquarters, while some were tended with great care by their occupants. The garden of the Nicewonder family on Atlantic and Wood was "known far and wide" for its rare and beautiful plants (Roberts 1937:7). Although flower seeds are rarely recovered archaeologically and generally only from damp well layers, surprising evidence of flowers did survive in area features (Table 5.4). The block originally developed by capitalist and spiritualist Curtis Marshall had a diverse garden with calendula, goldaster, mignonette, violets, forget-me-nots, poppy, and sweet William (Well 1700). Out at Oakland Point, the garden of a small rental cottage in Pine Street contained *Carpenteria* (a flowering shrub), mayweed, and scarlet flax. A date palm—a popular Victorian ornamental plant—grew in a flowerpot inside (Well 7175), while around the corner, a household of Pullman porters grew geranium, scarlet pimpernel, and a variety of sorrel. The porter household's interest in flowers is substantiated by the recovery of five flowerpots and five vases, including two matched sets: blue bud vases and porcelain vases with gilded and handpainted designs. Their lot may have had peach trees planted by the original owner, a fruit dealer, as indicated by the recovery of 290 peach pits, representing two bushels of fruit (Well 7511).

Most of the West Oakland households sampled for the Cypress Project contained flowerpots; many contained vases. Whether or not households maintained flower patches in their yards, they appear to have relished the color and variety of indoor plants and cut flowers. Domestic reformers advised that cut flowers and potted plants gauged the healthfulness of the home. Flowers died through lack of care and appropriate light, heat, and air. Thus flourishing plants signaled a healthy environment and the success of scientific homemaking principles (Leavitt 2002:65-66). Each month, the *Domestic Science Monthly* published "Garden Notes," a column that gave detailed gardening tips, sometimes listing chores by week and providing a poem for inspiration:

Plant blessing, blessing will bloom;
Plant hate, and hate will grow.
You can sow today—tomorrow shall bring
The blossom that proves what sort of a thing
Is the seed, the seed that you sow
[*Domestic Science Monthly* June 1900:84-85].

Oakland's climate is such that blackberries would have been ubiquitous, and considered a noxious weed by many. The plant thrives without care and every resident of the project area could have gathered berries in season within only a short walk. Ten of the 36 features from which seeds were recovered contained large concentrations of seeds that can be attributed to home food-processing. Over half of these features are associated with the wealthiest families. Of these, all features contained blackberry seeds, eight contained concentrations of grape seeds, and six contained tomato. The household of German brewer Charles Bredhoff processed elderberries as well, probably into wine (Hirn 1999). Other artifacts, such as large jugs, hydrometers, and other brewing tools, indicate that residents may well have brewing fruit wines as well as, or in addition to, preserving berries.

Table 5.4. Backyards and Food Processing

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Berries	Canning Jars	Vases/Flower Remains	Flowerpot	Garden Tools
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	>50,000	23	6 vases	1	
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908				1	
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	>20,000	2		3	
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880		8			
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890		11	9 vases	6	Hose
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s		9		12	Hose
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880				6	
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	>45,000			2	Shovel
1	Privy 954	French family	1880			2 vases	1	Hose, pick, spade
1	Privy 951	Paaddock/Swain household	1878				3	Hose
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	>100,000	1		1	
1	Pit 914+	Bredhoff renters	1887		1		1	
2	Privy 1431	Van Epps family	1880		1		1	
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	>27,000	2	1 vase?	3	
2	Privy 1376	Newell renters	1880		1	1 vase	1	
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900			1 vase	1	Axe
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880		1		2	
2	Privy 1301	Holland renters	1895			1 vase		
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900				2	
2	Pit 1309	Holland renters	1880		1		1	
2	Privy 1321+	Holland renters	1885		2	1 vase	2	Hose
2	Privy 1330	Fleck family	1878				1	
2	Privy 1358+	Cox renters	1880	>6,000	5	3 vases	2	Rake
2	Pit 1368	Cox renters	1895		2	1 vase	2	
2	Pit 1387	Cox renters	1880				1	
2	Privy 1452+	Stewart household	1880		1		3	
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890		1	1 vase	1	
3	Privy 1785	Curtis family	1874	>30,000	3	Violet		
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884					
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880		2	1 vase		
3	Well 1700, II	Curtis renters	1890	10	3	Calendula, goldaster, mignonette, violet		

(continued on next page)

Table 5.4. Backyards and Food Processing (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Berries	Canning Jars	Vases/Flower Remains	Flowerpot	Garden Tools
3	Well 1700, III	Curtis renters	1911	30	14	4 vases/Forget-me-not, oxalis, poppy, calendula, mignonette, sweet William	7	Hoe, hose
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906		2	1 vase	3	Shovel
4	Privy 3106+	Renters	1880		7		3	
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880		2		4	
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880		6		1	
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	400	6	1 vase	3	Hose
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880		6		1	
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	>2,000	3	3 vases	4	
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890		3	3 vases	1	
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	2,700	1		1	
4	Pit 3137	Dutton family	1880	2,050			3	
5	Privy 3800	Farmer household	1880				2	
5	Privy 3830	Quinn family	1877				7	Bulb pot Hatchet
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	>8,000	1	1 vase	1	
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	>25,000	1	1 vase	1	
6	Privy 4220	Broderick family	1880		4	1 vase	1	
6	Privy 4239	Corbett renters	1880		1	1 vase		
6	Privy 4243	Corbett renters	1880		1	1 vase		
6	Privy 4281	Coleman renter	1880		0	1 vase	1	Hose
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880		5	3 vases	1	Shovel
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	2,300	5		6	Hose
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1885	900	5		1	
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	>175,000	1		2	
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	5,740	4			
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885		2			
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	>43,000	2			
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885		4	1 vase	2	Hose
20	Privy 6270	Scoville renters	1870		3		2	Rake
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	2,580	2			Hose

(continued on next page)

Table 5.4. Backyards and Food Processing (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Berries	Canning Jars	Vases/Flower Remains	Flowerpot	Garden Tools
21	Well 7175	Schrock renters	1900	>10,000	10	2 vases/Sunflower, scarlet flax, date palm, mayweed, carpenteria	3	Hose
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family	1905		21	1 vase		Hose, shovel
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895		2	5 vases/Geranium, scarlet pimpernel, sorrel	5	Hose, pitchfork, shovel
22	Pit 5200	Buhsen Hotel	1900		2		1	Hose
22	Trench 5237	Chinese Laundry	1900		3	Sunflower	1	Hose
24	Well 559+	Pullman Hotel	1905	200	9		3	Hose
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	25	5	Poppy	1	Hatchet
24	Pit 574	O'Brien family	1909		1			
27	Pit 2855	Fischer family	1900		5		1	
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880					Shovel
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880		2			Hose
27	Pit 2870	O'Brien household	1900		24	3 vases		
27	Privy 2784+	McLaughlin rental	1890	>3,280	1			
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880		1		1	Hose
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895		1	1 vase		
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	100	5	1 vase/Calendula, oxalis	10	Hose
28	Pit 2404	Crocker family	1900		1			
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1880	19				
29	Well 4600, II	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1895		4		1	Hose
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	>7,500		1 vase	1	Hose
29	Privy 4731+	Gohsen renters	1880	>20,000	3	1 vase/Poppy		
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	>3,000				
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	>500			1	Hose
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895		4	5 vases		Hose
31	Pit 2524	Portuguese renters	1895		1		2	Shovel
37	Privy 100	Huddleson/Stryker household	1880	>125,000	1			Ax, hose
37	Privy 101	Stryker/Huddleson household	1881		2		1	
37	Privy 141	O'Connell family	1878		2	1 vase		
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	>10,000	1	1 vase/Oxalis	3	Hose

SEEDS FROM THE CYPRESS PROJECT: PARTS OF THE PUZZLE

Adapted from Hirn (1999) by Robert Douglass

More than 1,270,000 seeds were recovered from soil samples collected during the Cypress Project excavations. Although the volume of the processed soil samples was usually only 1 to 3 liters, some of the samples contained extremely large numbers of seeds. To save time and cost, a representative subsample of from 1 to 25 percent by weight was sorted, identified, and counted. Seed count and identification lists and tables were constructed for all samples. The analysis of these seeds and floral remains and the interpretation of their contextual associations have provided information about diet, food preservation, winemaking, and the cultural landscape, and have helped us to understand how people lived in late 19th-century West Oakland.

Most of the common plant foods that we use today were available to 19th-century West Oakland residents. Commercial fruit growing and shipment to the Oakland area were widespread by the 1850s (Olmo 1976:11-16). West Oaklanders bought produce from grocery stores and specialty markets, as well as from street-peddling fruit and vegetable dealers like Isaac Barnett and Samuel Jacobs on Block 2. Refrigerated rail cars, developed in 1877 for shipping meat, were soon being used for shipping fresh produce to and from Oakland (Jones 1975:132). Canned fruits and vegetables were available year-round in the late 19th century, but fresh produce did not become a staple of the diet until after World War I (Root and de Rochemont 1976:232). Popular wisdom held that vegetables were harder to digest than meat, and modern ideas of a well-balanced diet did not catch on with the general public until the 1920s (*Domestic Science Monthly* June 1900:293; Larsen 1977:66).

While cooking practices and beliefs are a strong part of cultural identity, the seed remains from the Cypress Project yielded little evidence of patterning related to ethnicity. Two ethnic groups in this study were represented by more than one household: Germans (three households) and Irish (four). Widely varying economic levels and occupations of the German families precluded looking for ethnic trends in the botanical remains. The Irish families were more economically uniform, but sparse seed remains prevented finding any patterns in those associations.

Cleaver-butchered mutton bone from Well 300, associated with the O'Brien family at 1817 Goss Street, provides the only link to ethnic Irish foodways, and taken with a lack of seed remains, seems only to indicate probable consumption of the typical meat-and-potato diet of the homeland (Bailey 1969:16-20; Smith 1990:224-240). The seed assemblage from Privy 933, associated with the African American household of Lucinda Tilghman and Abraham Holland at 662 Fifth Street, yielded no apparent ethnicity indicators. Trench 5237, at the Chinese laundry site on Block 22, contained the only seed with a definite ethnic association: one pit from an imported Chinese olive (*Canarium album*).

Social status is another aspect of dietary patterning. All societies assign some status value to different kinds of food (Wiessner and Schiefenhoel 1996:viii). "Out of season, unusual, hard to obtain, expensive food items bring status when served to guests" (Holt 1991:55). Privy 900 on at 654 Fifth Street, associated with Eunice Mann, the widow of a wealthy "capitalist," contained a wide range of fruit, vegetable, and nut remains. While Eunice may have been used to serving costly, exotic foods when her husband and brother-in-law were alive, as a widow with depleted resources, she probably served the cheaper meat cuts found in the faunal remains to save money. She may, however, have maintained personal feelings of social status by continuing to serve more expensive fruits and vegetables.

The Bredhoff, Irving, and Tilghman/Holland households, also on Block 1, and the Marshall Curtis family on Block 3, probably had more income than did Eunice Mann. The low incidence of fruit and vegetable seeds in the privies associated with these families may indicate that, like many 19th-century Americans, they favored diets emphasizing expensive meats over vegetable foods.

Generally, working-class people ate what they could afford, what they were used to eating, and what they liked (McIntosh 1995; Pillsbury 1998; Shapiro 1986). The seed deposits associated with working-class West Oaklanders are varied, with no readily apparent patterning.

It was expected that in late-19th-century urban areas, more affluent families would tend to use commercially canned fruits and vegetables, while lower income families would rely more on home canning (McIntosh 1995:105). This did not prove to be true in the West Oakland study area. Out of 36 studied features, 10 contained large concentrations of seeds attributable to some form of home food-processing. Of these, half were associated with some of the wealthiest families, who seem to have preferred home-canned over commercial products. In those deposits indicating food processing, all 10 contained blackberry-seed concentrations, 8 contained grape-seed concentrations, and 6 contained tomato-seed concentrations. Blackberries were the most widespread seed recovered throughout the Cypress study, found in over 75 percent of the deposits.

The Bredhoffs, one of the wealthier families, processed elderberries as well. In addition to preserves and jellies, project-area residents may have also made fruit wines. Despite a growing temperance movement, a good deal of winemaking went on in homes of the period (Jones 1975:105). Pits 1327, 1329, and 1370 at 718 Fifth Street on Block 2 were filled entirely with crushed and whole grape seeds. They are likely the remains of press cakes, or leftover masses of grape seeds and skins, resulting from home winemaking by Italian families in the early 1900s. The grape seeds found in the backyard of 718 Fifth Street represent the remains of over 3,000 pounds of European wine grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), enough to make two to three barrels of wine.

The rise of consumerism in the latter half of the 19th century changed the character and function of the kitchen garden (Tice 1984:49-51). Project-area residents increasingly relied on truck farms and markets for fresh produce. Privies, sheds, stables, outbuildings, and wells filled the small backyards of West Oakland: there was little room for extensive gardens, or ornamental plantings, and the recovery of flower seeds was a rare occurrence on the Cypress Project. Although no soil samples were taken from open areas, samples from three filled features provided some evidence of landscape plantings and flower gardens. While living in a cramped working-class home in Oakland could not have been easy, the seeds from these gardens are evidence that some residents took the time to grow plants and flowers, creating pockets of natural beauty in the

tiny crowded yards. Well 7175 at 812 Pine Street, associated with a small rental cottage, contained seeds of *Carpenteria* (a flowering shrub), geraniums, scarlet pimpernel, and sorrel, as well the seed of a date palm, a houseplant popular in late Victorian parlors. Well 1700 at 772 Fifth Street, associated with three small rental cottages, contained seeds of calendula, forget-me-nots, poppies, mignonette, sweet William, violets, goldaster, oxalis, and mayweed.

Weed seeds, abundant and easily dispersed by the wind, were present in all 36 features. Most of the weed seeds from the Cypress Project features are from plants similar to lambsquarters (*Chenopodium album*): low-growing, unobtrusive, and common even in well-kept yards. Sometimes, but not always, weed seeds can indicate an overgrown or neglected yard, or perhaps episodes of yard clean up. The seeds of cocklebur and red-root pigweed, both large rough weeds, found in Well 7175 on Pine Street, could have simply blown into the well from the vacant lot next door. Trees also left their traces in archaeological features. Leaves, easily wind-borne like weed seeds but more readily decomposed, were preserved nevertheless in some features, especially wells. Leaves and galls from Oakland's namesake trees were recovered from features near the western end of the project area. One of these also contained California sycamore leaves and seeds, fallen from trees that shaded busy West Oaklanders over a century ago.



Mrs. Lufkin probably displayed fruit in this handsome porcelain basket (Pit 3382).

"THE SEWING HOUR IS A PRETTY SCENE"

Sewing had both utilitarian and symbolic significance in late 19th-century America. The industrial production of cloth and clothing was relatively new, and manufactured apparel was still quite expensive: a working-class family might spend as much on clothing as on rent (Atwater 1888:437). At a time when the quality and style of one's clothing was a far clearer marker of wealth than in modern times, relatively little stigma was attached to buying secondhand and repaired garments, especially those of a high quality. By the same token, repaired clothing and other household fabrics would have been commonplace in the home.

Middle-class housewives had the time to make their children's clothes and were expected to do so. The poor, however, could not always afford to buy ready-made garments and women who worked outside the home often did not have the time to make clothing from scratch. This may have created something of a cultural conflict, for the ideal Victorian woman strove to be skilled in needlecraft, and practiced it often. This domestic attribute was seen as a demonstration of the household's frugality as well as an industrious example for the daughters of the house. By teaching her girls the competences by which their household's clothing and linens were kept in repair, the mother passed on more than mere skills. The entire moral world of the Victorians—not forgetting their system of gender roles—was symbolized in the sewing basket and its associated tools and materials.

Fashionable attire situated its wearer among the elite or at least as an aspiring follower. As a newlywed, Jack London's heroine Saxon devoted herself to the domesticity of her household and to the enhancement of her charms. She read the women's pages of the Sunday newspaper and perused the women's magazines in the public library:

Saxon made herself simple house slips of pretty gingham, ...crocheted yards of laces for her underwear, and made Battenberg in abundance for her table and for the bureau. A great achievement, that aroused Billy's applause, was an Afghan for the bed. She then ventured a rag carpet, which, the women's magazines informed her, had newly returned into fashion. As a matter of course she hemstitched the best table linen and bed linen they could afford [London 1913b:147].

From the mid-1890s, West Oakland's New Century Club taught sewing classes to girls in the neighborhood (Figure 5.15). Sewing was an integral part of the industrial curriculum for girls, giving them a marketable skill that could supplement the family's income. Also providing organized care for school-aged children during the summer months, domestic reformers incorporated other agendas into their sewing classes to help Americanize immigrant children, including religion, morals, and patriotism. Many study-area households included a dressmaker or seamstress.

A sewing kit would have been ubiquitous in late 19th-century homes, where it had both utilitarian and metaphorical functions. No differences in distribution by class, ethnicity, or nativity would be expected. Indeed, the relatively small number of sewing-related items found per household on Cypress Project excavations surely represents the process of curation at work and not the absence of sewing as an activity (Table 5.5). With the exception of disposable containers of sewing machine oil and broken darning eggs, most of the recovered sewing items were surely lost. The symbolic significance of the sewing basket and its accoutrements would have made this a likely set to pass on down the generations.

Table 5.5. Artifacts Associated with Sewing

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Sewing-related Artifacts
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	2 darning eggs, 1 sewing- machine oil
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908	1 safety pin
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	2 safety pins
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s	1 spool; sewing machine (probate)
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	1 knitting needle
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	1 sewing machine (probate),1 thimble
1	Pit 914+	Bredhoff renters	1887	1 safety pin
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900	1 safety pin
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	1 darning egg, 2 pins
2	Privy 1358+	Cox renters	1880	1 darning egg, 1 pin, 2 straight pins
2	Pit 1387	Cox renters	1880	1 safety pin, 1 straight pin
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	1 pin, 1 straight pin, 1 safety pin
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884	1 thimble
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	1 darning egg
3	Well 1700, II	Curtis renters	1890	1 knitting needle, needle case, 10 pins, 2 safety pins, sewing-machine oil
4	Privy 3106+	Renters	1880	3 sewing-machine oil
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	1 darning egg
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	2 darning eggs, 2 pins
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880	1 safety pin, 5 straight pins, 1 thimble
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	1 sewing-machine part
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	1 darning egg, 6 straight pins
5	Privy 3800	Farmer household	1880	1 safety pin
6	Privy 4239	Corbett renters	1880	3 straight pins
6	Privy 4243	Corbett renters	1880	1 flat iron, 2 safety pins, 4 straight pins
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	1 darning egg, 1 safety pin, 1 sewing-machine oil
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1885	1 darning egg, 1 safety pin
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	3 safety pins; sewing-machine salesman (census)
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	1 darning egg
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	6 straight pins
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	1 safety pin, 3 straight pins, 1 thimble
20	Privy 6270	Scoville renters	1870	1 tape measure
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	1 straight pin
21	Well 7175	Schrock renters	1900	5 safety pins, 17 spools of thread, 9 straight pins, 2 thimbles
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family	1905	1 safety pin, sewing-machine oil
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific Household	1895	2 darning eggs, 2 safety pins, 3 straight pins, 1 thread spool
22	Trench 5237	Chinese Laundry	1900	2 safety pins

(continued on next page)

Table 5.5. Artifacts Associated with Sewing (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Sewing-related Artifacts
24	Well 559+	Pullman Hotel	1905	5 knitting needles, 1 straight pin
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	1 scissors
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880	1 safety pin
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	1 darning egg, 1 pin, 1 thimble
27	Privy 2784+	McLaughlin rental	1880	2 pins, 1 yarn ball
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	3 pins, 1 safety pin
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	2 scissors, 1 sewing-machine oil, 1 straight pin, 3 thread spools
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange hotel	1880	13 knitting needles, 1 straight pin
29	Well 4600, II	Railroad Exchange hotel	1895	1 straight pin
29	Privy 4714	Goshen family	1873	1 pin, 1 safety pin, 1 thimble
29	Privy 4731+	Goshen renters	1880	1 darning egg
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	1 safety pin
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895	1 safety pin, 1 sewing-machine oil
31	Pit 2524	Portuguese renters	1895	1 safety pin
37	Privy 100	Huddleson/Stryker household	1880	1 iron
37	Privy 101	Stryker/Huddleson household	1881	1 straight pin
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	1 safety pin

Elias Howe patented the forerunner of the modern sewing machine in 1846. By the 1880s their price and availability was such that a sewing machine was a relatively common feature of a middle-class home. While pins and darning eggs appear to be common among project households, evidence of sewing machines is not and is generally associated with post-1890s deposits. The relatively affluent Mann household on Block 1 is associated with the earliest deposit (Privy 900) containing a sewing-machine oil bottle, which was discarded during a housecleaning episode in around 1885. Sewing machines may have remained a relative luxury. In 1894 a no-frills Singer machine could be bought from Sears, Roebuck and Co. for \$8.50 (1894:174), while the "Domestic," with many automatic features, sold for \$40 and upwards (Weinstock Lubin & Co. 1891:119).



Figure 5.15. Well-schooled seamstresses. After a girl had completed the nine "grades" of the New Century Club's Sewing Class, she could graduate to the Garment Class pictured here, where for 10 to 15 cents she could make an item of clothing for herself. (Source: *New Century Club* 1901)

STRUTTING YOUR STUFF: FASHION STRATEGIES OF THE FRUGAL OF WEST OAKLAND

Sunshine Psota

In 1888 a popular advice columnist wrote, “not every woman can dress well with even reckless expenditure, but a clever woman can dress well with intelligent economy and an artistic taste” (Roe 1888: 757). Smart purchasing through mail-order catalogs or at establishments in large cities could reduce costs and, when combined with proper cleaning and maintenance, resourceful women could present a good appearance. Since fashionable dresses can quickly become outdated even though the fabric itself does not appear worn, women were encouraged to remake their dresses in a more current style or turn them into children’s clothes. When clothes were thrown out, buttons, trim, and hooks were cut off and saved in a button box, to be used when making a new garment or replacing missing or broken buttons and hooks. Evidence of this curation is found in the remains of Well 7175, where many plain buttons contrasted with the moderately expensive clothing also recovered from the rental at 812 Pine Street.

The popularity of sewing machines, the rise in hand sewing, and development of the clothing-pattern industry meant that detailed instructions were available for even the most inexperienced sewer. Great skill was not always employed, especially for some basic alterations or repairs. Evidence of an inexperienced sewer can be seen in the alteration of a moderately expensive garment found at 772 Fifth Street; once either a fancy woman’s dress or man’s vest, it had been crudely altered to fit a smaller-sized person. The effort failed, as the alteration would have detracted from the fit of the garment.

Much has been written about remaking a dress, which was common from the 1870s to the 1900s, when fashion styles changed too dramatically to warrant such an undertaking (Severa 1995). The Cypress Project provides other examples of remade garments. A well behind the Railroad Exchange Hotel, located at the corner of Seventh and Bay, yielded many clothes and shoes, some in very good condition thanks to their deposition below the water table. Among the clothing fragments were two men’s vests, both an approximate size 38. When worn they would have looked practically the same: both with shawl

collars, three pockets, a dark color, and five or six buttons. One has an irregularity of a misweave running along the side seam. It was just one misplaced yarn that generally would be hidden by the fullness of a shirtsleeve, but might have reduced the cost of the garment. The other vest was originally larger and had been altered down to a smaller size. The only indication of this are the unusual two-piece triangular gussets under the arm, made from the same fabric as the rest of the vest. While hiding the cut for a larger chest, this neatly done alteration is creative without calling attention to its original shape. The fit and quality suggest that this vest was professionally altered. This style of vest was popular from the mid- to late 1860s to the early 1870s, and again in the mid- to late 1880s. Both vests would have been noticeably out of fashion between and after these times—no doubt the reason they were thrown out in the early 1890s during hotel remodeling.



Two vests probably worn in the late 1880s, recovered from the Railroad Exchange Hotel’s well (Well 4600).

Least important to one’s visual image, but a general necessity, was footwear. Since dresses and trousers were worn long, well-worn socks, stockings, and shoes were frequently ignored, even by well-dressed respectable people (Walkley and Foster 1978:94). A little care went a long way to maintain footwear, making them last longer. Shoes and boots were routinely polished and brushed to give the appearance of a new or at least well-cared-for item. When shoes and boots were worn, there were options besides buying a new pair or simply ignoring it a little longer. The neighborhood

cobbler could fix most problems. For those living in the Cypress study area, cobbler repairs were done mainly on men's shoes and boots. Mail-order catalogs, such as Sears, Roebuck & Co. (1897:207-208), offered another option with a variety of shoe-repair articles, from entire kits for mending shoes and harnesses to individual items such as buttons, shoemakers needles and pinchers, stacked leather heels, and shoe pegs and nails. The choice was then up to the consumer.

On Block 3, the Hickey or Loomis family who lived in a cottage at 770 Fifth Street, and the Winfield Curtis family, who lived on the southwest corner, have several boy's and men's work boots. The Curtis Family used a combination of both cobbler and at home repairs. One pair served its owner well with at least two repairs, providing for maximum longevity. The cobbler used small brass nails and larger-head ferrous hobnails at regular or patterned intervals. In contrast, the boots from the Hickey/Loomis family were repaired at home using larger than necessary

ferrous cut nails in a more creative pattern to address the problem. By doing so, both families' repairs were successful enough to give the wearer more time to leave further wear on the boot.

Generally shoe repairs are associated with footwear that have had a long hard life, serving the wearer well. For one Cypress cobbler repair this was not the case. In the Southern Pacific railroad family of either John Lawrence or Joseph Ward at 1812 or 1814 Goss Street, a pair of woman's shoes were placed too close to a stove or heater to dry resulting in a melted hole on the ball of the foot. A common enough occurrence in Cypress footwear, these must have been new enough to repair instead of throwing them away. Using a half-circle-shaped leather piece, a cobbler covered the large hole on the ball of the foot and then using nails and pegs attached a mend. While most shoes in similar conditions were discarded, this was the only one to sport such an elegant and creative solution that extended its use life.

Knitting needles are associated with the French family on Block 1 (Privy 954) and Curtis's renters on Block 3 (Well 1700), while clusters of needles were found in the wells of the Pullman and Railroad Exchange hotels (Wells 559, 4600). Much sewing and mending was probably done by hand, as indicated by the hand-held sewing needles, thimbles, and darning eggs.

RECYCLE, REPAIR, REUSE

Many items discarded into pits, privies, and wells in West Oakland backyards had enjoyed long use-lives through cycles of recycle, repair, and reuse. The New Century Club sponsored the Salvage Bureau at Sunshine Corner from 1900. Here they sold items for a nominal fee collected from more affluent neighborhoods. Similar to today's Salvation Army program, the Bureau supplied and picked up denim collection bags; they made necessary repairs to donated goods, priced the items, and sold them to mothers attending the Friday afternoon sale. A full range of domestic items passed in this way from relatively affluent households to those in need: "old carpets and matting, bedding and curtains, children's outgrown clothing, pots, pans, kettles, bags, baskets, and buckets, dishes, lamps, hats, shoes, gloves, ribbons, ice-cream freezers, stovepipe, chairs, and garden tools" (Carlin 1900b:256).

Given the tendency of the working classes to purchase beyond their incomes, documented elsewhere in this study, the association of fashionable clothing with a poor household cannot necessarily be interpreted as recycling. The contents of a well (7175) excavated on Pine Street, directly across the street from Jack London's boyhood home, provide an excellent case study. The well behind a tiny workers' cottage was backfilled around 1900 with an assortment of household goods by a group of unknown tenants. The clothing and footwear suggest a fashionable family that was not easily out-dressed. A mother or older sister may have made at least some of this stylish apparel, leaving behind 17 spools of thread, straight pins, and two thimbles. Corsets,

silk, mohair, beads, a hat veil, and fancy ribbons provide detail on the wardrobe, which may have included donated second-hand goods. This hypothesis is not supported, however, by the floral and faunal remains, which show a varied diet of meals primarily in the moderate price range, complemented by spices and exotic fruits and nuts. The residents of this tiny cottage purchased alcohol, expensive brand-name patent medicines, and tobacco, and they discarded items of personal apparel that they may have no longer liked. Evidence of recycling will be difficult to identify without supporting archival data or an unambiguous artifact use-life.

Evidence of repair is more straightforward, particularly for clothing and footwear, where easily recognizable handiwork varies from expert to haphazard. Likewise, evidence of artifact reuse may be compelling or subtle. A resident of the Pine Street cottage with the fashion-conscious inhabitants handcrafted cigar boxes into two toy boats, which may have raced against each other (Well 7175). Around the corner, housepainter John Weisheimer reused empty glass containers to store pigment for paints (Well 7500). Other indications of reuse may be more subtly derived from the context in which the artifact was found. Chinese brown glazed stoneware has been used for centuries to package and ship Chinese foodstuffs ranging from rice wine to pickled vegetables to fish-heads. Chinese merchants imported these foods and sold them to Chinese living abroad; for the most part, the foods would not have been recognizable as such to non-Chinese. Twelve Chinese brown glazed stoneware vessels of various sizes were recovered from the trench (5237) behind the Chinese laundry on Seventh Street. The Chinese commonly reused these containers once their original contents had been consumed (Yang and Hellmann 1996). As early as the 1850s, these durable containers found other uses within the non-Chinese community, including storage containers in aid of the gold-processing system at the U.S. Mint in San Francisco. If there is no evidence of a Chinese servant, the presence of Chinese brown glazed stoneware vessels on non-Chinese sites can generally be connected with reuse. A huge, nearly complete Chinese stoneware globular jar was recovered from the privy (955) of Bancroft bookstore clerk and real-estate entrepreneur William Irving (Figure 5.16). The vessel originally would have contained imported Chinese liquor or oil, but could have been reused to store food, collect water, or as an item of display. These vessels can still be found in upscale department stores and model homes, empty or filled with cattails or similar decorative natural foliage.

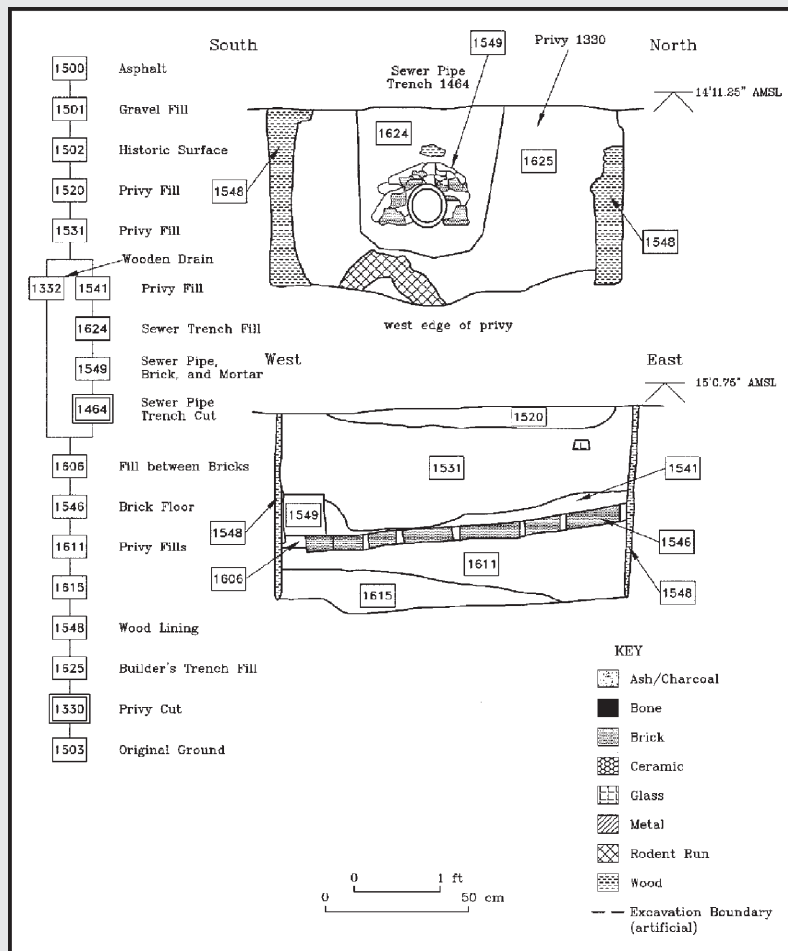
The Finley family at Oakland Point were not nearly as well off as the Irvings. Joseph Finley, a shoemaker, died shortly after moving to Oakland; his son found work as a laborer and his wife and two daughters as dressmakers. Three nearly complete Chinese brown glazed stoneware vessels found in this family's privy (6292) include a large barrel jar, a spouted jar, and a wide-mouthed jar.



Figure 5.16. Popular storage jars. Used to ship and store mundane food items, Chinese brown glazed stoneware vessels have been reused as decorative elements for more than one hundred years. This globular jar may have graced the Irving family home at 671 Sixth Street. Similar vessels can be found in upscale department stores to this day (Privy 955).

FROM CHAMBER POTS TO PRIVIES THAT FLUSH

Michael D. Meyer



James Holland converted the privies at his home and rental properties to water closets, a fact determined from the stratigraphic sequence uncovered by excavation (Privy 1330).

A necessary feature of every home and business in a city without sewers was the pit toilet, commonly known as the privy, the outhouse, or "the necessary," along with a variety of other euphemisms (Barlow 2000:4; Flexner 1976:18). Despite advances in sanitation and sewer systems as early as 3300 B.C. in Mesopotamia, the expeditious treatment of waste seems to have been the rule through the ages (Horan 1996:3-4). The perception of human waste as noxious and this willingness of humans to do the expedient meant that 5,000 years after the invention of the urban sewer system, people were still squatting over a hole in the ground to relieve themselves.

Technically, for most Oakland residents prior to the 1880s, the hole was wood-lined and the people actually sat on a seat. And there was some privacy due to the wooden superstructure, which if conforming to good building practices would have had screened vents, and a lid on the seat to reduce flies. Despite these engineering controls, the privy was placed discretely at the back of the yard. With the arrival of city water and sewers, this ubiquitous structure became obsolete or was at least moved closer to the house. The abandoned hole then became a nuisance and finally a natural receptacle for disposing of refuse. Thus, throughout the Cypress Project area the filled privy hole was



View of the brick floor in Privy 1330, with wooden water supply entering at top and sewer pipe drain at left.

by far the most common feature that met the research design's data requirements.

Most privies in the project area were abandoned with the arrival of public water and sewers in the 1880s. The toilet replaced the privy and, with the miracle of modern sanitation, moved indoors, or at the least, the structure was attached to the house. Answering nature's call no longer meant a walk through rain, mud, or chill of winter night or summer morning. In some cases, such as Privies 1746 and 1747 at 770 Fifth Street, it appeared that the toilet was plumbed into the privy structure; for a small rental property, the expense of building an addition for the toilet may have been impractical. At 802 and 812 Brush Street, James Holland took the modern approach and converted the privies on his properties to water closets.

A wood-lined rectangular hole 3 to 4 feet wide and a few feet deep describes most privies uncovered by archaeologists in the project area. While in most cases the superstructure would have been a wooden structure with one or two seats, in some instances—such as Josephine Bush's house at 814/816 Myrtle Street (Privy 3139)—an adjoining landowner built a larger privy that straddled the lot line, presumably with an interior divider. While privies were located at the back of the lot there were exceptions, such as on Block 3, where the yards were divided (perhaps for livestock) and the privy was placed close to the house. Privies throughout the project area exhibited evidence of being cleaned out, with the fill hauled away; this would have been done

annually or more frequently, depending on the rate of filling. Most lots were found to have only a single privy hole, suggesting that these may have lasted up to 15 years, from the time the lot was developed to the conversion to sewers. In a few cases multiple privies were found, such as those at 1868 and 1870 Seventh Street, where an impressive six wood-lined privies were located on the same lot, serving the enduring Charles Gohsen family and their tenants.

In addition to the privy, each household would have chamber pots for use at night, for the sick or invalid, and for small children who could not go alone to the privy. Regardless of necessity, the chamber pot had to be dumped and cleaned as quickly as possible. In more stylish homes, chamber pots would have resided in cupboards, commodes, or washstands, while in the confines of a cramped cottage, may have been slipped under the bed. Chamber pots were commonly found discarded in privy pits, indicating the simultaneous obsolescence of both pot and pit.

Both privy and chamber pot were potential sources of noxious odors and bacteria. Poorly constructed or improperly located privies might overflow with rainwater, while disease could be spread by flies and other vermin. Due to the narrowness of city lots, privies were often dug close to wells. Layers of ash and lime, used as a sanitizing agent, were often found in these privy pits. The early residents of West Oakland, however, were more dependent upon microbes in the soil and proper drainage to keep the percolating effluent from their water supply.

With the introduction of water and sewers, the waste was collected in pipes and sent untreated to the San Francisco Bay, creating a different set of problems. Downtown sewers that drained to Lake Merritt made the lake a cesspool, as tidal action was inadequate to purge the effluent from the waste lines that terminated there. Another problem arose with city-supplied water, when in 1888 Oakland residents' water use became so excessive that usage had to be curbed. The trouble arose in part due to citizens' erroneous assumption that leaving the taps open would keep the sewers clean (Bagwell 1982:130). The water closet, if flushed with city water, was a fixture with the potential to exacerbate the problem.

The water closet was in effect a privy that flushed. The only remains of this type of plumbing fixture were found on Block 2, on the Brush Street

properties of James Holland. The examples on Block 2—Privies 1301, 1321, and 1330—were converted from privies.

Holland's water closets loosely followed the design presented by architect Calvert Vaux in his 1857 *Villas and Cottages: A Series of Designs Prepared for Execution in the United States*. In Vaux's plan the vault is made of sealed brick with a cone rising from the center to reduce the water required to flush the waste. The waste is flushed with rainwater collected from the house gutters and supplied by pipe. The supply pipe also functions as a vent. The drain leading to a cesspool is outfitted with a trap as per modern plumbing codes; the cesspool was for houses that were not connected to a sewer. When in close proximity to a well, warned Vaux, the cesspool should be watertight, "or evil consequences may ensue." The architect also placed emphasis on proper pipes and traps, "or noxious gases will certainly rise through the pipes, and be extremely offensive in every way" (Vaux 1864:58).

Based on Vaux's predictions, we may assume that James Holland and his renters experienced evil consequences and extremely offensive noxious gasses at times. The Oakland water closets were created by partially backfilling the wood-lined privies and creating a sloped floor of brick leading to a clay-pipe drain with metal grate. The grate reduced the size of waste solids entering and potentially clogging the pipe. It may have also prevented the pipe's use as a vermin viaduct. Without a trap, however, noxious gases, including methane, were able to enter the water closets unabated. All things considered, however, the new sewer odors may have been less offensive than those of the privy.

A portion of the water supply for James Holland's Privy 1330 was a square wooden box drain (Context 1332), made of nailed redwood boards. As the supply pipe was lower than the sewer lines, the drain may not have served well as a vent. During summer and fall, rainfall would have been inadequate for flushing without the occasional supplement of well or city water. Of the three water closets found, only two—1321 and 1330—were used for a long time. The late, post-1889, conversion of Feature 1301 and its rapid abandonment are good indications that this type of plumbing device was considered obsolete by that time, and the toilet had become the preferred modern convenience in West Oakland.

The barrel jar probably once contained sheet sugar; Overseas Chinese commonly reused them to store grains or to collect rainwater. The spouted jar may have contained soy sauce, liquor, black vinegar, or peanut oil, while the wide-mouthed jar could have contained any of several preserved foods. Overseas Chinese immigrants commonly reused the spouted jar as a teapot and the wide-mouthed jar to store sugar and other condiments. It is likely that the Finleys reused these attractive and sturdy vessels in similar ways. Other households that reused Chinese jars include the McLaughlin and O'Briens, who rented their store to a group of Chinese laundrymen (Pit 2870, Privy 2784), the tenants of the small cottage on Pine Street (Well 7175), the family of German butcher William Long (Privy 156), the Barry family and their tenants (Privy 4234), and the Chapman household (Privy 3300), who also collected a variety of Asian ceramics.

In *John Barleycorn*, his autobiographical tome on the evils of drink, Jack London (1913a) wrote of the poverty of his youth, of never possessing toys or playthings. He learned to trade for the things he wanted: cigarette trading cards, marbles, postage stamps, and curios—the small collectables that caught boys' imaginations. Junk traders roamed the neighborhood with horse and wagon, purchasing unwanted items—rags, bottles, sacks, old iron, fruit jars, oil cans, and so forth. Jack became a famous trader. Notorious as a miser, he sold other boys' junk collections on commission and "could make a junk man weep" (London 1913a:81-93). Even into the 1920s and 1930s, some poor immigrant families practiced frugality and reused items as much as they could. The daughter of Croatian immigrants remembers her mother used "every shred of everything. Men's shirts as they wore out were cut into aprons. After the aprons wore out that was cut into wash clothes and dishrags" (Ericsson 1981:16).

DISCARDING THE UNWANTED

The useful life of a commodity often ends with its discard, although in this case, archaeologists have recovered, studied, curated, and re-entered items back into the world of goods. Archaeologists are identifying a tendency that runs counter to the dictums of Victorian thrift and prudence: the wasteful disposal of useful material possessions. Despite many opportunities to recycle or to encourage the reuse of goods through sale, gift, or donation, some people simply chose to throw them away. The quantity and quality of discards found in the backyards of West Oakland homes, hotels, and boardinghouses is truly remarkable. In particular, a huge quantity of whole, glass bottles were discarded by hotels and families who could have sold them to any of Oakland's junk dealers: the Railroad Exchange Hotel discarded 129 whole, unblemished bottles into its obsolete well, while the Weisheimer family alone dumped 70 (Table 5.6). Of course, the number of bottles that did find their way into the dealers' hands may have been substantial. Nonetheless, the choice to discard these items that could be conveniently sold to the junk man on his weekly round is puzzling.

Table 5.6 was constructed to see whether members of different social classes (as derived from occupation; see key) were disposing of these usable and potentially valuable items at dissimilar rates. To provide a more uniform dataset, the table excludes hotels and lists only households whose social characteristics could be determined with confidence. Although probably more numerous in West Oakland than their skilled colleagues, unskilled workers are, regrettably, underrepresented in the sample. As a class, poorer urban people tended to be both more mobile and, for obvious reasons, less likely to own their homes. This combination of factors makes households of unskilled workers less visible to the historian and to the historical archaeologist.

Table 5.7 summarizes data from Table 5.6, with the exception of that for W/L (Widow/Landlady) and the mixed U/P (Unskilled/Professional) categories, which were small in sample size. All but nine collections in the sample contained whole bottles, with an overall mean of 11.12 bottles per household, and a remarkable 667 in all. The three basic arithmetical indicators tabulated on Table 5.7—range, mean, and median—do not show any correspondence between the occurrence of whole bottles and class/occupation. Patterns do, however, emerge from the data through statistical analyses performed by Bruce Owen (see Appendix G), whose comments form the basis of the following paragraphs.

As a group, poorer households disposed of fewer whole bottles than wealthier ones. When unskilled workers' households are compared with any and all of the other categories, the former show significant differences at the 10% level of significance, with an average standard deviation of 0.086. Conversely, the residents of Polite two-story Victorian houses (the largest, most expensive type of residence) seem to have been less inclined to recycle than their poorer neighbors: comparing the former with the residents of all other categories of homes one finds that almost every instance finds a significant difference at either the 5% or 10% level. By the same token, homeowners disposed of more alcoholic-beverage bottles—wine containers in particular—than did tenants.

The result is predictable from a micro-economic perspective. Since the junk dealer would buy these items for cash, households in the most need were the most inclined to sell them. There is no evidence, however, that larger economic trends played a role in households' discard practices. One might have hypothesized that the nationwide economic depressions of the early 1870s and early 1890s would have influenced disposal patterns; yet, the data do not support

Table 5.6. Occurrence of Whole Bottles by Feature

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Class	Whole Bottles
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	P+	51
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908	P	1
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	S	6
1	Privy 951	Paddack/Swain household	1878	P	0
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	S	2
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	S	19
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s	P	19
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880	P	0
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	P	6
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	S	20
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	P+	3
2	Privy 1431	Van Epps family	1880	S	12
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	S	3
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900	S	7
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880	U	0
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	L	4
2	Pit 1469	Tierney household	1901	S	0
2	Privy 1452+	Stewart household	1880	P	5
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	P	5
3	Privy 1785	Curtis family	1874	P+	2
3	Privy 1858	Tighe family	1882	U	11
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884	S	0
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	S	6
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906	S	28
4	Pit 3137	Dutton family	1880	P	0
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880	S	27
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	S	4
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	U	24
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880	S	1
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	S	28
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890	P	21
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	P	22
5	Privy 1454	Farmer household	1880	W	4
5	Privy 3830	Quinn family	1877	S	4
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	P	3
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	P	9
6	Privy 4220	Broderick family	1880	U	0
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880	S	2
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	S	36
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1887	S	20

(continued on next page)

Table 5.6. Whole Bottles by Household (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Class	Whole Bottles
9	Privy 10102	Frank family	1890	S	20
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	S	12
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	S	13
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	S	15
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	S	10
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885	P	1
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	S	2
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family	1905	S	70
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895	U	12
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	S	2
24	Pit 574	O'Brien family	1909	S	7
27	Pit 2855	Fischer family	1900	S	2
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880	U/P	2
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	U/P	40
27	Pit 2870	O'Brien household	1900	W	6
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	S	5
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895	S	3
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	S	15
28	Pit 2404	Crocker family	1900	U	0
29	Privy 4714	Goshen family	1873	P	43
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	U	14
29	Privy 4648	McNamara rental	1880	U	3
31	Pit 2524	Unknown renter	1895	U	0
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895	U	5
37	Privy 100	Huddleson household	1880	S	8
37	Privy 101	Stryker household	1881	S	1
37	Privy 141	O'Connell family	1878	S	4
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	S	7

KEY: P+=Wealthy Professional, P=Professional, S=Skilled, U=Unskilled; two types of residents (W=Widow and L=Landlady) could not generally be assigned to an occupational class. Plus sign following feature number indicates additional contexts included (see Appendix C: Feature Associations by Block).

Table 5.7. Occurrence of Whole Bottles [WBs] by Class/Occupation

Category	Unskilled	Skilled	Prof	Prof +	All
Households	8	36	13	3	60
Households w/ WBs	4	34	10	3	51
Total WBs	55	421	135	56	667
Range	0-24	0-70	0-22	0-51	0-70
Mean WBs (all households)	6.9	11.6	10.4	18.6	11.12
Median WBs (all households)	5	7	5	3	6

this. Similarly, an assumed decline in the secondhand value of bottles as a result of the rise of California's glass industry does not seem to have brought about a noticeable increase in the number of bottles discarded as the 19th century progressed into the 20th. Thus, although the conclusion that poorer people disposed of fewer whole bottles than wealthier people did is valid, this general observation glosses over decision-making that may have owed more to cultural factors than unadorned economic rationality and masks a great deal of variation in the data from individual households. From a purely rational perspective, one would have predicted commercial hotels to have been studiously parsimonious. This does not seem to have been the case. As a simple percentage, hotels disposed of more whole bottles than any other category of residence. In fact, at 15.6%, hotel refuse contained more than twice the percentage of whole bottles compared with the average of the other residence categories.

While collections across the sample contained a median of 6 bottles, why might Mary Murray and her laborer husband, Dennis, have disposed of 24 or the household of James Carter, a porter, have thrown out 19? From their position on the lower end of the economic scale, both households could certainly have made good use of the money. The same might be said for the Mann family, which, although categorized as "professional" class, appears to have been living in reduced circumstances by the time their obsolete privy was filled with household refuse. In spite of this, their refuse contained 51 whole bottles. Whether these families wished to keep their purchasing habits to themselves or felt demeaned by the old-fashioned practice of bartering, noneconomic factors clearly entered into the decision. This issue is explored further in the concluding chapter.

OFF TO THE DUMPS

Aside from filling disused wells and privies, residents also transported their garbage to illicit disposal sites near the railroad tracks on Cypress Blocks 16, 17, and 18. A portion of Block 15 is shown as a "garbage dump" on the 1902 Sanborn Map, although auger borings in advance of freeway construction showed no evidence that this block had actually been used to dump garbage. Horse-drawn rubbish wagons delivered garbage to waiting railway cars that then carried the material away. Oakland City-mandated garbage disposal appears to have begun by 1926, when the Oakland Scavenger Company gained a contract to collect garbage. The following year, disposal at sea commenced (Praetzellis 1994:251, 301).

As mass-produced goods become obsolete, unfashionable, or "useless" at an ever-increasing rate of speed, the context of the value and meaning of discarded items must be thoughtfully explored. Illegal dumping along railroad tracks and other undeveloped land continues to be a problem with no evident solution. As in the past, homeless individuals make these dumps their homes, using the available materials for shelter, clothing, and entertainment, and salvaging and selling what they can. San Francisco recently cleaned up such a camp at a cost of more than \$100,000, displacing several dozen people, including Grimes Poznikov, formerly the Automatic Human Jukebox of Fisherman Wharf fame. Poznikov had lived for many years at this dump beneath a baby grand piano, which he often played to entertain his neighbors. His piano was covered "in a heap of clothes, blankets, liquor bottles, naked Barbie dolls, suitcases and a tattered American flag" (*San Francisco Chronicle* 8, 12, 31 December 2002). The origin of the piano was not specified.

This essay has ranged through time and topics to explore how people acquire things outside of the standard mercantile consumer networks and how they adapt what they own, including their homes. Although the items themselves, the uses we put them to, and the value we place upon them vary across time and space, the means by which this is accomplished—collect, create, barter, reuse, recycle, repair, remodel—have changed little through the ages. People are very creative in how they manipulate and adapt to their surroundings; this chapter uses an interdisciplinary approach to view how this took place at the smallest scale—the household—in West Oakland from the 1860s through around 1950.

PART III: ETHNICITY AND URBAN SUBCULTURES

Part III contains five chapters that focus on sub-populations in West Oakland: African-, Chinese-, Irish-, and Jewish-Americans, among others. The area's architectural landscape and lodging are considered, as well as the lives of women and the working class. Connections are made between the rise of a 19th-century black middle-class, urban redevelopment, and the Black Panther Party. Other work examines the role of ethnicity in consumer choice, as well as consideration of artifacts in the construction of ethnicity itself.



"BUSY AS BEES": WOMEN, WORK, AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN WEST OAKLAND

MARTA GUTMAN

Over the Back Fence: An Imagined Conversation

One afternoon in the autumn of 1879, Ellen McLaughlin walked out the backdoor of her one-and-one-half story, wood-frame house on Cedar Street in West Oakland and, paused for a moment before making her way to the abandoned privy at the back of the lot [1].

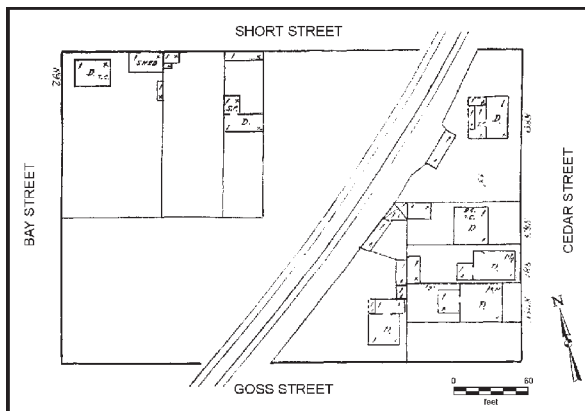
The 18-year-old dressmaker was helping her sisters clean out the house following their uncle's death the past August, as they had done after their mother's demise a few years before [2]. In the course of the day's work, Ellen discarded a few tools of her trade—some beads, buttons, a darning egg, a thimble, and a straight pin or two. She also tossed out other unwanted household goods: a chamber pot and basin, an old shawl and toothbrush, tired shoes, cracked dishes, a teapot, broken glass lanterns, and empty perfume and patent-medicine bottles, including several vials of Dr. McMunn's Elixir of Opium [3]. Her uncle, Edward Murphy, a prosperous butcher who had boarded with his deceased sister's family, consumed the drug to ease the intense attacks of diarrhea during the final stages of his fatal illness, typhoid fever [4]. The bottles of perfume helped to mask the intense odor that pervaded the dying man's sick room. Murphy was a bachelor and his property, including the Grand Point Market on Seventh Street, was divided equally among his sisters, nieces, and nephews [5]. The inheritance was much needed in the McLaughlin household, as Ellen was the sole wage-earner. Her father, Michael, a widowed Irish immigrant, was an unemployed laborer; her older sister, Elizabeth, was keeping house; and her two younger, school-age siblings did not yet work for wages [6].

Ellen expected to work hard that afternoon to rid the house of patent-medicine bottles, perfume vials, and other tangible reminders of the recent illness and death that upset her family's daily life

and put her in the position of breadwinner for the immigrant household. Nonetheless, she took a few moments to linger on the back porch, having heard her name called by a neighbor, Rosa Lewis. Mrs. Lewis and her husband, a brakeman for the Central Pacific Railroad, rented their very small dwelling from Ellen's family, bringing the McLaughlin family some sorely needed income [7]. In the early 1870s, Ellen's father built the four-room, one-story rental cottage, about 500 square feet in size, next door to his family's much larger (about 1,150 square feet) home [8]. That afternoon, Rosa Lewis, who was



Dr. McMunn's Elixir of Opium. Archaeologists recovered 14 bottles of this medication from the McLaughlins' abandoned privy at 881 Cedar Street. In the 19th century, opium was a common homeopathic treatment used in many patent medicines for the relief of a variety of common and life-threatening illnesses (Privy 2822).



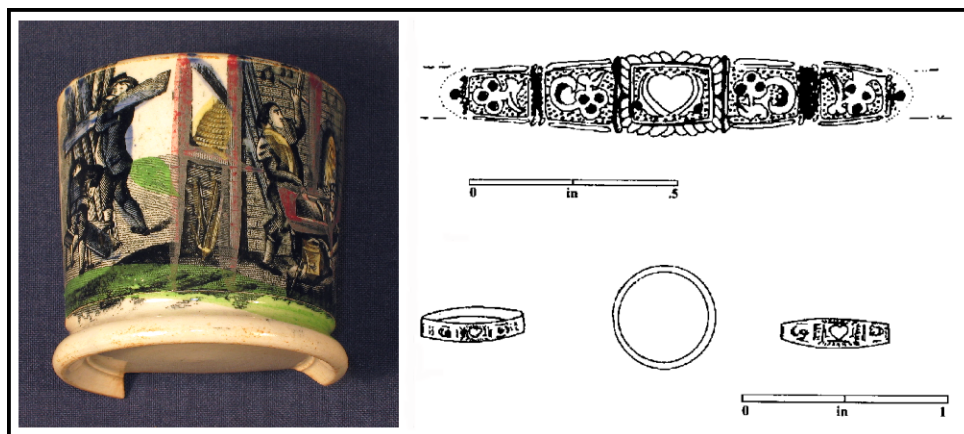
Living near Death's Curve in Oakland Point. In 1880 the Lewis and McLaughlin families lived next door to each other in small cottages at 881 and 883 Cedar Street, adjacent to the railway line known as "Death's Curve." Despite the less than salubrious locale, members of the McLaughlin family resided here from as early as 1869 through 1921.

about 10 years older than Ellen, sounded like she needed a few minutes respite from housework and childcare, especially for her infant son, whom Ellen often heard crying inside the cottage. Rosa had two other sons; her young sister, Mary Webb, also lived with the family [9].

The seamstress was glad to oblige and spend a few minutes chatting with this harried mother over the backyard fence. Although one woman was single and the daughter of Irish Catholic immigrants and the other was married and had native-born, Protestant parents, the two often shared a moment's conversation, even the occasional cup of tea, to break the pace of a day's work at home [10]. Rosa had just finished sorting through her children's possessions

and she was about to throw some of them away in the old, wood-lined privy in the middle of her backyard. It was much smellier than the McLaughlin privy because it held the decomposing carcass of a diseased calf that the young mother helped to dump there not so long ago [11]. Rosa held old toys, marbles, a porcelain doll or two, a broken china plate inscribed with the alphabet and a biblical message, and a child's cup [12]. This last object caught Ellen's attention: it bore the motto "Busy as Bees," and the black transfer print that decorated the vessel portrayed scenes extolling the value of hard work in a small town: two boys engaged in carpentry, a beehive (a sign of industry), and two blacksmiths at a forge. Not unexpectedly, the depictions of male labor with no acknowledgment of the extent of women's work, elicited a comment about just who was as "Busy as Bees" in the neighborhood that afternoon.

Unbeknownst to Rosa Lewis, her younger sister Mary had put inside the cup for safekeeping a tiny golden ring with molded hearts and flowers and a gold locket. These treasured pieces of jewelry, which both sisters used as small children, would be lost to history when Rosa Lewis tossed out the pile of children's possessions, shattering the "Busy as Bees" cup in the process. There wasn't much time to inspect the cup or ponder the inequalities of labor or their representation, however, because a steam-driven railroad train entered "Death Curve"—the steeply bowed double set of railroad tracks that severed the residential block in half. The noise of the train made conversation impossible, for the northbound railroad track abutted the McLaughlin and Lewis backyards. And so the women parted.



Children's treasures. The Lewis family disposed of this child's motto cup (left) and this tiny gold ring with molded heart and flowers design (right). The cup, with its colorful illustrations of hard work, conveyed to children the value of industry; the ring may have once been worn on a chain with a gold locket that was also found in the privy complex (Privy 2786).

Sources for "Over the Back Fence":

1. Date is based upon the *terminus post quem* (TPQ) for Privy 2822, which can be found on the Feature Summary Table, p. 72 of *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 27, 28, and 31*, edited by Mary Praetzellis, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation (hereafter referred to as the BTR). Ellen McLaughlin's association with the feature is presented in the Documentary Research Table (DRT) on p. 53 and in the Parcel Overview for 881 Cedar Street on p. 50 of the BTR. The description of the dwelling comes from the 1889 Sanborn map reproduced on the Parcel Plan on p. 52 of the BTR.
2. Ellen's age and occupation come from the 1880 U.S. Census; the death of her uncle (Edward Murphy) is documented from Death Certificate #3100; her mother's death is listed on Petition for Guardianship Case #47; all documents abstracted on p. 54 of the BTR.
3. The items discarded into the privy are tabulated on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 75-80, and shown in the Artifact Layout Photograph on p. 74 of the BTR.
4. Information on Edward Murphy comes from Tax Rolls (1868-1875), Block Books (1876-1880), City Directories (1869-1879), and his Death Record (1879), which can be found on the DRT on pp. 57-59 of *Block Technical Report: Historical Archaeology of the I-880 Cypress Replacement Project: Blocks 22, 24, and 29*, edited by Mary Praetzellis and Suzanne B. Stewart, 2001, prepared for the California Department of Transportation. For the use of opium to treat typhoid fever, see 19th-century home-medicine books, e.g., *The Cottage Physician for Individual and Family Use*, King-Richardson Publishing Company, 1897.
5. Murphy's property and its disposition are stipulated in Probate Case #1180 and abstracted on p. 54 of the BTR.
6. The McLaughlin family's economic situation is inferred from their 1880 U.S. Census and 1884 Block Book listing; see p. 54 of the BTR.
7. Information on the Lewis family is taken from their 1880 U.S. Census listing, as found on p. 113 of the BTR; their dwelling is shown on the Parcel Plan on p. 112 of the BTR, as taken from the 1889 Sanborn Map. The economic relationship between the two families is demonstrated by Michael McLaughlin's ownership of the Lewises' parcel, as shown on the 1872 Tax Roll and 1884 Block Book, as listed on pp. 53-54 of the BTR.
8. The size and placement of the two residences are taken from the 1889 Sanborn maps, as shown on the Block Plan on p. 29 of the BTR. That Michael McLaughlin built both houses is inferred from his 1870 U.S. Census listing (BTR p. 53)—he owned considerable real estate and had four carpenters residing with him.
9. The composition of the Lewis family is taken from their 1880 U.S. Census (BTR p. 113).
10. The McLaughlins' ethnicity is documented by their census listings; their religion by Edward Murphy's obituary (BTR p. 54). The Lewises' nativity is documented by their 1880 U.S. Census listing; that they were Protestants is inferred from their material culture, which included an alphabet plate with a biblical quotation (BTR p. 149). For more on the material culture of Protestant domesticity, see *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900*, by Colleen McDannell, 1986.
11. Site structure, including the buried calf, is described on p. 148 of the BTR, the feature record for the calf is illustrated in this volume on p. 5.17.
12. The items discarded into the Lewises' privy are tabulated on the Artifact Descriptive List, pp. 156-160, and shown in the Artifact Layout Photograph on p. 153 of the BTR.

MATERIAL EVIDENCE OF WOMEN'S WORK

This meeting between Ellen McLaughlin and Rosa Lewis is an imagined event, a fictive encounter between two white, working-class women who worked at home—one for wages, the other unpaid—in West Oakland during the 1870s and 1880s. Albeit invented, the meeting is rooted in archaeological findings and archival evidence recently brought to light through the Cypress Project. The McLaughlins' and Lewises' informal, wood-frame, carpenter-built houses were torn down long ago, and the city block where they once stood sits beneath the freeway that replaced the older roadway that collapsed during the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. Fortunately, Ellen McLaughlin, Rosa Lewis, and many other women left extensive material evidence of their daily lives in the privies, refuse pits, trenches, and wells that cluttered the backyards of the West Oakland community. Throughout the district, women cleaned out their houses (and tossed out the accoutrements of everyday life) as the result of major changes in life course (marriage, illness, and death), the demolition of buildings and the construction of new structures (including additions), and the advent of new technologies, especially those made possible by infrastructure improvements (water, sewer, gas, and electricity). The recovery of these artifacts and their detailed presentation in synthetic technical reports that integrate archaeological, archival, and architectural evidence on a lot-by-lot basis (the BTRs), allow us to examine the extent of women's work in West Oakland and tie our investigation to actual people, the places where they lived, and the things they used in daily life.

This chapter draws on the technical reports and other documentation associated with the Cypress Project to put forth the breadth of women's work at home in the rapidly growing working-class neighborhoods that spread in West Oakland during the late 19th century (Praetzellis 1994; Stewart and Praetzellis 1997). It focuses on the astonishing number and diversity of artifacts associated with women's work that were uncovered during the Cypress Project, examines the meaning these artifacts held for specific households, and takes account of reformers' interest in the neighborhood. The artifacts excavated in conjunction with the project suggest that gender was a constitutive fact in everyday life in West Oakland, as important as any other social relationship. In West Oakland, as elsewhere, the gender divide conditioned the work available to women; the archaeological and archival records show, however, that not all of this work was as sharply differentiated along class, racial, and ethnic lines as we might expect it to have been during the 1870s and 1880s (Katzman 1978; Kessler-Harris 1982). The African American, immigrant, and native-born women who lived in the project area houses may have worked at the same domestic tasks, but some women received wages for their work while others did not. In addition, the artifacts suggest that we need to rethink the analysis of consumption patterns, which in recent literature in historical archaeology is used to explain the cultural values of women, their class affiliation, and interest (or lack thereof) in gentility. To be sure, the "cult of domesticity"—a powerful ideology that shaped the goals and aspirations of middle-class men and women in California during the middle of the 19th century—retained some force at the end of the century (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992). Nonetheless, artifacts uncovered in West Oakland suggest that women's interest in gentility is not as profound a marker of class identity as scholars have found it to be elsewhere (Seifert 1991; Wall 1991). This finding becomes especially evident when we situate the artifacts in the actual settings where women worked.

It is fortunate that the breadth of the Cypress Project makes it possible to add a spatial dimension to our analysis of women's work and material culture. What is the tie between the

PLAYING HARD IN WEST OAKLAND

Suzanne Howard-Carter

From the skilled railroad workers in the westernmost neighborhood of Oakland Point to more middle-class households such as the Manns and the Carters on the east side of Market Street, families in 1880s Oakland invested in their children, as seen by the many toys left behind. Rag or wax dolls, wooden toys, and children's books may not survive in the archaeological record, but porcelain and metal toys come to us out of the dirt and demonstrate a love of indoor and outdoor play by nearly all of the households studied for the Cypress Project.

Several archaeological assemblages in the Oakland Point area provide compelling evidence of raucous activity across the busy neighborhood. These are associated with the families of a German-born butcher and a Michigan-born ship's carpenter in the 1880s, and an Irish plumber a generation later (ca. 1909), who all bought their children metal toys suitable for indoor or outdoor play.

Toy pewter and iron pistols were found in several of the households. A child lost his or her pewter toy flintlock pistol at 1827 William Street in the early 1880s. Cap pistols were invented around 1859 but not mass-produced until the 1880s. Little girls and boys (it was advertised as safe for both) could finally run about firing a child-sized pistol—small, yet satisfyingly noisy.

A white metal whistle in the shape of a bird was lost at the McLaughlin household at 881 Cedar, perhaps the noisiest block in the Point. The small whistle, produced "in abundance" from 1850 to 1890 (Freeman and Freeman 1942:171), was found in the upper layers of a trash pit, likely lost off its string (along with a marble) about 1880. Two of the McLaughlin children, Edward and Mary, were 10 and 7, respectively, in 1880, and both may have enjoyed whistling back at the steam trains that ran past their house.

Jacks, marbles, and a homemade toy cigar-box sailboat were found down the street at 812 Pine, where some 23 toys were recovered from a well associated with a modest rental cottage. The family lived fairly well, and the children had many store-bought toys, yet were inventive enough to sail a homemade boat.

Iron wheels and a copper-alloy train wheel in a railroad worker's assemblage show evidence of carriages, cannons, or racing sulkeys and trains. Sturdier than their German-made tin counterparts, cast-iron toys were manufactured in the United States from around 1875, and were mass-produced by the turn of the century (Freeman and Freeman 1942).

Both boys and girls were the subject of instructive play in the Victorian era (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990b). Toy makers and business owners shamelessly appealed to the Victorian parent's sense of duty: an 1887 toy catalog recommends a toy train as "instructive for the whole family," and promises that a toy steam engine "will not explode" and will "teach industriousness" (Freeman and Freeman 1942:190). As the historian Thomas Schlereth writes, "Many middle-class Americans could play only if persuaded they were also improving themselves" (1991:209). Adults imparted this value to their children, and the potential instructive value of toys both mechanical and stationary was often aimed at parents: "Mothers who want to teach their children correct ideas select each part of the doll with care, and have each article of clothing well made, so that it can be taken off and put on. First, the doll's head is selected. This may be of the composition said to be indestructible, and with short blonde curly hair of wool that is easily cleansed, and will cost from 30 cents to \$2.00" (*Harper's Bazaar* 31 December 1881).

Most of the affordable, mass-produced German porcelain doll shoulder heads were unmarked, but they can be roughly grouped into eras by hairstyle (Borger 1983). German factories such as Hertel, Schwab & Co. in Thuringia dominated the market until World War I, churning out molded or poured porcelain doll heads in vast quantities, becoming more affordable from 1860 to 1890 (Coleman, Coleman, and Coleman 1968; Richter 1993). European or U.S. doll manufacturers would then assemble parts and bodies for local sale (Christopher 1949). Heads, arms, and legs could usually be purchased separately and replaced or composed into a doll at home. A December advertisement in the 1886 *Oakland Enquirer* describes an entire basement floor



These are just some of the parts of 24 dolls found in a well associated with the Carter household at 668 Fifth Street. A "black" character doll, not shown here, is part of a display on loan to the African American Museum and Library at Oakland. Character dolls with tinted skin colors and dressed in ethnic fashions were available by the mid-1890s, the same time that the dolls pictured here appear to have been discarded into a well by an African American household headed by James and Nellie Carter (Well 953).

devoted to toys at Jones' Bazaar, including "every variety of dolls' bodies, arms, stockings, shoes, etc" (22 December 1886:3). The same china head could be redone with new parts if need be.

A 1981 study from a 19th-century dump in San Francisco showed that many china dolls were older than the materials around them and were possibly heirlooms (Pastron, Pritchett, and Ziebarth 1981:521). This does not seem to be the case for many of the toys in the West Oakland assemblage, where dolls are often found with contemporary materials. The San Francisco dolls were deposited in a dump, however, not expediently disposed of in a yard. The well-off Prussian-born Gohsen family at 1868-1874 Seventh Street in the Oakland Point bought their daughters the best china doll on the market, along with what may have been the largest tea set available; both were disposed of close to their manufacture dates. The small but stunning Parian bisque doll, styled after the French Empress Eugenie, would have been pricey for most households and, according to doll expert Lydia Richter, not for a child's hands (Richter 1993:53). Made about 1870 by the German firm of Alt, Beck & Gottschalk (Richter 1993), the Empress may have been bought as a present for Gohsen's Prussian-born wife, Madille, as a status piece, perhaps invoking their European heritage. The

speedy demise of the fragile Empress, however, points to a short life as a child's toy.

Mobility seemed to work against heirlooming toys for many of the families of West Oakland. Even short tenancies, such as the Hickeys', left whole toys behind. Renters abandoned an 1870s Alice in Wonderland-style doll when they moved in the early 1880s (Borger 1983:35). Other households, such as the McDonalds' at 817 Myrtle, disposed of two unbroken, good-quality china heads from the previous decade. The dolls both have the molded "flat top" hairstyle, popular in the 1860s and 1870s (Borger 1983), suggesting that these dolls, as with Alice, were kept just long enough for small girls to play with, and tossed when the family moved in 1884.

Fragility was probably an issue acting against heirlooms as well. As with the Gohsens, the Carter household, a well-off African American family, lavished stylish French bisque dolls on their girls in the late 1880s and 1890s—pieces of 24 different dolls were recovered in varying degrees of destruction.

The Victorian dollhouse craze may have kept small china dolls and dishes indoors (McClinton 1970), but some doll play certainly moved outside as girls took their bisque dolls out for an airing in miniature strollers, or to swing them in hammocks (Montgomery Ward & Co. 1895). A 1913 survey of children in another medium-sized city, Cincinnati, found girls in yards, alleys, and playgrounds with their dolls (Mergen 1982). Outdoor play was common for both city girls and boys and was sometimes necessary for lack of indoor space (Nasaw 1985).

Oakland families had a myriad of local shops large and small to browse for toys for their young ones. Variety or notions stores often sold very cheap penny toys—in part to draw women consumers (Freeman and Freeman 1942)—and were located all over the city, both downtown and in the neighborhoods (Oakland city directories 1875 to 1890). By the 1880s, Jones' Bazaar and Grand Rule Bazaar on Washington Street offered storefronts loaded up with toys during the holiday season (*Oakland Enquirer* 23 December 1891:1).

In the 1890s, Christmas ads in the Oakland newspapers reached new levels of elaboration and were lavishly illustrated. The front page of the 23 December *Oakland Enquirer* was almost entirely devoted to Christmas shopping, and the line drawings of storefronts show toy cars suspended

outside of the building and rocking horses tethered out on the front walk. It would have been difficult for any parent and child to get by these shops without at least trying out the rocking horse, or going in to explore the five-and-ten-cent tables.

The rise of the bazaars coincides with a change in attitudes toward children's play. Bernard Mergen suggests that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, children were "less separated from the adult world" and that "their play was more imitative of adult activities" (Mergen 1982). Other studies have examined the prescriptive quality of Victorian play, as adults sought to impart proper Victorian values to their children (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990b). By the late 1890s, leisure time was beginning to be seen as a right, almost a goal, and the recognition of children's fantasy and make-believe play accompanied a growing consumer culture (Mergen 1982). The lavish ads and packed bazaars show a greater interest in leisure for the young for its own sake, as the turn-of-the-century velocipede from the assemblage at 812 Market Street exemplifies.

Middle-class families such as the Gohsens and the Carters lavished pricey toys on their children, but even the poorest household, at 817 Filbert, had dollhouse furniture and a mid-price, decorated toy tea set. Discussing two working-class neighborhoods on the East Coast, Rebecca Yamin writes that instead of taking the toy tea set



Archaeologists found the remains of this tricycle in a well at 812 Market Street. The tricycle is reconstructed next to a picture of a similar model from the 1897 Sears Roebuck catalog. In that year, the bike came in five sizes for children from 2 to 15 years old, primarily for girls. By 1902 the tricycle was advertised for both boys and girls, yet only the three smallest sizes, for 2 to 7 year-olds were sold by Sears (Well 1703).

as an expression of the desire for upward mobility in a working-class household, we can also interpret the toys as parents' resistance to local reformers' outside values and the pressure to work—as an investment in their "children as children, not merely workers" (Yamin 2002:110). The variety of well-made toys found across the Cypress Project area points to a high level of investment in the upbringing of one's children, even for highly transient, struggling families.

form of houses and the sorts of artifacts that women used in everyday life? In our study of workers houses in West Oakland, we uncovered a sharp divide in the architecture of small working-class dwellings, between what we called "Informal workers' cottages" (Figure 6.1) and "Almost-polite houses" (Figure 6.2). The interior spaces of the latter houses are more differentiated by function and hierarchically arranged than in the former: the Almost-polite houses contained foyers, hallways, rooms that could be used for parlors or dining rooms, and clearly identified bedrooms (Groth and Gutman 1997). The West Oakland excavations show, however, that the form of a house does not necessarily indicate (and certainly does not determine) an occupant's cultural values or class affiliation. A working-class woman, such as a seamstress, who lived in a small, two- or three-room Informal workers' cottage (working-class housing by any account) could buy (or use) objects typically associated with much wealthier families, objects that are frequently taken to indicate a female user's interest in middle-class gentility. Moreover, the convention is to focus on objects that tie women to specific interior spaces, such as dining rooms, parlors, kitchens, and bedrooms (perhaps because the artifacts associated with these rooms are often the ones that survive). Yet, women's work in West Oakland also took place on back porches and in yards, where laundries, privies, garbage pits, vegetable gardens, animal sheds, and barns were located. These areas of the house and lot were scarcely genteel settings or pristine architectural environments.



Figure 6.1. Annie Crowley's Informal workers' cottage built in 1875. At 300 square feet, this cottage at 1825 Short Street was the smallest residence on the block. Over the years, it was enlarged and remodeled in interesting ways. Architectural historians prepared formal floor plans of the cottage for the Cypress Project before it was largely destroyed by fire prior to demolition in 1995. (Photo credit: Paul Groth)



Figure 6.2. Almost-polite house from the mid-1880s. Carpenter Thomas Stevens built three nearly identical Almost-polite houses at 1813, 1815, and 1817 Short Street. His family made their home here, at 1817 Short Street, through 1915. This house was also remodeled and enlarged over the years, prior to being formally recorded for the Cypress Project. The building was moved prior to freeway construction. (Photo credit: Paul Groth)

To address these sorts of dynamic relationships between people, places, and things, we need to draw on scholarship that views "material culture as social discourse" (Beaudry, Cook, and Mrozowski 1991), that embeds material culture analysis in particularities of place and thus in architectural, social, and urban history (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001), and that argues that individuals in the same social group may use consumer objects to different ends (Upton 1996). We also intend to contribute to recent investigations of the material culture of working-class neighborhoods in other English-speaking cities (Mayne and Murray, eds. 2001; Yamin 2000) by drawing on women's history (Ryan 1975), sociology (Zelizer 1985, 2000), and feminist political philosophy (Ruddick 1998; Tronto 1993). We shall see that women's unpaid work at home was central to the process of industrialization, as was wage labor, whether male or female. As historians and sociologists have argued, housework and carework—which were provided mainly by women historically—were crucial for maintaining the social and economic fabric of everyday life in working-class households.

WOMEN AT WORK IN WEST OAKLAND

West Oakland—racially integrated, ethnically diverse, and predominantly working-class—offers an especially opportune setting in which to examine the extent of women's work and its ties to material culture in late-19th-century American cities. The artifacts left on the blocks excavated in conjunction with the Cypress Project come from sites where many women were occupied "at home." The enumerators for the U.S. census used this term to describe women who were usually married and thus did not receive wages for housework or carework (unlike a hired servant or nurse, for instance). Almost all of the women who were "at home" in the West Oakland study area worked, albeit at unpaid domestic tasks. Since they kept house without the assistance of servants, for the most part, they cooked meals, canned food, cleaned house, and washed dishes; they made, repaired, and laundered clothes; they planted gardens and planned entertainments; and they raised children, took care of sick family members, and tended to them during the last stages of debilitating illnesses. This range of work seems to have been a condition of a woman's daily life in West Oakland, whether she lived in the wealthier part of the study area, east of Market Street, or close to the railroad yards, the less well-off section of the district.

Eva Carlin, a middle-class reformer who worked in the district, described the daily life of working women in West Oakland during the late 1890s, focusing on women who lived south of Seventh Street (Carlin 1900a, 1900b). In two articles published in *Overland Monthly* in 1900, Carlin put forth the heterogeneity of women's work, recognizing in eloquent (if biased and at times inaccurate) descriptions the extent of women's labor in working-class families as well as the value of wage work for women and girls. "The girls of the neighborhood are not in 'service,' using the term as applied to household vocations," Carlin wrote, "they are clerks or cash-girls in candy-stores and printing-offices; they work in the cotton-mills and shoddy-mills. There are girls who make things, girls who sew things, and girls who sell things. They all seem to have a feeling of self-satisfaction at escaping the monotonous drudgery of the home" (Carlin 1900a:426). The heterogeneity of women's work—the many means women used to bring income into households—was as wide-ranging and as impressive in West Oakland as Carlin suggested, although most women, including working girls, did not manage to escape the toil of household work for very long.

CROSSES AND WITCH BALLS

Erica Gibson

The religious artifacts recovered during the Cypress Project reflect the Catholic, Protestant, and alternative religions of the time. These artifacts were found in features deposited between 1880 and 1905. Like other small pieces of jewelry, religious items were probably not thrown out with the trash, but were more likely simply lost.

California, with its majestic and diverse natural beauty, was characterized from the beginning of historic-period settlement by a cultural and religious diversity. It was a state where religions, both traditional and nontraditional, existed alongside a "celebrated secularity" (Ernst 1987:10-11). The state was distinctive for its high degree of cultural and ethnic variety; from the Gold Rush on, immigrants to the area included eastern Americans of all professions and religions seeking their fortune. German, Irish, English, and other European immigrants, as well as the Chinese, were added to the mix. While eastern American church leaders brought their religions to the region, the traditions they espoused had to be altered to fit with a western culture that was more diverse and innovative than its counterpart to the east (Ernst 1987:16). Despite their best efforts, by 1906 almost 65 percent of California's population did not belong to a church. For those that did, the predominant church of choice was the Roman Catholic, followed by Protestant religions, and finally other smaller denominations (Frankiel 1988:xi).



This rosary may have belonged to a member of the Irish Catholic O'Brien family, who lived at 1817 Goss Street from the middle 1860s through 1924. Baptismal, marriage, and death records also connect the family with the Catholic Church (Well 300).

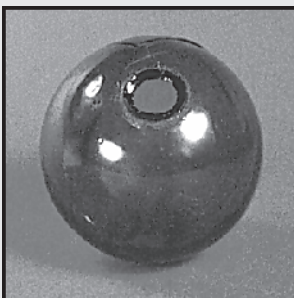
The presence of artifacts affiliated with Catholicism in the deposits is not surprising; it was during the late 19th century that Pope Leo XII (1878-1903) was instrumental in increasing devotion to the rosary (McDannell 1986:15). Two rosary fragments were recovered from the Cypress Project: a medallion from the James Carter household at 668 Fifth Street and a crucifix with chain and rosary bead from the O'Brien family at 1817 Goss Street. James Carter, an African American railroad porter, lived with his wife and possibly several other adults and children. The O'Brien family included Bridget—a widow—and several of her adult children. In addition to the rosaries, two crucifixes were recovered: one from the Irish Terrance Brady family (812 Castro Street) and a second from the Scottish William Irving family (671 Sixth Street). This last item, stamped on the back "INRI SOUVENIR DE MISSION," was quite possibly a souvenir from a visit to one of the local missions.

Benjamin Mann, a capitalist from New Hampshire, and his family had a beautiful, ornately carved bog oak cross. Bog Oak jewelry was made from wood retrieved from Irish peat bogs. Popular for mourning jewelry after Prince Albert's death, it was introduced at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851 and remained popular for over 30 years (Ruhling and Freeman 1994:37). The Manns' cross may have been acquired while in mourning for one of several members of the family who died between 1879 and 1884.



Irish Bog Oak jewelry and ornaments were popular elements of Victorian material culture. This ornate Bog Oak cross is associated with the Mann family and may have commemorated one of the many deaths that beset the family in the early 1880s (Privy 900).

Some religious items were made for use at the table and would have reinforced the Protestant



A witch-ball good-luck charm. It probably belonged to an African American family of barbers and hairdressers who lived in a large house, which they owned, at 713 Sixth Street in the late 19th century (Privy 1452, Pit 1404, Pit 1461).

belief in the importance of Bible worship at home (McDannell 1986:83). Two such artifacts were recovered from the Cypress Project: a pressed-glass bread plate with the inscription "GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD," from tenants at 812 Brush Street, and an alphabet plate with a transfer-printed scene and biblical quotation (John IV:5), from the Lewis family at 883 Cedar Street. These items would have served to reinforce the teachings of the Bible at meals.

The most unusual items related to spirituality from the Cypress Project are two witch balls and a possible witch bottle. Witch balls, small glass globes often placed on a stand or hung in a window, were used to ward off evil spirits or to prevent disease. Wiping them clean daily removed evil influences from the home. Sometimes bits of yarn were inserted in the balls; when the witches pulled the yarn out, they would forget to harm the family (Kovel and Kovel 1981:93-94). A 2-inch-diameter olive-glass witch ball was found at the Stewart residence, an African American family living at 713 Sixth Street. A second amber glass ball was found at the Irving family's home at 671 Sixth Street. Though slightly larger and thinner-walled this may also have been

a witch ball. Interestingly this was the same family who owned the mission crucifix mentioned earlier.

Like witch balls, witch bottles were a charm against witchcraft. Often the bottles were filled with pins, nails, or needles; urine, nail clippings, or hair from the one believed cursed; and finally a cloth heart, sometimes pierced with pins. The bottles were believed to hurt or kill the offending witch by sending the spell back to the one who cast it (Merrifield 1987:163-175). A single bottle recovered from the German Weisheimer family at 1768 Atlantic Street may be a witch bottle. This small bottle, with an intact cork studded with needles on the inside, contains a piece of fabric that may be heart-shaped.

The presence of rosaries and crosses, tableware items with religious overtones, and the more unconventional witch balls and bottles testifies to the eclectic belief systems at work in Oakland at the end of the 19th century.



The Cypress Project lab crew chose not to tamper with the cork and contents of this bottle that, if including a heart-shaped piece of cloth, may be a witch bottle designed to ward off curses from neighboring witches (Well 7500).

WORKING FOR WAGES

Usually, but not always, the women in West Oakland who worked for wages during the 1870s and 1880s found their options for employment circumscribed by the gender conventions of the time. Some women (Ellen McLaughlin, for example) received wages for work that took place at home—what Eileen Boris and others call "homework" (Boris and Daniels 1989). In West Oakland, women's homework very often involved the fabrication of clothing, with women working as seamstresses, dressmakers, and weavers. Other women turned different skills and talents into paying work; for example, Margaret Fleck, married to a hairdresser, was a midwife, and Josephine Bush, a widow with two adult children living at home, offered music lessons in her house. Many married (or widowed) women took roomers and boarders into private homes, as Carlin observed, although the practice crossed the boundaries of race, ethnicity, and class. Americana Scott, for instance, one of the few women in the study area who hired a servant,

took several boarders into her substantial, two-story home on Myrtle Street even though her husband worked as a bookkeeper in San Francisco.

Outside the home, women managed hotels and boardinghouses and procured other employment in work typically open to women. Alice Richardson and Louise Graffelman were schoolteachers, with Graffelman working at Prescott School; Julia Newhall worked as a ladies' nurse; Mary and Helen King were bookkeepers; and Emily Stewart and her daughter, Georgiana, were hairdressers. The women and men (who were barbers) in this African American family worked in salons on Seventh Street as well as opening an establishment in downtown Oakland. Other women found jobs, often before marriage, as cloak makers, hotel laborers, cotton-mill spoolers, waitresses, maids, and notwithstanding Carlin's observations to the contrary, servants. Married women also worked in canneries and cleaned houses—they "go out scrubbing and cleaning," to borrow Carlin's words (Carlin 1900a:426). Women with quite different occupations and class backgrounds could find themselves living and working in close proximity to one another. In the early 1880s, Dr. Sarah Schuey, one of the first female physicians in Oakland, opened an office near the southwest corner of Market and Fifth streets; Melinda Fenton, an elderly Irish peddler, rented a cottage around the corner from the physician's establishment.

In West Oakland, where homeownership was common among working-class residents in the 1870s and 1880s, property ownership offered women a source of income independent of working for wages. Eva Carlin noticed the prevalence of owner-occupied homes in the community, but the participation of women in this aspect of the neighborhood economy escaped her attention (Carlin 1900a:426). In this community, owning a piece of property did not guarantee a woman financial security any more than it did a man; there were many instances of cash-poor owners of rental property and relatively affluent renters. Given that situation, it seems that women property-owners, who usually were widows, recognized the importance of diversified investments: they owned several dwellings, sometimes adjacent to one another, sometimes in different neighborhoods, and rented out one or more of the buildings for income. Margaret Graffelman and Sarah Richardson, the widowed mothers of schoolteachers, owned several houses from which they received rental income. Graffelman owned a duplex and a rental cottage next door to one another on William Street. Richardson owned two adjacent cottages on Goss Street, one of which she sold to Delia Collins, a married woman who held the property and several others nearby, in her own name. Julia Newell, the widowed nurse, owned two lots on Fifth Street and property elsewhere in the district; she let to tenants the houses she owned and rented for her own residence less expensive, smaller dwellings in the neighborhood. Elizabeth Delainey, an African American widow, also owned two adjacent houses on Sixth Street, not too far from Newell's houses. Mrs. Delainey lived in one of the buildings and rented the other dwelling to relatives. In contrast to the people just mentioned (and most other residents of West Oakland), Jane Dutton, an elderly, single woman who lived in a modest house that she owned on Fifth Street, accrued a considerable fortune, having opened a boardinghouse in San Francisco just after the Gold Rush and invested her earnings in real property around the region. Miss Dutton, who was described as "keeping house" in the 1880 census, had an estate worth \$100,000 when she died in 1888.

In this neighborhood, property ownership may have helped some women challenge the constraints of the late 19th-century gender system and achieve a measure of personal independence. Jane Dutton, for example, never married, perhaps to retain control over her investments. In 1890 Kate Tierney, a single, middle-aged Irish servant, bought a cottage on Brush Street. Tierney moved into the building, divided it into flats, and proceeded to rent rooms

UNDER WRAPS: 19TH-CENTURY CORSETS

Sunshine Psota

If "clothes make the man," then corsets shaped the modern 19th-century American woman. The least familiar and most controversial garment from that century's wardrobe, corsets were an invisible asset—only "seen" in the contoured shape over which tightly fitted garments accentuated the created figure. Small-waisted women were equated with corporeal beauty, but the means to achieve the ideal was always controversial. Clothing and health reformers of the day compared corsets to Chinese footbinding, while mid-20th-century feminists called Victorian women "Exquisite Slaves." Most recently, however, revisionists are writing from a more realistic view (e.g., Miller 2000; Steele 2001).

By the 1880s, mass-produced corsets were well-made and their cost was affordable to almost all women. Corsets encased the average woman from puberty, to courtship and marriage, through childbearing years, and beyond. Every woman in West Oakland would not have worn corsets all the time, because corsets restricted their ability to undertake vigorous house cleaning and other household tasks. At a minimum, they would have been donned for public outings, but also at other times depending on the type of work a woman did (Crane 2000:51, 57, 73). When worn by female servants and women and girls performing other physically energetic jobs, lacing would have been minimal.



Typical corseted silhouette for the early 1880s well-dressed woman. (Photo courtesy of the Ziesing family)

As a metaphor for the upright, virtuous values of a reputable Victorian woman, the corset allowed only restricted movement. Standing or sitting on the edge of her seat were the most comfortable positions for a woman in public. Movements that 21st-century women take for granted—bending at the waist, slouching, and deep breathing—were impossible. Physical exercise, such as dancing, would have made the

corseted woman breathe as deeply as she could using her upper lungs, which created the heaving bosom, which, when combined with a low neckline, was irresistible to men. Walking upstairs would have been difficult with the long corsets fashionable in the 1870s, as the busk—the two ferrous, front fastener straps that spanned its length—dug into the stomach and hips with any exaggerated movement. Despite the restrictiveness of its extreme form, the busk, in widespread use by the 1850s, was an enormous improvement to the corset design. With its slot-and-stud front opening, the busk allowed for easy removal by the wearer and eliminated the necessity of constantly relying on someone else—either a parent, husband, servant, or child—to lace daily.

Corsets have been blamed for an array of illnesses that under today's scientific scrutiny are not considered creditable (Steele 2001:67-85). Yet some deleterious effects are supported. They restricted breathing by a moderate amount, weakened some back muscles overtime, and affected a woman's reproductive system. Widely known as a tool for aborting an unwanted pregnancy, corsets were worn into and sometimes beyond the second trimester, occasionally resulting in unintentional miscarriages, but more often in difficulties in labor. Infant deformities or illnesses were often attributed to corset wearing instead of the numerous diseases and conditions that were so common to the time. After childbirth, specially designed undergarments allowed mothers to be corseted while breast-feeding.

A few myths about corsets tend to color our perspective. Unlike *Scarlet O'Hara* in *Gone with the Wind*, most women did not have 18-inch waists. In the 1890s, the average woman had a 26- to 30-inch natural waist. Typically, laced corsets reduced the waist 2 to 3 inches. American corset manufactures usually produced a standard range of sizes, creating 18- to 30-inch waists (Steele 2001:44). For example, a "Royal Worcester" 23-inch-waist corset was labeled a "medium" (Miller 2000:134). Worn between a garment resembling an undershirt and a cover for protection, corsets generally were used for about a year. By then, the steel fasteners would begin to rust, the stays break, and the cotton- and silk-covered edges fray; eyelets



The corseted silhouette required the use of metal clasps and other hardware. These two corset clasps were associated with an African American household at 1774 Atlantic Street. One is marked "AMAZON" and the other "P.D.," identifying it as part of a moderately expensive French coutille-style undergarment (Well 7511).

would go missing or get torn, and lacings would get played out or broken.

The image the corset created was not only a small waist—suitable for polite compliments—but a smooth-lined torso, pushed-up breasts, and rounded hips. But the image of the inner woman was also at stake, as reflected in some of the corsets' names. Among the Cypress Project assemblages, the gold-colored busk impressed with "Amazon" stood out from the rest of the

corsets. The Amazon Dry Goods Company manufactured a line of corsets in the late 1800s. This was one of five corset remains recovered from a privy at 1774 Atlantic Street. "P.D." was impressed onto another, which refers to a particular model. Both were purchased from mail-order catalogs and were worn by the wife or daughter of a Southern Pacific Railroad employee. Corsets were among the most common items directly associated with women recovered from the Cypress Project features.

to lodgers who included African Americans and Mexican immigrants. Personal independence did not always depend on property ownership. Around 1880 Lucinda Tilghman, an African American widow, rented an Informal workers' cottage on Fifth Street, which she shared with two of her children, Abraham Holland (a porter for the railroad), and a servant. Mrs. Tilghman and Mr. Holland were prominent members of the African American community, living very respectable lives.



Figure 6.3. A porcelain court jester from the Josephine Bush residence. This figurine graced the Almost-polite house at 814 Myrtle Street in the early 1880s. A music teacher, Mrs. Bush may have taught lessons or hosted recitals at her home (Privy 3139).

In the main, we know about the working lives of these women through the archival record, not from archaeological findings. Yet, on occasion the refuse pits and privies in West Oakland offer material evidence of women's work for wages. Women who sewed for a living, for instance Ellen McLaughlin and the renters at 810-812 Myrtle Street (their names are not known), discarded beads, buttons, thimbles, thread spools, sewing-machine oil, fabric, and clothing—that is, material evidence of female employment and skill (Privy 2822, Privy 3119/3106). In addition, deposits in the backyards of homes occupied by women such as Josephine Bush give some sense of the settings and accoutrements that sustained the employment of professional women. Josephine Bush was a woman of modest means, but the privy in her backyard contained the remains of a tea set, fashionable shoes, cosmetics, perfume, and a few unusual decorative items, including the porcelain head of a court jester (Figure 6.3). Mrs. Bush's students and their families may have found the slightly eccentric decorations suited to a music teacher's home; in addition Bush may have needed to rely on her personal appeal, as well her talent, to earn a living and support her family.

WOMEN "AT HOME"

Domestic items dominate the findings in West Oakland, with the range of materials bringing to life the extent and variety of tasks that the female sex faced at home. Like other women reformers who were active in the western part of the city, Eva Carlin found much to criticize about family life in West Oakland's small houses, writing that for women, "here are all the operations of existence to be carried on. Cooking, eating, sleeping, living, and dying—these pictures rise to mind. Here the women are shut in, to heat in summer, to cold in the rainy season, and always, in a greater or lesser degree, to odors, dirt, and discomfort" (Carlin 1900a:426). The prejudices of Progressive Era reformers thread through this description (women were not shut in their homes), but the emphasis on women's household work is accurate. Artifacts associated with carework and housework prevail in the archaeological assemblages, making real the drudgery of daily life for women in the neighborhood even though technological improvements (gas lights, indoor plumbing) appeared in some houses by the end of the century. By that time, women reformers in Oakland, including women in West Oakland, vigorously campaigned for municipal improvements and domestic reform, hoping to simplify and modernize housework in middle-class and working-class homes under the rubric of domestic science and rationalized household management (*Domestic Science Monthly* 1900-1902; Wright 1980).

Yet, the domestic reformers who were active in West Oakland left almost no trace of their ideologies on the neighborhood's material culture, not even one method of preparing food. The accomplishments of reformers figured more prominently in the public than in the domestic sphere (Gutman 1997a, 2000a). A few objects found in West Oakland's backyards—the "Busy as Bees" cup, for example—held didactic purpose (moral education and religious sentiments), but items such as these did not necessarily put forth Progressive Era reform ideology. The lack of evidence of reform influence on working-class women and their material culture is probably due to timing and historical circumstance rather than resistance to modernization on the part of female residents. Most of the deposits on the West Oakland blocks come from the 1870s and 1880s, when the values of domestic reformers were diffusing into consumer culture; many products had yet to change. Plus, it is difficult to assign the effects of reform ideology directly to the use of specific artifacts, as families in these neighborhoods recycled and reused household goods, making repairs as necessary—a time-honored tradition, which reformers encouraged (Carlin 1900b; Gutman 1997a). Moreover, the programs of domestic reformers, which focused on organizing housework and improving cooking methods, ignored the variety of tasks and challenges that working-class women faced daily, especially mothers with young children at home. Whether or not she worked for wages, a mother who lived in the West Oakland study area usually juggled housework and carework at once, and she depended on the assistance of her daughters, before and after they went out to work for wages (Cosy, Albanese, and Albanese 1995:53).

In West Oakland, "housework" took the female sex all over house lots and into stores and workplaces, as well as into every room of their dwellings, despite Carlin's assertion to the contrary. By the late 19th century, working-class women used consumer products to accomplish many domestic tasks, although there is some evidence of self-reliance in this community, with respect to food preparation—canning food, catching fish and wild game, collecting wild berries, and growing fruits and vegetables. For the most part, though, women bought from local merchants prepared foods and drinks (soda water, baking soda, alcohol, salad oil, condiments), as well as raw ingredients, with meat taking a significant place in the local diet. Women also used industrially



Figure 6.4. A portion of the white table service used by Mrs. Tilghman at 662 Fifth Street. The presence of 18 serving vessels (not all shown here) indicates that formal meals were served on occasion (Privy 9331/1112).

African American widow who shared her house with Abraham Holland, the railroad porter, owned two sets of dishes—one made of common, white improved earthenware (Figure 6.4) and the other of expensive porcelain. The formal dinner service, which included specialized dishes—platters, pitchers, a tureen, a gravy boat, and a butter dish—gives a good sense of the formality of dining in Mrs. Tilghman's house. She also owned three teapots, teacups and saucers, a creamer, and elegant glass tumblers and stemware (Privy 933/1112). The desire to distinguish between ordinary and fine service is especially apparent in tea service items, which were used by almost every family in the study area. Many families owned at least two teapots: an elegant teapot and an ordinary one, usually decorated with an image of "Rebekah at Well." Martha O'Brien (Ellen McLaughlin's younger sister) used an unusual "ordinary" teapot, decorated with a Mandarin figure at the well, instead of the more typical Biblical Rebekah (Pit 2870/2800). The influence of Asian culture on artifacts found in this household is not surprising, given that the family rented the butcher shop (inherited from Edward Murphy) to Asian immigrants who turned it into a Chinese laundry.



Figure 6.5. Entertaining on Fifth Street. The French Family living at 666 Fifth Street may have entertained at home, as indicated by the recovery of bottles from expensive liquors and fancy glasses from their privy (Privy 954).

manufactured items to prepare, cook, and serve food; they did not make these items themselves. Almost all of the dishes excavated in West Oakland originated in the Staffordshire potteries, a good indication of the extent (and continued strength) of the British monopoly on the china trade in the United States during the late 19th century.

Very often, families owned both utilitarian and elegant food-service items, suggesting that at least some women wanted to distinguish between everyday and festive occasions when serving food and drink to family and friends. Many families could afford more than one set of dishes. For example, Lucinda Tilghman, the

The use of two sets of china and the prevalence of the tea service (with its associated rituals and ceremonies) can be taken to indicate an interest in gentility on the part of working-class women in West Oakland. Certainly, women had some interest in establishing pleasing environments inside and outside of their homes: they decorated their homes with vases, figurines, and other objects; owned pets; and set out flowerpots in their gardens. The interest in gentility did not, however, exclude other understandings of entertainment or celebration. Drinks other than tea were commonly served in West Oakland's homes east and west of Market Street (Figure 6.5), with wine, brandy, bourbon, whiskey, and even champagne in use, as well as elaborate vessels for serving them.

Evidence of an interest in gentility—two sets of dishes, elegant decorative objects, and teapots—can be found in the same houses where alcohol was consumed heavily. Of course, it is not clear the degree to which women consumed alcohol as a beverage; in fact, one suspicion is that patent medicine may have been a principle source of alcohol for women. The alcohol content of some bitters exceeded that of ordinary beer or wine.

Moreover, other matters than entertainment claimed women's attention on a daily basis, taking them to the back porches and backyards of their houses, as well as into kitchens and front rooms. The material record of women's involvement with cleaning, laundry, and pest control is less abundant than is evidence of food preparation and service, although these arduous tasks took up a great deal of time before mechanization (Cowan 1981; Strasser 1982). Even though the tangible artifacts associated with these chores are few, several sorts of items suggest their extent: the clothespins used to hang out clothes to dry (Figure 6.6); the chamber pots, which remained in use in some households (Figure 6.7); and the lighting fixtures, which needed regular maintenance and cleaning before electrification. The presence of animal bones gnawed by other than human teeth in almost every backyard gives some sense of the appeal of buried garbage to rodents and pests. Indeed, the overall quantity of trash and the diversity of the material deposited in these backyards gives a good indication of the time and effort needed to keep houses clean and yards maintained, especially if the latter contained animals and productive gardens and orchards.

In addition to leaving records of housework, women "at home" deposited artifacts that speak to the extent of their carework in the industrializing community. For many women (and older girls), the care of infants and young children was a prime task, as was the care of sick family members, including children. Artifacts associated with carework and personal hygiene (Figure 6.8) appear on almost every block in West Oakland, with feeding bottles and prescription and patent medicine bottles prime among them (Table 6.1). The number of infant feeding bottles is not surprising because women experimented with bottle-feeding throughout the 19th century, seeking easier methods than breast-feeding. By the 1880s, using a bottle to feed an infant was not an uncommon practice (Paula Fass 2002, pers. comm.). The renters at 810-812 Myrtle Street used baby bottles, as did the family who rented a cottage on William Street from



Figure 6.6. Wooden artifacts from a Goss Street well. This well provided the ideal environment for the survival of wooden artifacts, such as these clothespins indicating that washing was done at home and hung in the yard. A sewing-machine oil bottle, three spools of thread, and two scissors suggest home sewing (Well 2007).



Figure 6.7. Personalized chamber pots. Three complete, usable chamber pots were discarded into a privy at 1820 Atlantic Street. Of three different sizes and styles—one plain, one with a molded handle, and one of annular-ware—these pots would have been easily recognized by their respective owners (Privy 6270).

(continued on page 195)

Table 6.1. Artifacts Associated with Carework

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Carework Artifacts
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	11 feeding, 13 patent medicine, 12 pharmacy, 1 syringe
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908	2 patent medicine
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	1 feeding, 6 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	3 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	20 patent medicine
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s	13 patent medicine, 6 pharmacy, 1 syringe
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880	1 pharmacy
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	2 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	13 patent medicine, 7 pharmacy
1	Privy 985	Bredhoff household	1880	3 patent, 2 pharmacy
1	Pit 914+	Bredhoff renters	1887	7 feeding, 3 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
2	Privy 1431	Van Epps family	1880	4 patent medicine
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	4 patent medicine, 3 pharmacy
2	Privy 1376	Newell renters	1880	1 pharmacy
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900	3 patent medicine
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880	1 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
2	Privy 1301	Holland renters	1895	2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
2	Pit 1309	Holland renters	1880	1 patent medicine
2	Privy 1321+	Holland renters	1885	2 patent medicine
2	Pit 1469	Tierney household	1901	4 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
2	Privy 1330	Fleck family	1878	1 pharmacy
2	Privy 1358+	Cox renters	1880	8 patent medicine, 11 pharmacy, 1 syringe
2	Pit 1368	Cox renters	1895	2 patent medicine
2	Pit 1387	Cox renters	1880	4 patent medicine
2	Privy 1452+	Stewart household	1880	2 patent medicine
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	1 baby food, 6 patent medicine
3	Privy 1785	Curtis family	1874	1 pharmacy
3	Privy 1858	Tighe family	1882	3 patent medicine, 7 pharmacy
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884	9 patent medicine, 3 pharmacy
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	2 patent medicine, 4 pharmacy
3	Well 1700, III	Curtis renters	1911	10 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy, 1 syringe
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906	21 patent medicine, 1 syringe
4	Privy 3106+	Renters	1880	3 feeding, 2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880	3 patent medicine, 11 pharmacy, 1 inhaler
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	1 feeding, 1 patent medicine, 4 pharmacy
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	7 patent medicine, 6 pharmacy
4	Pit 3196	Scott household	1880	1 feeding
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	10 patent medicine, 4 pharmacy
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890	6 patent medicine, 8 pharmacy
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	1 feeding, 5 patent medicine, 7 pharmacy, 1 syringe
5	Privy 3830	Quinn family	1877	3 patent medicine, 3 pharmacy, 1 syringe

(continued on next page)

Table 6.1. Carework (continued)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Carework Artifacts
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	3 patent medicine, 3 pharmacy
6	Privy 4239	Corbett renters	1880	2 patent medicine
6	Privy 4243	Corbett renters	1880	1 pharmacy
6	Privy 4281	Coleman Renter	1880	4 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880	2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	8 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy, 29 ampoule, 1 syringe
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1887	23 patent medicine, 7 pharmacy, 2 syringe
9	Privy 10102	Frank family	1890	13 patent
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	6 patent medicine, 1 syringe
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	3 patent medicine, 9 pharmacy
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	5 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	3 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	6 patent medicine, 5 pharmacy
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885	3 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
20	Privy 6270	Scoville renters	1870	2 patent medicine
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	2 patent medicine
21	Well 7175	Schrock renters	1900	3 baby bottle, 14 patent medicine
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family household	1905	27 patent medicine, 17 pharmacy
22	Pit 5200	Buhsen Hotel	1900	4 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
22	Pit 5293	Murphy's butchershop	1877	1 patent medicine
22	Trench 5237	Chinese laundry	1900	24 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
24	Well 559+	Pullman Hotel	1905	3 patent medicine
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	3 patent medicine
24	Pit 574	O'Brien family	1909	1 syringe
27	Pit 2855	Fischer family	1900	3 patent medicine
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880	30 patent medicine, 6 pharmacy
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	1 darning egg, 1 pin, 1 thimble
27	Pit 2870	O'Brien household	1900	14 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
27	Privy 2784+	McLaughlin rental	1880	5 patent medicine, 1 syringe
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	1 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895	2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	5 patent medicine, 7 pharmacy, 1 inhaler
28	Pit 2404	Crocker family	1900	9 baby food, 3 patent medicine
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1880	16 patent medicine, 10 pharmacy
29	Well 4600, II	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1895	14 patent medicine, 6 pharmacy, 1 syringe
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	13 patent medicine, 10 pharmacy
29	Privy 4731+	Gohsen renters	1880	12 patent medicine, 17 pharmacy
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	6 patent medicine, 5 pharmacy
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	5 patent medicine, 3 pharmacy
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895	11 patent medicine
37	Privy 100	Huddleson household	1880	1 patent medicine
37	Privy 101	Stryker household	1881	1 patent medicine, 2 pharmacy
37	Privy 141	O'Connell family	1878	1 feeding, 2 patent medicine, 1 pharmacy
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	4 patent medicine, 8 pharmacy

PETS

Elaine-Maryse Solari



Louis and Florence McDermott pose with their dog in front of the family mansion on Seventh Street between Center and Cypress streets in the 1880s. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

Although royalty in various parts of the world had kept pets and used them as important gift exchange between courts for millennia, widespread pet ownership by the middle classes in Europe and America did not begin until the late 18th and early 19th centuries (MacDonogh 1999:237-241; Ritvo 1988:20). This occurred during a time when Europeans' general relationship to the material world had changed dramatically. Due to scientific and engineering advancements, nature was perceived as dominated by human beings. Since nature was rendered less threatening, it could be viewed with more affection and artistic appreciation (Ritvo 1988:21). Wild creatures such as birds and squirrels were kept in cages; fish and turtles were displayed in bowls; and cats and dogs were taught to have manners. By these acts nature was civilized (Kete 1994:76; Ritvo 1987:3).

The Victorian ideology of domesticity, which viewed the individual household as the medium for creating "the self-disciplined adult who could live the theology of liberal Protestantism" as well as a "refuge for the increasingly separate and competitive masculine world of economic

competition" (Grier 1999:98), also played a central role in the evolving status of pets. Families were encouraged to keep pets as a tool for training their children in the qualities of kindness, self-control, and responsibility. It was believed that cruelty to animals predated cruelty to humans. If children, especially young boys, were not raised to be kind, there would be troublesome consequences for families as well as society at large (Grier 1999:95-99). As valuable tools for child socialization, cats and dogs came to enjoy the status of family members. Although some pets continued to be kept for practical purposes, such as keeping down vermin or guarding private property, during the 19th century the attitude decidedly shifted from viewing animals as utilitarian possessions to seeing them as personal accoutrements (Russow 1989:32).

Centuries of animal breeding had prepared pets for their new role in the family. Domestic animals, especially dogs, had been selectively bred to look and act younger and to be viewed more readily as children (Lawrence 1989:62; Russow 1989:33). The pug, a prime example of this trend with its flat face and large eyes, became a fashion



Consumers could choose between an assortment of dog collars in the 1897 Sears, Roebuck & Co. mail-order catalog, as shown here. (Source: Sears, Roebuck & Co. 1897:592)

craze in the 1870s. Not only was the live animal popular as a pet, its image was on a wide range of merchandise, including Christmas cards, calendars, and ceramics. The most popular pets in 19th-century America were dogs and cats, with dogs being viewed more favorably (Kellert 1989:21). Although a purebred "dog fancy" seized the upwardly mobile, mixed breeds constituted the majority of dogs (and cats) in American homes (Ritvo 1987:84-85; Serpell 1996:51, 125). Birds in their decorative, often elaborate, cages and goldfish colorfully swimming in their bowls were more frequently viewed as living art or as a piece of natural history rather than as companions. Caged birds were at times also used to provide solace to those suffering from illness (Carlisle 1993:141). Rodents of various sizes and species were also kept as pets. One could order a squirrel cage with an exercise wheel—similar to a modern-day hamster cage—from mail-order catalogs (e.g., Wm. Frankfurth Hardware Co. 1886:195)

In the second half of the 19th century, pet-keeping became fully commercialized. Nationally marketed pet supplies, including food, cages, collars and leashes, grooming supplies, and medicines were available in specialized stores and through catalogs. Ever mindful that even pet-keeping should be done properly, instruction books such as "Our Home Pets: How to Keep them Well and Happy" were listed in *Harper's Weekly* (23 June 1894, 595:4). In 1886 one could order a seven-pound can of Dr. Wither's Challenge Dog Food via the

mail for 50 cents. Most owners, however, prepared the food themselves, using table scraps or pet meat picked up at the butcher shop and cooked into stews with rice and potatoes (Grier 1993:114-115). The 1877-1878 city directory advertised bird-cage awnings available in San Francisco; by 1886 one could buy a brass bird cage locally for 90 cents in Jones' Bazaar (D.M. Bishop & Co. 1877-1878; *Oakland Enquirer* 16 November 1886, 4:3). By 1892 Oakland had a bird dealer; four years later it had two (F.M. Husted's Publishing Co. 1892, 1896).

Unlike today where veterinary services, including spaying and neutering, are readily available, Americans in the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century had to deal with animal fertility in a much more naturalistic way. It was a common practice to drown all but one of the offspring in a newborn litter, particularly cats. Vaccines for distemper and rabies were not yet available. Distemper was widespread and was fatal at least 50 percent of the time. The general public feared rabies, which was transmittable to humans and was always fatal. As a result there were periodic campaigns in towns and cities to kill wandering dogs.

As early as 1865, Oakland passed an ordinance requiring any owner or possessor of any "Dog or Slut" in the city to pay a yearly license fee of \$2.00 and to procure a collar and display the registered number on it. This ordinance apparently remained dormant until it was "resurrected" in 1872. In July of that year, the *Oakland News* republished the 1865 ordinance, and it was vigorously enforced. Some were thrilled with the results:

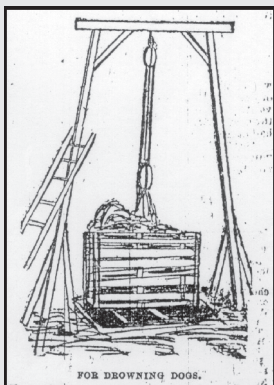
Three days ago one could count from a dozen to 50 dogs within the space of a block or two anywhere on Broadway at almost any time of day. The town might be said to have been fairly given up to the dogs, so numerous were they upon the streets. But since the commencement of the dog catchers' raid these animals have become wonderfully scarce and but few are allowed to roam at will [*Oakland News* 12 July 1872 3:1].

Others protested that the law was too obscure and uncertain and the \$5.00 fine too high (*Oakland News* 3 July 1872:2). As a result, in 1873 a new city ordinance, No. 551, "An Ordinance Providing for

the Registration and Licensing of Dogs in the City of Oakland," was passed. It required that all dogs wear a "suitable collar at least three-fourths of an inch wide, and have attached thereto the metallic plate or tag." If a dog was found running loose on public property without being registered it would be taken to the pound. The owner had three days to redeem the dog for \$3.00 before it would be killed. If an unregistered dog on public property bit anyone, the captain of police was to have the dog immediately killed (City of Oakland 1873).

The following year, 1874, the Oakland SPCA, one of the oldest welfare organizations in the United States, was founded to ensure humane treatment of horses. They subsequently fought to help other animals, including cats and dogs (East Bay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals n.d.).

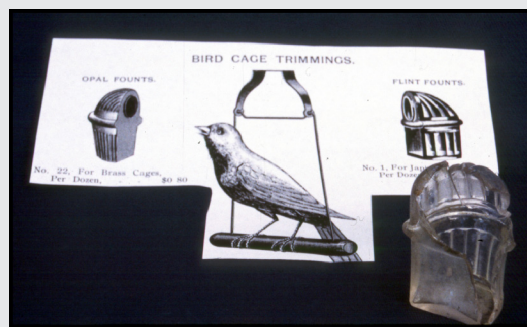
Stray dogs continued to be a problem, however, and the method of their control was subject to abuse. In 1888 a new building was erected on 26th Street near Peralta with a unique apparatus constructed specifically for drowning dogs. Pound master O'Connell was quite diligent in drowning dogs—complaints were made about the number of drowned dogs washing up on the beach, and he was accused of seizing hunting dogs and other animals illegitimately in order to collect the fees. In 1892 the Oakland Humane Society brought charges against him for cruelty, abuse, and corruption. The conditions at the pound were deplorable. Starving dogs would attack and eat each other because the food intended for them had been sold elsewhere for profit. Horses would gnaw



Oakland used an ingenious dog-drowning machine in the late 1880s to keep down the stray population.

holes through wooden doors in the desperation of their hunger (*Oakland Examiner* 20 May 1892, 5:1, 28 May 1892, 7:3).

In spite of O'Connell's efforts, Oakland had a large dog population. In 1896 license collector Cole estimated that there were about 1,100 dogs, but little more than half would be licensed because of economic hard times (*Oakland Enquirer* 20 July 1894, 1:2).



Many West Oakland homes kept birds. Like plants, birds could be used to gauge the healthfulness of a home and the success of the homemaker in providing a suitable environment in which her family could thrive.

The presence of animals in the lives of West Oakland residents is evidenced in some of the material they left behind. Of the 78 addresses excavated for the Cypress Project, 42 contained artifacts or faunal remains indicating that residents at one time or another kept pets. Eighteen of the addresses contained artifacts associated with bird-keeping, including bird feeders, water dishes, and water bottles. Only one household had glass fragments clearly identified as belonging to a fish bowl, but fish could have been kept in any non-specific, unidentifiable bowl. Cats were the most common domesticated animal presence; their remains were found at 28 of the addresses, while only 13 of the addresses contained remains of dogs. All the cat bones and all the dog bones, with one notable exception, were found disarticulated in abandoned privies or wells. Just one dog was found to be carefully buried at the addresses excavated. Faunal remains at four households suggest that the residents were confronted with unwanted offspring from their pets. Abel French and his family, at 669 Sixth Street, disposed of the remains of 10 dogs and 3 cats, mainly kittens and puppies, in a deposit dating to around 1880. Also recovered in their deposit were several chicken elements evidencing healed fractures and other trauma that could indicate altercations between the chickens and pets kept on the property or nearby. Next door, at 671 Sixth Street, the household of William Irving—a Scottish clerk for the Bancroft Company—disposed of four cats and three very young kittens along with one dog and three very young puppies at around the same time. In archaeological deposits dating to the 1880s, kitten remains were also recovered at 712 and 718 Fifth Street.

No animal-specific patent medicines or commercial dog-food products were found at any of the addresses. The West Oakland residents apparently fed their dogs in a more economical fashion as evidenced by the plethora of soup bones with gnaw marks that were recovered.

Not all pets were unloved or unwanted. Annie Fallon, or perhaps a female relative or lodger living with her at 711 Sixth Street, cared enough for a very small dog to comply with the Oakland licensing ordinance. This little dog had a collar with a license dated 1880/81. William Long, a German butcher living at 1726 William Street, was sentimental enough to bury his dog rather than dump it down a privy.

What does the archaeology tell us? The presence of numerous artifacts associated with bird-keeping indicates that many West Oakland residents displayed a bit of nature in their homes. This ties in nicely with the Victorian call to civilize nature. On the other hand, the archaeology does



Collar dated 1881 for a very small dog associated with the home of Annie Fallon at 711 Sixth Street. Oakland required such licenses from 1873, although most owners probably ignored the regulation (Privy 1454).

not strongly support the view that dogs and cats enjoyed the status of family members. Confronted with the reality of too many cats and dogs, the West Oakland residents killed the offspring of their pets and tossed them down abandoned privies or wells. While some pets were well-loved and properly treated, these species as a whole were considered expendable and easily disposable.

Margaret Graffelman (Privy 3119/3106, Privy 6300). By the beginning of the 20th century, other conveniences became available to mothers. Elsie Crocker, who lived in a very modest house on Short (later Shorey) Street, fed commercially prepared infant food to her young children (Figure 6.9). Although the food was expensive, the manufacturer's promise of "well nourished, healthy, bright, and active" babies may have held special meaning to the young mother because an infant had died in the same house during the prior tenant's residency (Pit 2404). Stomach disorders were cited as the cause of death. Specific medicines were used to ease illnesses and pain of children. In the 1870s, Lizzie Lufkin, who rented a house on Market Street, may have given her infant daughter and three-year old son "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" to counter teething pain (Pit 3382). The high alcohol and morphine content of this patent medicine probably helped to settle the children, but as the dangers these substances posed to children became better understood, families turned to other remedies. In the 1880s, Margaret Tate, who was married to a druggist, used "Dr. Samuel Pitcher's Castoria," advertised as safe for children because it was free of narcotic drugs (Privy 3828).



Figure 6.8. Nursing at home. In addition to her duties as a housewife, Mrs. Mann acted as nurse to her ailing older relations, including her mother, husband, and brother-in-law. The 11 feeding bottles and numerous medicines found in her privy at 654 Fifth Street may relate, in part, to the paralyzing stroke suffered by her brother-in-law. Mrs. Mann took care of him for two years prior to his death on New Year's Eve, 1884 (Privy 900).

The care of adults also fell to women, who left considerable tangible evidence of their work in this regard. These artifacts are dispersed across households, seemingly without much respect to the boundaries of class, race, or ethnicity. Eunice Lean Mann, whose mother-in-law owned



Figure 6.9. Caring for infants. In 1900 Elsie Crocker lived in the tiny cottage pictured in Figure 6.1. Although the family clearly did not have very much money, they purchased expensive baby food, such as the Mellin's Infant Food pictured here, for their young children. Poor nutrition and errors in diet were a common cause of infant mortality at the time, and baby-food manufacturers capitalized on the fear this engendered (Pit 2404).

almost an entire city block in West Oakland (the block where the Mann family lived), did not hire domestic help. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, Mrs. Mann took care of her elderly mother, who died of liver cancer; her husband, a miner who died of unknown causes; her brother-in-law, a banker who suffered a stroke; and her three, apparently healthy children. Eunice Mann and her children inherited the property after her brother-in-law died. The numerous feeding bottles and empty patent-medicine bottles, once full of opium and alcohol, offer testimony to the presence of illness (and death) in this relatively well-off household (Privy 900). Augusta Vogt, a less-wealthy German immigrant who was married to a carpenter, suffered from ovarian cancer. She took painkillers, filled with opium and chloroform, to ease the pain of this incurable disease, with many vials uncovered in the privy

in her backyard on Linden Street (Privy 4236/4237). Not all medicines were associated with fatal illnesses. For example, the Hudson family, who lived on Cedar Street, near the McLaughlin family, used a general painkiller, "Magic Oil" (Privy 2719). Catnip and *Cannabis* seeds were discovered in the well in the backyard of the family who rented Shrock's house on Pine Street (Well 7175). The seeds from these plants were used for medicinal purposes (catnip eased colic in babies) and to stimulate household pets (*Cannabis* seeds encouraged songbirds to sing).

When coupled with archival records, the artifacts just mentioned bring to light the close-knit, neighborhood-based, social networks that women created for caregiving, especially with respect to illness. Karen Hansen has described the importance of local networks for childcare in modern working families (Hansen 2001, 2002), and we can see that the observation pertains to the West Oakland community, historically. Lucinda Tilghman could afford to place her mentally ill son in an asylum; similarly, Eunice Mann's ill mother received care in a sanitarium just before her death. These were exceptional cases, however; most women in West Oakland turned to relatives and friends for help. While cost probably factored into the decision, habit and custom likely figured into the choices women made as well. As much as Eva Carlin criticized the housekeeping practices (especially with respect to sanitation and cooking) in this community, she praised the "generosity and helpfulness" that she noticed often involved self-sacrifice on the part of women. "Always some one in the neighborhood is in trouble," Carlin wrote, "always there is rent to pay, or there is some one out of work, or some one is sick, or some one dies and help is forthcoming." She pointed to the loan of a stove as an example of female cooperation: "one woman loaned her stove for two months to a woman less fortunately placed than herself, apparently without any reflection upon the physical discomforts involved" (Carlin 1900a:428).

There are many other, more profound examples of reciprocity and exchange embedded in the history of this community, with the care offered to members of the extended McLaughlin clan discussed at the beginning of the chapter being one of them. Another story stands out, also about an Irish immigrant family: in 1880 Margaret Farmer, a relatively well-off, 62-year-old, Irish American widow, owned several properties in the area, including a one-story house on Filbert Street. She shared this building, her home, with her nephew William Coffey, a typesetter,

Table 6.2. Children's Things

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Artifacts
1	Privy 900	Mann household	1885	1 girl's shoe, 5 doll, 6 marble, 8 tea
1	Pit 928+	Centini family	1908	2 doll, 1 tea
1	Privy 933+	Tilghman household	1880	3 doll, 2 marble
1	Privy 947	Donavan family	1880	2 doll, 1 marble, 3 tea, 1 ball.
1	Well 953	Carter household	1890	5 shoes, 24 doll, 4 marble, 7 tea, 1 wheel
1	Well 968	Brady family	1890s	2 doll, 4 marble, 1 ball
1	Privy 993	Judell store/household	1880	3 doll, 1 marble, 4 tea
1	Privy 955	Irving family	1880	3 doll, 5 tea
1	Privy 954	French family	1880	3 doll, 3 marble, 9 tea, 1 toy chamber pot
1	Privy 951	Paddock household	1878	4 doll, 2 tea
2	Privy 1431	Van Epps family	1880	1 shoe, 2 doll, 1 marble
2	Privy 1409	Barnett/Jacobs household	1885	1 marble
2	Privy 1376	Newell renters	1880	3 doll, 3 marble, 1 tea
2	Pit 1354	Weber family	1900	1 marble
2	Well 1300	Breen family	1880	1 doll, 4 marble
2	Privy 1301	Holland renters	1895	1 boot, 1 doll, 1 marble
2	Pit 1317	Kinsella household	1900	1 tea
2	Privy 1321+	Holland renters	1885	3 shoe, 1 doll, 1 tea
2	Pit 1469	Tierney household	1901	1 doll, 1 marble, 1 tea, 1 bank
2	Privy 1330	Fleck family	1878	1 doll, 3 marble, 3 tea
2	Privy 1358+	Cox renters	1880	4 doll, 5 marble, 5 tea
2	Pit 1368	Cox renters	1895	1 doll, 1 marble
2	Pit 1387	Cox renters	1880	2 doll, 2 marble, 1 tea
2	Privy 1454	Fallon household	1890	2 tea
3	Privy 1858	Tighe family	1882	1 marble
3	Pit 1753	Taylor family	1884	1 doll, 1 marble, 4 tea
3	Pit 1747	Hickey/Loomis family	1880	1 doll, 5 marble, 7 tea, 1 wheel
3	Well 1700, III	Curtis renters	1911	9 doll, 10 marble, 7 tea, 1 tricycle
3	Well 1703+	Bankhead family	1906	5 doll, 5 marble, 4 tea, 1 lead figure, 1 lead horse
4	Privy 3139	Bush family	1880	3 doll, 1 marble
4	Privy 3178	McDonald household	1880	1 doll, 1 marble
4	Privy 3185	Murray household	1880	1 marble, 1 tea
4	Privy 3300+	Chapman household	1890	3 doll, 4 marble, 2 tea
4	Privy 3346	Morgan household	1890	1 doll, 1 tea
4	Pit 3382	Lufkin household	1875	1 doll
4	Pit 3137	Jane Dutton	1880	1 doll, 3 marble 3 tea
5	Privy 3800	Farmer household	1880	2 doll, 2 marble
5	Privy 3830	Quinn family	1877	1 shoe, 1 marble
5	Privy 3828	Tate household	1880	1 tea
5	Privy 3802	McDonald household	1880	4 doll, 5 marble
6	Privy 4220	Broderick family	1880	1 marble
6	Privy 4239	Corbett renters	1880	1 shoe, 2 doll, 16 marble, 2 tea, 1 doll chair
6	Privy 4243	Corbett renters	1880	1 shoe, 5 doll, 1 marble, 3 tea
6	Privy 4281	Coleman renter	1880	1 shoe, 4 doll, 1 marble
6	Privy 4245	Corrigan family	1880	1 doll, 12 marble
6	Privy 4236+	Vogt family	1890	2 doll, 6 marble, 1 tea

(continued on next page)

Table 6.2. Children's Things (*continued*)

Block	Feature	Association	Date (ca.)	Artifacts
6	Privy 4234	Barry family and tenants	1887	1 doll, 1 marble, 1 tea, 1 gun
19	Privy 8445	Holderer family	1895	2 doll, 3 marble
20	Privy 6260	Leonhard household	1880	1 shoe, 1 doll, 2 marble, 2 tea
20	Privy 6239	Hansen-Hayles families	1880	2 doll, 4 marble, 1 tea
20	Privy 6292	Finley family	1885	1 doll, 2 marble, 2 tea
20	Privy 6300	Graffelman renters	1880	4 doll, 4 marble, 3 tea, 1 pistol
20	Privy 6325	Robertson family	1885	1 boot, 2 shoe, 6 doll, 3 marble, 1 tea
20	Privy 6270	Scoville renters	1870	3 doll, 2 marble
20	Privy 6282	Haynes family	1880	1 doll, 3 tea
21	Well 7175	Schrock renters	1900	3 baby shoe, 1 boy work boot, 1 shoe, 2 girl's shoe, 2 wooden boats, 6 doll, 6 marble, 6 tea, 1 jack, 1 shovel
21	Well 7500	Weisheimer family	1905	2 doll, 4 marble, 2 tea
21	Well 7511	Southern Pacific household	1895	3 shoe, 4 doll, 1 marble, 1 utensil, 2 tea
22	Trench 5237	Chinese laundry	1900	1 doll, 2 marble
24	Well 559+	Pullman Hotel	1905	3 doll, 1 figurine, 2 marble
24	Well 300	O'Brien family	1890	2 shoe, 3 doll, 3 marble
24	Pit 574	O'Brien family	1909	1 shoe, 5 tea
27	Pit 2855	Fischer family	1900	1 marble
27	Pit 2809+	McLaughlin household	1880	1 marble, 1 whistle
27	Privy 2822	McLaughlin household	1880	3 doll, 8 marble, 3 tea, 1 ball
27	Pit 2870	O'Brien household	1900	1 doll
27	Privy 2784+	McLaughlin rental	1880	5 doll, 6 marble, 2 tea
27	Privy 2786+	Lewis household	1880	1 gold locket, 1 gold ring, 5 doll, 2 marble, 1 gun
27	Privy 2719	Hudson household	1895	1 doll
28	Well 2007	Lawrence and Ward families	1900	1 rubber boot, 4 doll, 5 marble, 7 tea, 1 ball
29	Well 4600, I	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1880	1 boy's work boot, 8 children's shoe, 2 girl's shoe, 1 wood boat, 5 doll, 1 marble
29	Well 4600, II	Railroad Exchange Hotel	1895	2 doll, 3 marble, 1 tea
29	Privy 4714	Gohsen family	1873	2 doll, 2 marble, 4 tea
29	Privy 4731+	Gohsen renters	1880	3 shoe, 8 doll, 5 tea
29	Privy 4724+	McNamara family	1878	1 shoe, 1 tea
29	Privy 4648	McNamara renters	1880	1 doll, 1 ball
31	Pit 2504	Crocker household	1895	2 boot, 5 shoe, 1 girl's shoe, 2 tea
31	Pit 2524	Portuguese renters	1895	1 doll
37	Privy 100	Huddleson household	1880	2 shoe, 1 doll, 3 marble, 1 tea
37	Privy 101	Stryker household	1881	3 doll, 5 tea
37	Privy 141	O'Connell family	1878	1 doll, 1 marble
37	Privy 156	Long family	1882	1 doll, 1 marble, 1 wheel

HOUSEHOLDS AND HOUSES

In West Oakland, where women lived and worked in many sorts of dwellings, the design of her house did not necessarily predict the range or appearance of household objects that a woman used. Her home, which could be an Informal cottage, an Almost-polite house, a Polite house, a rooming house, or a hotel, was but one part of her life—a container, not a determiner of domestic values or a predictor of female cultural proclivities. Moreover, the range of household objects in use suggest that a woman's cultural aspirations could range across class boundaries even though the designs of her home may have been clearly associated with one social group or the other.

Very often, working-class women in West Oakland used household items that appealed to middle-class consumers, although they frequently chose (or needed) to purchase less-expensive versions of elite objects. Particularly in families with some purchasing power, where men were employed as skilled railroad workers or Pullman porters in the 1870s and 1880s, families were able to lead relatively comfortable lives, in part because they could afford to purchase consumer objects. Following Lawrence Glickman's argument, we can see that in West Oakland, workers "played an active role in creating a consumerist identity and a consumerist political economy" as they did elsewhere in the United States (Glickman 1997:5). The backyards in West Oakland do not, however, offer evidence that in the 1870s and 1880s women recognized the political power of consumer organizing, although women would use boycotts to great advantage in Oakland during the early 20th century (Albrier 1979). Rather, the fluidity of cultural practices stands out across the district, as does the range of choices consumers made about purchase and investment. Women weighed the value of renting or investing in real property as they faced major life-course decisions, and they responded to the appeal of consumer culture, all the while taking account of their relative purchasing power.

South of Seventh Street, the families who lived in specialized dwellings located in the wealthier part of the district close to Market Street did not always buy (or use) objects that endorsed middle-class notions of gentility. The terms used to define specialized houses—Polite and Almost-polite houses—link the dwellings with mainstream domestic values, as do the designs of the homes themselves (Groth and Gutman 1997). In some instances, that assertion follows through with respect to the social class and taste of users in this part of the study area, where proportionally more white-collar workers and native-born residents lived than elsewhere. For example, the Mann family, which achieved some measure of wealth through property ownership and banking, lived in a 1,960-square-foot, two-story house on Fifth Street (east of Market), a gracious middle-class home by most standards. Not surprisingly, Eunice Mann dressed well, decorated her home with elegant objects, gave her children several tea sets, and owned and used expensive porcelain dishes and glassware—until the family fell on hard times. After the deaths in the family (described above), Mrs. Mann remarried, discarded her dishes, and moved out; her former home became a rooming or lodging house, home to several unrelated workingmen. By contrast, Emily Stewart, the African American hairdresser, lived with her family in a large, two-story house on Sixth Street, which she owned; her husband owned the lot next door. At 1,700 square feet, Mrs. Stewart's house was the largest, most formal dwelling on the block. The Stewarts, however, bought relatively modest consumer products in spite of the formality of their home, their sustained business successes, and relatively high social standing.

Families who lived nearby turned to other strategies. In the early 1870s, Marshall Curtis built five workers' cottages at the southwest corner of Market and Fifth streets, which attracted

working-class tenants rather than white-collar workers. Immigrant families crowded into these very small buildings, each about 460 square feet in size, which probably contained two interior rooms and a back porch, initially. In 1874 John Taylor, an Irish-born carpenter, rented one of the houses for his family. His brother, also a carpenter, joined them, and in 1880, three adults and five children lived in one of the small buildings, which had a one-room addition by 1889. At 73 square feet per person (585 square feet total), the space allocation in the Taylor's house resembled that found in a tenement apartment. Yet, Katie Taylor, John Taylor's wife, owned two sets of dishes (plain and decorated china) and a formal tea service; the family also owned a cow, which they buried in their backyard (Pit 1815, Pit 1753). Neighboring tenants (the Carneys and the Fredenbergs) made similar decisions, electing to keep housing costs down while enjoying the benefits of consumer culture. The women in these families, who discarded unwanted objects into a shared old well, served tea and alcohol, decorated their homes with all of sorts of items, and gave many toys to their children, including the tricycle mentioned above.

Closer to the railroad yards, renters and owners could have similar tastes and proclivities although they lived in very different houses. In the 1860s and 1870s, Charles and Madeline Gohsen, financially successful Prussian immigrants, owned a double lot facing Seventh Street and adjacent to the Railroad Exchange Hotel—the premier hotel in this part of West Oakland. Three houses stood on the Gohsen property: a 2,050-square-foot house, which served as the family's residence, a smaller rental dwelling, which also faced Seventh Street, and a 465-square-foot cottage, which straddled the back of the double lot. The residents of all three dwellings used an abandoned complex of privies for a trash receptacle in the 1880s (Privy 4714, Privy 4371/Privy 5167/Privy 5169). Charles and Madeline Gohsen had sold their property by that time, and the new residents were also comfortably well-off. The tenants of the back house ate beef, used formal dinner service, drank alcohol and tea, took care of personal hygiene, and gave their children toys. The difference between the material culture of the big house and that of the back house were in the "kinds and quantities of things," rather than their "quality" (Praetzellis and Stewart 2001:228-229, 247-249).

Renting a house did not necessarily put a family at a disadvantage in terms of accruing wealth; owning residential property could have its own disadvantages, especially if the property were located close to the railroad yards, where encroaching industrial uses diminished the value of private residences, in particular. In 1880 Catherine McNamara, who lived on the same city block as the Gohsens, inherited from her husband, Michael, a one-and-one-half story, 1,180-square-foot dwelling (their home), plus other property in West Oakland and elsewhere in the region—in total worth about \$4,320 and capable of producing \$200 a year in rent. Unlike the Gohsens, who sold their residential property before values declined, Mrs. McNamara lived with her surviving children in the Goss Street house until she died in 1891. The value of her properties declined, and she could not always rent the houses as they fell into disrepair. Even so, her husband, Michael, unemployed at his death, seems to have developed a reasonable financial strategy for his wife and surviving children. Although the family did not have very much disposable income, Kate McNamara owned the accoutrements of respectable widowhood, including household furnishings—a range, a spring mattress, a double bedstead, chairs, carpets, table, washstand, crockery, and parlor set, and her estate could pay for her nursing care and funeral, with some money left to distribute to her heirs.

THE WEST OAKLAND HOME

Marta Gutman

At the beginning of the 20th century, West Oakland was a densely built, mixed-use urban district made up of heterogeneous, rapidly developing neighborhoods and filled with diverse buildings and groups of people. As was often the case in industrializing neighborhoods in American cities, middle- and upper-class, white, Protestant women set up in West Oakland a rich mix of privately run charities that catered to working-class families, some of whom lived and worked on the Cypress Project blocks west of Market Street. Influenced by deeply held concepts of poverty, female moral authority, and environmental determinism, as well as by newer child-saving ideologies powerful in the Progressive Era, these women created what I have described elsewhere as a landscape of charity (Gutman 2000a, 2000b). After 1900 the woman-run establishments, which made up the landscape of charity in the western part of the city, included orphanages, free kindergartens, cooking and sewing schools, day nurseries, settlement houses, and playgrounds (Gutman 1997a; Woods 1994). In these privately run, public places, American-born and immigrant women and their children, as well as people of color, could find social assistance and educational programs, often offered free or at minimal cost. They filled the vacuum created by California state legislators who declined to fund the construction of urban institutions until well after the turn of the 20th century (Pillsbury 1906; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1913).

The West Oakland Home, the first nonsectarian charity that women opened north of Seventh Street and west of Market, was one such charity (Slingerland 1916:81; West Oakland Home 1914:4-5). Established in East Oakland in 1883, the orphanage was moved from place to place, until Rebecca McWade, the founder, settled on a location in West Oakland, shortly after she moved with her family to this part of town. Thanks to gifts from Charles and Mary Crocker, the one-time seamstress and dressmaker was able to purchase in 1887 a substantial piece of property for the charity: two double lots and a large, rambling house, near the northwest corner of Campbell and Taylor streets. Probably, McWade made the acquaintance of the Crocker family

through her husband who was a railroad engineer employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Within walking distance of Oakland Point, the new children's home stood three doors east of the McWade family's new house, and a number of churches and other buildings important in local public life were close by. Shortly after the property purchase, McWade, who was in poor health, retired from active work in the charity, but she left the charity in good hands. Ethel W. Crocker (the Crocker's daughter-in-law) became the charity's new president, and as one of the principal benefactors helped bring to life a new dormitory addition, the first of many improvements to be financed by her largesse. A name change accompanied the shift in leadership: the "Little Workers' Home for Foundlings and Destitute Children" (McWade's choice of title) became the "West Oakland Home" after Ethel Crocker assumed the presidency in 1888.

Like her peers in other American cities (Cmiel 1995; Zmora 1994), Rebecca McWade adopted an incremental approach to urban institution building when she opened a charity for children, the charity that would become a fixture in West Oakland's landscape. To begin with, she relied on the adaptive reuse of standing buildings, a pragmatic, process-driven building strategy in use throughout Oakland and most other rapidly growing American cities. McWade's institution-building process started with offering orphans, abandoned children, and destitute mothers shelter in several houses (including her own East Oakland home) and making minimal adjustments to interior spaces. The Little Workers charged as little as ten cents a day for room and board and



Rebecca McWade, founder of the West Oakland Home. (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Child Center)

permitted a single mother to pay as much as she could afford. Often, no fees were received at all (*Oakland Enquirer* 1888; McWade 1885-1892; West Oakland Home 1885-1896). Winning the support of wealthy female patrons allowed McWade to secure a firmer place for the children's institution in her city's charitable landscape. In large measure, the munificence of women in the Crocker family permitted the organization to purchase property and hire William T. Kirk, an up-and-coming Oakland architect, to design a handsome new building.

After the new dormitory opened in 1891, two kinds of buildings—one an altered house, the other a purpose-built institution—stood side by side on the orphanage's site. The former house and the new dormitory retained their visual independence, giving patrons, clients, and perhaps even the ordinary person passing by some indication of the charity's incremental building process; the new dormitory, decorated in the latest architectural style and fitted out with a large sleeping porch and modern conveniences, also demonstrated the charity's commitment to feminized, child-saving ideals. Popular images of children's institutions, especially those received from books like Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*—suggest that 19th-century orphans lived in dilapidated buildings, isolated in the countryside



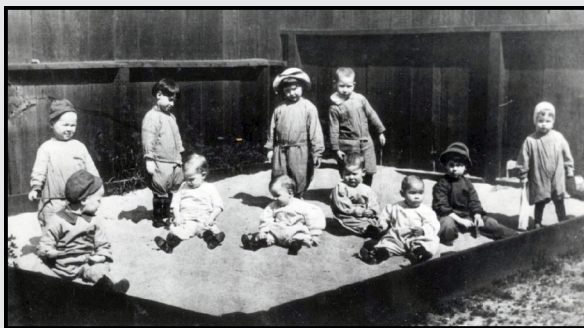
The West Oakland Home at Campbell and Taylor Streets in 1891. This image captures the incremental approach women took to institution building in California. On the right is the Roseberry House, which McWade used as an orphanage starting in the late 1880s. On the left is the purpose-built dormitory addition, designed by William T. Kirk and open for use in 1891. This photo may have been taken to celebrate the completion of the new building. A racially integrated group of children is gathered around the institution, which also contained a free kindergarten. (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Child Center)



Residents of the West Oakland Home, ca. 1891. The racially integrated group of children is gathered in the backyard of the orphanage, lined up against the board fence that separated the charity's property from neighboring residences. In this and other photographs of the time, the charity's clients do not look like institutionalized children: they are wearing "street clothes," rather than uniforms, and their hair has not been shorn—a measure often taken to prevent the spread of head lice. (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Child Center)

and were beaten, sick, poorly dressed, and ill-fed. The situation existed in California (California State Board of Health 1894:24-25), but such a perspective misses the proactive position that working-class parents took with respect to procuring care for their children in the urbanizing state and wealthier women took toward providing it. From the 1830s, when modern orphanages appeared in the United States, to World War II, when many closed their doors, scores of children lived in orphanages, and many had at least one living parent who took advantage of the services offered by these institutions (Cmiel 1995; Hacsí 1997; Michel 1999; Rothman 1971; Zmora 1994). In working-class Oakland, orphanages were part and parcel of daily life.

To be sure, the boys and girls, who would come to call the West Oakland institution home, encountered a moralistic setting, where the design of the institution, its rules, and strict discipline helped to fabricate social control, enforce congregative ideals, and Americanize immigrants. "Here were swarthy lads and senioritas of ebon locks, fair Gretchens and rosy-cheeked Irish damsels and more than all others the compromise[d] American of both sexes, all overflowing with the keen zest of childhood," H. A. Redfield wrote in the *Oakland Tribune* in 1894. The reporter accurately described the diversity of the institution's clients, but exaggerated the number



This photograph of toddlers playing in a sandbox at the West Oakland Home after 1904 indicates that the managers of the institution paid close attention to the advice of Progressive-era reformers. The play areas of younger children are separated from those of older children; toddlers are wearing gender-neutral clothes, and they are engaged in developmentally appropriate play, using purpose-built equipment. This photo was probably taken after the charity opened a separate nursery for infants and children under three years old, and it suggests that the charity was racially segregated by this time. The young children bear more of an institutionalized look about them, when compared to the children photographed in the 1890s. (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln Child Center)

of children in residence who were born to single mothers. "These four-score little ones, olive plants sown in sin, children of misery baptized in tears," he argued, are "gathered together and gently nourished in a home as good as that which shelters those born in [a] happier environment" (Redfield 1894). The design of the new addition, for the most part an inward-looking building, facilitated adding order to the daily life of the diverse group, potentially quite an unruly one. Inside the large dormitory rooms, the matron could readily observe the institution's clients and "grade" them, that is, separate boys and girls by age and sex. American reformers roundly criticized this aspect of institutional life by the 1890s. They argued that congregate living created an artificial distance between groups of children, one that they would not experience in ordinary family life and thus made it hard for orphans and half-orphans (a child with one living parent) to adjust to home living when they left a congregate institution. The space, like the care, had been too impersonal (Brace 1872). Nonetheless, charity workers in West Oakland, like managers of urban orphanages across the country, welcomed a conventional congregate solution as efficient, economical, and socially appropriate (Cmiel 1995:38-42; *Oakland Enquirer* 1890).

In West Oakland the congregate design of the new dormitory did not deter parents from bringing their children to the orphanage during the 1890s, a time of economic and political crisis in Oakland and across the American nation. This urban orphanage, like many others, offered a relatively inexpensive solution to child-care, which working-class families took advantage of, usually when faced with emergencies and after other family-based solutions failed. Customarily, children boarded at the home for a short period of time when a caretaker (or breadwinner) fell ill, became unemployed, died, or disappeared from a family's daily life for one or another reason.

In West Oakland parents found that they could appropriate the charity's services to suit family needs, at least to some degree. At the West Oakland Home, children moved in and out of the orphanage as family needs changed, with short stays (several months to one year) common and adoption rare (Gordon 1999, for comparison). Moreover, children received reasonable, if strict care—meals with enough food (including meat) to satisfy a growing body, sanitary surroundings (with indoor plumbing), clean clothing, regular medical attention, space to play, and even love and affection from some of the women who ran the establishment. The charity observed compulsory education laws, enabling working-class children to attend school rather than be sent to work in a factory or as a servant. Plus, this institution for children opened its doors to all "worthy" boys and girls in need of assistance and did not exclude Catholic or African American children at this time. After the turn of the century, the establishment would become racially segregated and more institutionalized in form, as the charity added new buildings to its property. Even so, the woman-built establishment continued to serve as a material resource for working-class children and their families. The orphanage represented to a larger urban public the needs of working-class children and their families, as well as the socializing, disciplinary, and moralistic functions, so emphasized by elites of that time and in subsequent accounts of 19th-century urban institutions.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

When Eva Carlin visited West Oakland in the late 1890s, she confronted the enormity of the tasks that working-class women faced each day of their working lives. In the main, the reformer probably would have agreed that women were "busy as bees" in West Oakland's homes, which were places of work as well as habitation for women. Since Carlin arrived in the neighborhood at the end of a tumultuous decade, after economic depression and the Pullman railroad strike rocked the district, she probably encountered domestic situations more charged with the effects of political and economic strife than was the case in the period under study. Nonetheless, the reformer's description of domestic life in the neighborhood and her assessment of its consequences for female residents (mothers in particular) as "sometimes ... worn out ... shut in ... discouraged ... careless ... over-worked, weak, [and] ill-tempered" (Carlin 1900a:426) does not entirely square with stories uncovered about the 1870s and 1880s throughout the Cypress Project area. I would argue that Carlin misrepresented the full range of working-class women's daily lives because of her environmental determinism and class-bound values, which included a belief in personal improvement and a passion for domestic reform. Even though she was a more accurate and compassionate observer than many other Progressive Era reformers (Cohen 1986), Carlin did not grasp the complexity and heterogeneity of domestic material culture in West Oakland and the meaning it held for women in the neighborhood.

In West Oakland, working-class women paid a great deal of attention to domestic material culture, even when they lived in seemingly pressed circumstances—very small, two- and three-room cottages. Although women may not have taken heed of domestic reformers' prescriptions for household management, evidently, they took great pride in their houses and in home décor, purchasing or otherwise procuring a wide range of household objects. Families in most of the homes investigated for the Cypress Project owned and used elegant and utilitarian objects, especially evident in the bric-a-brac and the range of food and tea-service items uncovered in the neighborhood's backyards. Moreover, working-class women, who lived and worked in a variety of dwellings in West Oakland, used objects that historians and archaeologists generally take to stand for middle-class values, although working women usually purchased less-expensive versions of elite artifacts. This aspect of West Oakland's history, brought to light through archival, archaeological, and architectural research, leads us to question and rethink assumptions about associations between the design of houses, domestic material culture, gender, and social class. Particularly in families where men were skilled railroad workers, women's aspirations for consumer objects (and ability to get hold of them) crossed class boundaries, even though their houses may have not done so.

While the prevalence of homeownership caught Carlin's attention, she did not discuss women's participation in this aspect of the neighborhood economy. Thus, she did not assess the meaning and consequences of gendered proprietorship for family and community life in a district where some families would live for generations. To some degree, this issue remains an open question, beyond the scope of this study. Yet, women's investment in property surely had some consequences for the social, and physical, landscape in West Oakland. This situation is worth considering on its own merits and with respect to the value rental housing held in this community. As we have seen, there were many instances of cash-poor owners of rental property in West Oakland, as well as relatively affluent renters.

This observation brings us to the concluding point of this essay. Eva Carlin recognized the extensive caregiving networks among women in West Oakland and their importance to community life, an observation that is borne out by archival and archaeological records. Again and again, as Carlin noted, women helped each other in West Oakland, especially at points of life-course change—childbirth, marriage, and death—and during times of crisis—unemployment, disability, and illness. To her credit, Carlin contrasted the prevalence and success of women’s private caregiving networks and their spatial and geographic basis with the lack of attention given the neighborhood by civic and municipal authorities. Thus, although she and the reform-minded women who were her colleagues proposed to improve women’s daily lives by altering personal habits and housekeeping skills, they recognized the need for neighborhood improvements and wide-ranging municipal reform.

Women who followed Carlin would bring these plans to fruition. But implicitly and again to her credit, Carlin sounded the call when she wrote: “In the daily life of a hard-working community one finds an ideal of service so high that it inspires great hope for humanity at large” (Carlin 1900a:428)—words that ought to give us pause in our own time.



ARISTOCRACIES OF LABOR: CRAFT UNIONISM, IMMIGRATION, AND WORKING-CLASS HOUSEHOLDS

MARK WALKER

...Wide open and unguarded stand our gates
 And through them presses a wild and motley throng—
 Men from the Volga and the Tatar steppes,
 Featureless figures of the Hoang-Ho,
 Malayan, Scythian, Teuton, Kelt, and Slav
 Flying the Old World's poverty and scorn;
 These bring with them unknown gods and rites,
 Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.
 In street and alley what strange tongues are loud,
 Accents of menace alien to our air,
 Voices that once the Tower of Babel knew!
 O Liberty, white Goddess! Is it well
 To leave thy gates unguarded?...

T.D. Aldrich, "Unguarded Gates"
 in the *Railroad Trainmen's Journal* (1902)

INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Bay Area has a strong tradition of working-class organization extending back to the 1850s (Cross 1935; Issel and Cherny 1986), a tradition structured by specific historical conditions and the differing experiences, understandings, and actions of workers. Growing disparities in wealth, an unstable economy, and the creation of new regimes of work as industrial production expanded and increasing numbers of workers entered wage work, led to dramatic increases in labor struggles during the late 19th century. From 1881 to 1885, there was an average of 500 strikes per year. In contrast the annual average for the 1890s was 1,300 strikes (Licht 1995:173). The increase in class tensions during this period may be attributed to a number of causes, including deskilling of craftwork, a shift in the nature of immigration, new ideologies, and declining standards of living as people moved into cities. Worker responses to these changing conditions and expectations varied immensely.

In California the early labor movement was inextricably bound up with nativist ideologies and constructions of ethnicity (Figure 7.1; Cross 1935; Kazin 1995; Olmsted and Olmsted 1994; Saxton 1971). Many of these workers were organizing themselves, not just in struggles against their employers, but also against other groups of workers. The nativist campaigns against the Chinese were particularly vicious, all the more so as they acquired legal sanction. But native-born workers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in California and throughout the U.S.

were also concerned with recent immigrants from Europe, especially those from southern and eastern Europe, but also from Ireland and northern Europe (Aldrich 1902; Barrett 1992; Dawson 1983; Doyle 1983; Kazin 1995; Saxton 1971). Immigrant labor was used by capitalists to undermine labor organizations, craftwork, and socially accepted wages. For U.S.-born workers and even older immigrants, recent immigrants were more than simply an economic threat; they were also a threat to an "American" identity based upon certain Victorian ideas of an appropriate standard of living and forms of behavior (Arnesen 1994; Barrett 1992; Dawson 1983; Doyle 1983; Kazin 1995). The language of unionism and craft solidarity was, through the discursive practices of Victorian ideology, married to the language of race and nativism.

The Cypress Archaeological Project recovered assemblages with a total of nearly 450,000 artifacts, associated with 100 documented households. The breadth and control of this dataset permit a detailed comparative view of life in a late-19th-century working-class neighborhood. This study uses a sample of 19 households in which the head of household worked for the railroad industry or in probable railroad-related jobs (Table 7.1). The scale of the archaeological work also allowed quantifiable comparisons between groupings of households; while the numbers in each group were small, it was nonetheless not an opportunity to be passed up.

Because of the scale of the archaeological work and the tight historical associations of the features excavated, it is possible to examine the assemblages of a cross section of workers within a single industry—the railroad—and to do so with a fair understanding of the historical conditions confronting those workers. A focus on workers in one industry sacrifices some statistical robustness, but it does ensure that the comparisons are made within a detailed historical context, especially since the nature of work in the railroad industry during this period is relatively well-documented (for statistical studies at a larger scale, see Chapters 3 and 11).

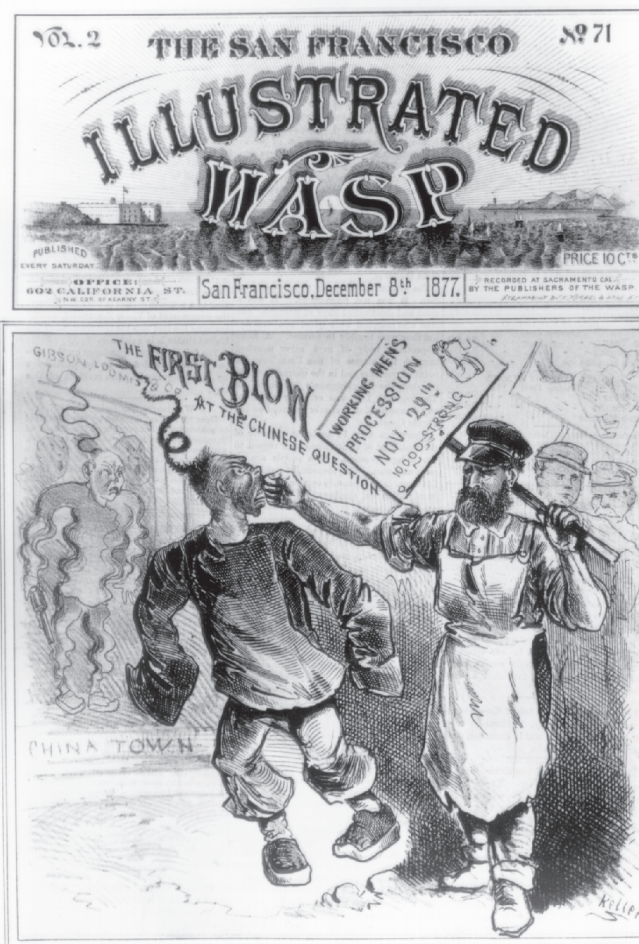


Figure 7.1. A view from *The Wasp* (8 December 1877). "The First Blow at the Chinese Question." (Illustration courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California)

Table 7.1. Households and Features Used in the Railroad-workers Analysis

Name	Block	Address	Period of Residence	Feature Number	Feature Type	Date of Deposition	Ethnicity	Occupation	Class Segment
Unknown	31	1860 Short	1890s	2524	Pit	ca.1895	Portuguese	Laborer	Unskilled Immigrant
Breen	2	802 Brush	1877-1882	1300	Well	1876-1880	Irish	Laborer	Unskilled Immigrant
Broderick	6	813 Filbert	1875-1900	4220	Privy	1880	Irish	Laborer	Unskilled Immigrant
Carter	1	668 Fifth	1889-1895/6	953	Well	1889-1896	Black	Porter	Unskilled U.S.-born
Corrigan	6	825 Linden	1876-1891	4245	Privy	1880	Irish	Boilermaker	Skilled Immigrant
Crocker	28	1825 Short	1900-1	2404	Pit	1900	White U.S.	Laborer	Unskilled U.S.-born
Fischer	27	1862 Goss	1899-1900	2855	Privy	1900	White U.S.	Carpet Layer/ Upholsterer	Skilled U.S.-born
French	1	669 Sixth	1880	954	Privy	ca.1880	White U.S.	RR Conductor	Skilled U.S.-born
Haynes	20	1820 Atlantic	1880-1884	6282	Privy	Early 1880s	White U.S.	Carpenter	Skilled U.S.-born
Hickey/Loomis	3	770 Fifth	1878-1881+ (combined)	1747	Privy	1880	White U.S.	Carpenter/ Carpet Layer	Skilled U.S.-born
Lewis	27	883 Cedar	1876-1882	2873/2874/ 2864/2786	Pits	1880	White U.S.	Brakeman	Skilled U.S.-born
McDonald	4	818 Myrtle	1875-1890	3178	Privy	early 1880s	White Canadian	Carpenter	Skilled U.S.-born
Murray	4	822 Myrtle	1875-1898	3185	Privy	1880s	Irish	Laborer/ Gardener	Unskilled Immigrant
Quinn	5	812 Filbert	1875-1880	3830	Privy	1875-1880	Irish	Laborer/ Fireman	Skilled Immigrant
Robertson	20	1814 Atlantic	1872-1900+	6325	Privy	Mid-1880s	White Canadian	Foreman	Skilled U.S.-born
Taylor	3	768 Fifth	1874-1892	1753	Pit	1884	White U.S.	Carpenter	Skilled U.S.-born
Tighe	3	762 Fifth	1880-1882	1858	Privy	1882	Irish	Railroad Car Cleaner/Oiler	Unskilled Immigrant
Van Epps	2	809 Castro	1874-1892	1431	Privy	Early 1880s	White U.S.	Carpenter	Skilled U.S.-born
Vogt	6	822 Linden	1877-1894	4236/4237	Privy	Early 1890s	White U.S.	Carpenter	Skilled U.S.-born

THE RAILROAD

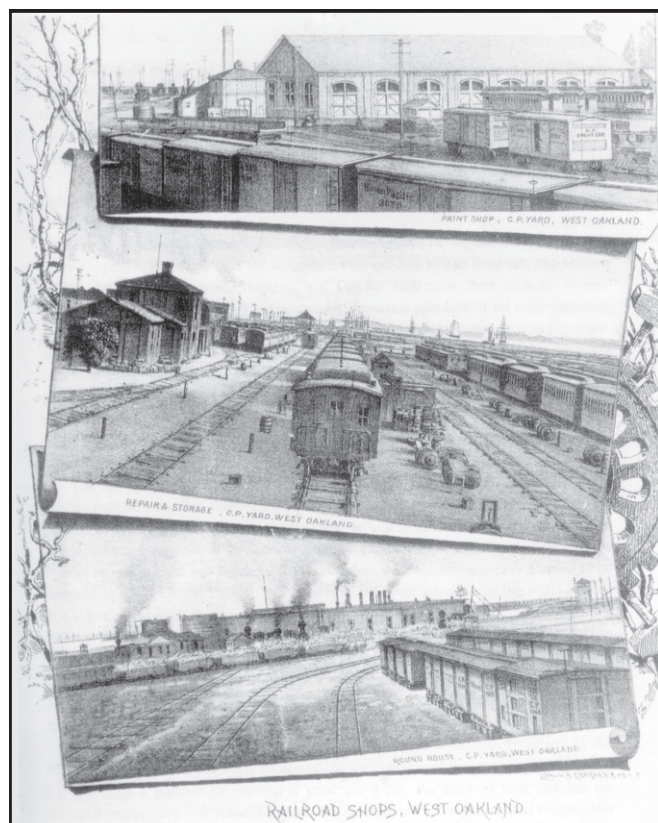


Figure 7.2. The Central Pacific Railway Yards in the 1870s. The yards already formed a substantial complex of solidly constructed buildings in a town where there was, as yet, little other industry. The paint shop, at top, a busy place in an era when the wooden coaches were kept highly polished as a matter of pride, was still standing in 1993, as was the large building in the middle view, but the roundhouse was long gone. (Illustration courtesy of Bancroft Library)

contraction likewise cascaded through the national economy (Hays 1957:8). The railroads linked the U.S. into one vast market, enabling corporations to produce, distribute, and compete on a national scale.

Railroads entailed new labor-management techniques. They were a new kind of business, operating on a hitherto unprecedented scale in sheer size, capitalization, operating expenses, geographic expanse, complexity, and economic impact (Licht 1982:5). The complexity and geographic scale of the operations required careful synchronization of the various operations and a consequent regimentation of the employees. As much as possible, the work was broken down and made consistent across the whole operation. In situations where employees operated independently of management oversight, such as on the actual trains during runs, they were often guided by extensive rulebooks, with separate ones for conductors, engineers, brakemen, and firemen (Licht 1982:80-82). In the shops, management was apparently close, continual, and oppressive. In many railroad strikes, such as the 1893 American Railway Union (or Pullman)

Oakland was incorporated in 1852, and became the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, rapidly developing into an industrial center, focused on the docks, shipbuilding, and the railyards. The Central Pacific Railway Yard and Shops, which had a block of land larger than the neighborhood itself, dominated West Oakland in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Figure 7.2). The Central Pacific became the Southern Pacific after 1885. The neighborhood was ethnically diverse, composed of both immigrant and U.S.-born workers, white and African American, attracted to the locale by the relatively steady work the railroads offered (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994).

The last quarter of the 19th century, the nation's "Gilded Age," saw a concentration of wealth and capital that was unthinkable in the earlier days of the Republic. The U.S. economy was unstable, with rapid boom-and-bust successions as the business cycle accelerated. There were severe depressions from 1873 to 1878 and from 1893 to 1897, with a recession from 1884-1886 (Licht 1995:181). The industry that drove the cycle was the railroad. The expansion of the national railroad networks spurred growth in the steel, lumber, iron, and mining industries, and their

strike, the central issue was not wages but the arbitrary exercise of power by supervisors (Licht 1982:254). The failure to organize railroad workers industrially, i.e. into a single, industry-wide union—especially after the Pullman strike—led to a proliferation of craft-based unions, with each job having its own union. There were three stable railroad unions in 1877; in 1901 there were 13, with, for example, individual unions for electricians, telegraphers, blacksmiths, and oilers (Licht 1982:264-265).

CRAFT UNIONISM

Labor on the railroads, as with many industries, consisted of a thin stratum of skilled workers underlain by a workforce that was largely unskilled; some were skilled in jobs outside the traditional exclusive framework of the upper stratum craft-workers and unable to enforce a monopoly on those skills (Figure 7.3). The unskilled work-gangs on the railroads were largely African Americans or immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Mexico (Arnesen 1994:1607, 1608). The ethnically homogeneous and relatively privileged group of skilled craft workers comprised only 12 to 15 percent of the U.S.



Figure 7.3. West Oakland switching crew in the 1880s. The varied dress of these men is some indication of their roles at work. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

working class (Dawson 1983:138; Shefter 1986:208). These craft workers were highly class-conscious, but with a consciousness that, to us today, seems curiously contradictory. Their impressive solidarity had very definite boundaries (Barrett 1992:1000-1001; Kazin 1995:313-314). "By the close of the nineteenth century the modern craft stratum had formed itself into a cohesive 'social bloc' with barriers restricting working-class entry from below and an antipathy towards mingling with the white collar middle-class above" (Dawson 1983:138-9).

Immigrant unskilled workers actually posed no immediate threat to craft workers. They were, after all, unskilled. What they did pose was an ideological threat, a threat to the identity of skilled workers as Americans. This American identity was bound with the language of Victorianism—respectability, a certain standard of living, manhood and domesticity, self-improvement, and, most important, the right to earn enough to maintain that American identity (Arnesen 1994:1614-1615; Jameson 1998:121).

Yet the craft workers did not slavishly adopt middle-class ideologies wholesale, but rather interpreted Victorian hegemony through a staunchly laborist lens. They believed in social advancement, but this would be achieved through collective action, not the solitary efforts of the atomistic individual of bourgeois ideology (Dawson 1983:139). They protected their privileges and their position by organizing in exclusive skilled-based unions—craft unions. Their monopoly of skills enabled organized craft workers to extract high wages from their employers, to regulate

the pace of work, and even to establish output quotas to maintain the cost of labor (Shefter 1986:201). The unions also served as educational venues for their members, publishing technical articles as well as self-improvement essays (Arnesen 1994). An article on temperance highlighted the attitude of the Brotherhoods toward their unskilled co-workers, pointing out that "trackmen and laborers, possibly, need to abstain much less than any other class, for their labor being merely mechanical requires no great amount of brain" (*Firemen's Magazine* 1883).

Craft workers saw immigrants as a threat to this American identity (Kazin 1995:313-314). In working for lower wages, immigrants undermined socially accepted standards of living. Through competing for jobs with cheap immigrant labor, white American workers compromised their standard of living, ceasing to be respectable and consequently ceasing to be fully American. As one writer noted, "If, in his new home, the immigrant fills up a place that might have been occupied by someone of a higher standard of civilization, our own country is the worse for his coming" (*Locomotive Firemen's Magazine* 1902).

The distinction between skilled and unskilled workers played into tensions between U.S.-born and immigrant workers. This period also saw a massive wave of immigration from Asia, England, Ireland, and southern and eastern Europe. Most of these immigrants, especially those from agricultural backgrounds, funneled into low-paying unskilled jobs. Older immigrants who had acquired skill and position would look down on recent arrivals (Doyle 1983:207), and different immigrant groups battled among themselves. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the early anti-Chinese agitation among working-class organizations was led by Irish organizers who exploited and even fanned nativist feelings in political struggles between skilled and unskilled workers (Saxton 1971).

THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK IN THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY

Railroad labor was typically divided into three main departments: Operating, Mechanical, and Maintenance of Way (Cottrell 1970; Licht 1995). The Operating Department ran the trains and was responsible for the transport of passengers and their luggage and freight. Operating Department workers consisted of the engineers, firemen, conductors, and brakemen. At the end of the 19th century, each of these groups had its own union: the stable, powerful, and conservative craft unions that were collectively known as the "Big Four."

Engineers operated the locomotives and were one of the highest paid occupations among U.S. workers (Freeman et al. 1992:21). Engineers were a true "aristocracy of labor," fully aware of the power their work brought them and defensive of their privileges. Most of them belonged to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, the BLE (Cottrell 1970; Licht 1995). Since none of the excavated features from the Cypress Archaeological Project could be tied to engineers' households, they are not discussed further.

Beneath the engineers were the firemen. They were responsible for jobs such as coaling, filling the boilers, and oiling. They worked in the shop when not on runs. Generally this was an apprenticeship position on the way to becoming an engineer, if the fireman was white. This was generally the case in the North, but on many southern lines most firemen were African American and thus unable to become engineers. Most firemen who met the racial requirements belonged to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers, which was established in 1873, 10 years after the BLE. Of the 19 railroad households in the Cypress sample, one—the Quinn household—was that of a fireman. Quinn was listed as a "laborer/fireman" in the U.S. Census.

THE QUEST FOR "DAD" MOORE

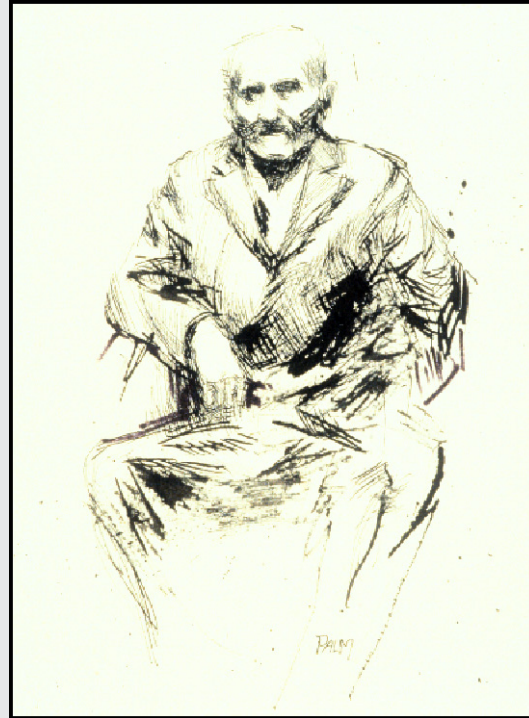
adapted from William A. Spires (1994) by Mary Praetzellis

The International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was founded in Harlem on 25 August 1925 with the primary object of securing higher wages and improved working conditions for thousands of African American workers. The principal thrust of their struggle was directed at the owners and operating staff of the Pullman Palace Car Company, which operated the railroad sleeping cars so critical to travel from the West Oakland railyards. The porters, represented nationally by A. Philip Randolph and in Oakland by Morris "Dad" Moore and later by C.L. Dellums, devoted heroic efforts to organizing, publishing, and staging boycotts before they secured recognition and concessions from the Pullman Company in 1937, 12 years to the day from their first meeting.

Born in 1854 somewhere in Virginia, Morris "Dad" Moore began work as a Pullman Car porter out of Chicago in 1901; in 1919 he transferred to West Oakland to take charge of the porters' quarters, where he remained until his retirement in 1924 (*Pullman News* May 1924:28). The Pullman Company provided sleeping quarters for porters to remain while on call or stationed away from home. Dad Moore managed the West Oakland quarters in two converted sleeping cars stationed in the Southern Pacific Railyards in West Oakland, and he did so in his own way:

Dad Moore didn't have nothing but a pint of moonshine. He was in retirement. They gave him the job of taking care of two old sleeping cars where the porters stayed. He took care of those cars, woke the men up, and saw that they got on the job. . . . He preached Brotherhood to every man he saw coming in and out of the railroad yard in Oakland. He and the boys would share a bottle of moonshine and he would preach Brotherhood. If you wasn't a Brotherhood man you had a hard time getting in and out of his quarters. He worshipped Randolph [Anderson 1972:176].

Moore's "retirement" coinciding as it did with the formation of the Brotherhood may well have come about in retaliation against his



Morris "Dad" Moore, September 1929. Dad Moore attended the first BSCP convention in Chicago, Illinois, and sat in a position of honor for the delegates' portrait. This drawing, made from that portrait, captures Moore's simplicity and strength.

(Illustration credit: Olaf Palm)

organizational efforts. Moore opened his own operation at 519 Wood Street to provide housing for porters and to serve as a local base for the BSCP. Moore worked tirelessly to dissuade Oakland porters from voting for the proposals put forward by the Pullman Corporation for an Employee Representation Plan. Rejection of this plan was the first step in the BSCP's efforts to be recognized as the legitimate bargaining agent for all porters. Randolph himself wrote to Moore on this matter:

Our strategy is unqualifiedly definite and positive opposition to "yellow-dog" contracts and the Plan. We must fight them with every ounce of blood and power we possess with a view to killing them entirely, for the Plan means slavery to the porters and the Brotherhood alone means freedom [7 August 1928].

Randolph concluded his letter by congratulating Moore on his "splendid work, noble character, fine spirit, indomitable courage, flaming zeal and great enthusiasm" (7 August 1928).

By this time, Moore had signed up a young porter named C.L. Dellums, who would succeed him in running the local BSCP office and become a national figure in the African American labor movement. Dellums became Moore's "Field Agent" and was fired along with 45 other porters for union activity. They relocated the BSCP office to 1716-1718 Seventh Street, with sleeping quarters above a saloon and an office downstairs. Pullman official O.W. Snoddy kept tabs on the BSCP, and "stool pigeons" infiltrated the organization, passing on information to the corporation. The BSCP was under attack not only from the Pullman Company, but from less radical black leaders, especially the American Negro Labor Conference. In one of his last letters to BSCP headquarters in Chicago, Moore expressed his complete devotion to the cause:

I listened to his talk then I got up and said that I was an old man 75 years old and I daired eny one in the City of Oakland or State of California to say my hands was tainted with a half penny and it went for Mr Randolph for I would stand by my leader if it cost my life I told them I would Die in the Streets before I would go against my leader . . . that I would wade in blood up to my nees and . . . [22 June 1928].

Despite poor health, Moore attended the first BSCP meeting in 1929 in Chicago, where he held the place of honor in the group portrait. He died of cancer four months later. He was eulogized by Randolph in *The Black Worker* (February 1930) for having fought the good fight, keeping the faith, and never bowing to Baal. Moore was buried by the Brotherhood in Evergreen Cemetery, where until recently, there was no headstone to mark his grave. The trustees of the Northern California Center for African American History and Life (an affiliate of the African American Museum and Library at Oakland) dedicated a headstone in his honor on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 25 August 1995. Bill Thurston, praised Dad Moore:

Even today, 65 years after his death we should all pause and thank giants such as Dad Moore and many others who steadfastly fought to make a better America for African Americans who had just recently broken the yoke of chattel slavery and were attempting to fight off the yoke of wage slavery. Once again, it is fitting and proper that we give this long overdue recognition to Mr. Moore. Perhaps with this headstone dedication he can rest just a little better knowing that we honor and salute his life and his efforts today.



Headstone Dedication Ceremony for Dad Moore's Grave, Evergreen Cemetery, Oakland. The trustees of the Northern California Center for African American History and Life gathered on 25 August 1995, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, to honor Dad Moore. *From left to right*, Mrs. James Carter; James Carter, Member, Retired Railroad Men's Club; Samuel Lewis, Recording Secretary, Retired Railroad Men's Club; Bill Thurston, President, Board of Trustees, African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO); Herman Simmons, Member, Retired Railroad Men's Club; Reverend Fred Silkett, Member, Board of Trustees, AAMLO; Charles Turner, representing Dad Moore's descendants in Oakland; Robert L. Haynes, Senior Curator, AAMLO; and E. Hope Hayes, Administrative Director, AAMLO.

(Photo credit: Gene Prince)

The “laborer” designation may have reflected his position in the shops or his occupation during downtime.

Paralleling the engineer and his firemen in the locomotive were the conductor and the brakemen in the cars. The conductor had overall responsibility for the train, leading to considerable tension between conductors and engineers. He was essentially a traveling clerk, although he had some technical knowledge of the cars’ operation (Cottrell 1970:18). Conductors belonged to the third of the great brotherhoods, the Order (or Brotherhood) of Railroad Conductors, founded in 1868. The archaeological sample includes one conductor household, that of the French family.

Brakemen were under the conductors. They were responsible for the cars’ brakes, stoking and tending the stoves and lamps in the cars, and loading and unloading baggage (Licht 1982:82). Their union was the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen (BRT), established in 1883. They were presumably on their way to becoming conductors although, as with the firemen, that was far from guaranteed. The Lewis household represents the brakemen in this archaeological sample.

The Mechanical Department was responsible for the maintenance of the locomotives and cars in the shops. As with the Operating Department, there was a hierarchical organization, but one based on that of factories, with managers, foremen, skilled workers (such as carpenters, blacksmiths, upholsterers, and boilermakers), and unskilled laborers. The organized shop workers were less insular than the Operating Department workers. The railway brotherhoods of the Operating Department owed their power to their monopoly of skills. If they went on strike, there was no way they could be replaced. However this strength was also in some sense a weakness: their skills had no outside value, being only useful within railroad Operating Departments. In contrast, while the Mechanical Department workers were vulnerable to strikebreaking, their skills were also useful in a number of industrial settings. Downtime on the railroads could be made up by work in other industries. Partly as a consequence of this, the shop workers’ unions operated much more in the mainstream of the U.S. labor movement, while the Operating Department brotherhoods held themselves aloof from the other unions.

The last department, the Maintenance of Way, was responsible for maintaining the tracks, telegraph lines, bridges, and tunnels that comprised the infrastructure of the railroads. This department used a lot of unskilled laborers, although there were some skilled occupations such as carpenters and stonemasons. There seems to have been a single union for this department, the Brotherhood of the Maintenance of Way (BMoW).

Most of the households in the archaeological sample were headed by workers in either Mechanical or Maintenance of Way Departments, or if not working for the railroads at least in similar occupations. There were five “laborer” households: the Breens, Brodericks, Crocker, Murrays, and one household of unnamed Portuguese immigrants. These men were all unskilled workers. The skilled worker households were headed by Corrigan, a boilermaker; Hickey (a carpenter) or Loomis (a carpetlayer); Fischer, a carpetlayer and upholsterer; and Haynes, McDonald, Taylor, Van Epps, and Vogt, all of whom were carpenters. There was also one foreman, Robertson. Except for two ca. 1900 deposits, these assemblages make up a tight group dating to around 1880 (Table 7.1).

A final class of railroad labor is important here: these were the Pullman porters and the station porters, the Redcaps (Collins 1997c)—occupations that were dominated by African Americans. They did not fall within the recognized railroad labor organizations, as railroad brotherhoods were segregated well into the 1960s.

To the railroad companies and the traditional craft unions, the porters were low-wage, unskilled labor. Yet the porters were able to parlay these jobs into tightly controlled and apparently (through tipping) rather remunerative positions, ultimately organizing into an independent Brotherhood in the 1920s. Their income and aspirations in many ways made them an African American middle class, "an Aristocracy of Negro labor," who occupied prominent positions in their communities, churches, and fraternal orders (Arnesen 2001:23-24).

A porter's income, composed largely of tips, did not depend on the same sorts of skills as mechanics' incomes did, but rather on a being a student of human behavior and even something of an actor (Arnesen 2001:18). Many young African American men saw being a Pullman porter as an avenue to social and economic mobility. In 1890 one Russian traveler remarked on the number of studying Pullman porters, "It seems as if every railroad train is a sort of traveling black college" (Arnesen 2001:18). But, although their struggle for unionization has since become legendary, they were ignored by the traditional craft-union organizations because Pullman porters were black and the job itself was perceived as unskilled (Collins 1997c).

HEGEMONY AND VICTORIAN MIDDLE-CLASS CULTURE

The expansion and consolidation of capitalist enterprises in the later 19th century brought about a proliferation of middle-class professions: managers, record-keepers, and also lawyers, researchers, and engineers. And while it remained circumscribed from above, the late 19th century is the period when the middle class came into its own as a political and social power. Middle-class tastes and middle-class attitudes came to define national cultures, not just in the U.S. but also in Britain and much of Europe (Calhoun 1993:232).

As privileged wage workers, the middle class occupied a tenuous position between the capitalists, whose corporations had led to the massive expansion of the middle class, and the abyss of the working class. It was a position defined largely on the basis of capital that was more symbolic and cultural than financial. Flouting social conventions could carry penalties, far more so than for the working classes or capitalists.

Victorian beliefs represent the hegemony of the middle class during this period. The fact that the middle class was largely a symbolic construction meant that an enormous weight was given to education and shaping the character of children. The reproduction of a family as middle class required that the children master the language of class membership. Victorianism was a set of beliefs that was also explicitly grounded in material culture. Children were carefully acculturated through material objects (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001). Architecture, landscaping, toys, and table settings all played a role in shaping character, and were often designed with specific pedagogical goals. The improving role of material culture was also assumed by domestic reformers seeking to Americanize immigrants and the working class.

A traditional approach in historical archaeology has been to conceptualize certain elements of material culture as representing a single culture, world view, or ideology. So when working-class households or sites yield such finds as matched dinnerware or tea sets, they are sometimes used as an index of acculturation into this dominant culture, be it phrased as the Georgian world view, Victorian ideology or culture, or middle-class ideals. To some of its interpreters, the archaeological record appears as a continual absorption of the working class into the middle class through emulation and acculturation. However, the polyvocality of material culture—its

potential to carry multiple messages and meanings—must be borne in mind in considering class relations in Victorian America. This needs to be considered in any context but is especially important in this period, when mass production and mass consumption were replacing hitherto localized material culture with objects produced and distributed nationally and internationally, leaving most people with seemingly “middle-class” assemblages.

Mass-produced material culture is in some sense the terrain on which struggles between different interest groups are waged. For most Americans, Victorianism was the “language” with which values were expressed and arguments were made. There was much that could be said, but conversely the assumptions of Victorian ideology also limited what could be said and how it was said. The presence of teacups and white matched tableware does not necessarily indicate acculturation into middle-class ideals or emulation of the middle class, at least not in any direct sense. For example, in her well-known study of working household furnishing Lizbeth Cohen (1986) suggests that such objects may indicate alternative ideas of what constitutes “Americanism” —working-class or immigrant ideas, rather than middle-class ones, yet still “Americanism.” Or, as Elizabeth Jameson (1998) points out in her study of Cripple Creek, the acquisition of supposedly “middle-class” artifacts and housing may not be emulative, but rather proud or defiant statements of equality and the strength of union. Middle-class ideologies as well as artifacts may be given new meanings or used in unexpected ways by working-class people. In the same study, Jameson also notes that, for better or for worse, the ideology of separate spheres and domesticity was used by organized labor to justify wage demands—the “family wage” and the moral obligation of the male breadwinner to earn enough to support his family (Jameson 1977, 1998). The same objects could be used to say very different things.

CLASS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

As we move to specific examples of these abstractions, we need to address the interaction of class processes with other social processes. In considering class in the United States in the late 19th century, we would, at the higher levels of abstraction, consider issues such as the nature of capitalism in the U.S., immigrant flows, and the organization of labor. Then, more specifically, we would need to consider cultural factors, the different experiences and historically rooted interpretations of the class structures in which the immigrants and U.S.-born workers found themselves. Finally we should reflect how these structures and understandings are expressed in action.

What class is becomes more historically contingent and more complex as we look at concrete examples. One of the critiques of class-based approaches is that they deploy inappropriate levels of abstraction. Demonstrating that class, used in the most abstract structural sense, does not exist by pointing to differentiation within the working class in one city is akin to disproving the existence of the four states of matter by pointing to the existence of puppies, trees, and archaeologists.

Likewise, observations that class does not exist because it is dissolved into a welter of other categories make the same error. Class processes never exist in a pure “laboratory” form (Thompson 1963:9; Thompson 1978). Beyond a very abstract level, it is just not possible to discuss classes separate from their concrete historical situation. They are always historically situated and interact with other social and natural processes and contexts in complex ways. Once we start addressing concrete historical situations, we must address the way class processes

work themselves out in the actual world, through kinship networks, community, ethnicity, race, and gender relations.

In the late-19th-century United States, for example, we can see the structuring of class through ethnicity. Immigrants and African Americans experienced class relations in ways that were generally ethnically and racially based. Their understandings of class and exploitation were structured by these experiences and their actions organized through ethnic and racial networks and communities, what one author refers to as ethnocultural class formation (Barrett 1992:999).

Yet class relations also structured ethnicity. We tend to equate ethnicity with nation-states, but nation-states are not internally homogeneous, and they are themselves historical creations, requiring the formation of an "imagined community" (Alonso 1994; Anderson 1983; Calhoun 1993; Foster 1991). Even immigrants to the U.S. who came from a defined nation and who may have thought of themselves in some abstract sense as belonging to that nation, based their identities on being from certain villages or regions: "the girls of the Glens of Antrim, it was said, felt as strange in Belfast 50 miles south as in Boston, the men of Sligo only 10 miles from their own farms" (Doyle 1983:216). But when these men and women of Munster, Ulster, or Connaught emigrated, they found themselves being organized in workgroups and neighborhoods, working and living as "Irish." Abstract national identities were realized in concrete ways in the work gangs, tenements, and coal camps of industrial America. So, paradoxically, it was in the U.S. that these diverse ethnic groups became, not only "Americans" and "workers," but also "Irish," "Greeks," and "Italians." The formation of these new ethnic identities was part and parcel of the formation of class-consciousness.

THE STUDY

In this study, I focus on distinctions in diet (as represented by faunal remains) and dining between different groups of working-class households, using a sample of 19 households, introduced above, that represent a broad spectrum of railroad-related or probable railroad-related jobs (Table 7.1). For this analysis, I divided the sample household heads into four groupings: U.S.-born, skilled and unskilled, and immigrants, both skilled and unskilled (Table 7.2). Seven were workers who, from the perspective of the railroad managers and craft unionists, were unskilled: 5 laborers, 1 cleaner and oiler, and 1 Pullman porter. The 12 remaining household heads were either skilled mechanics in the shops or members of one of the "Big Four," the Operating Department railroad brotherhoods for engineers, conductors, brakemen, and firemen. Seven of the household heads were immigrants, whom the census enumerator recorded as being born outside North America. Six were Irish and one was Portuguese.

SOME CAVEATS

The integration of historical documentation with the archaeological features makes a fine-grained analysis possible, but also requires qualification. Many of the poorer workers—those living in tenements, boardinghouses, and hotels—will not be associated with specific features and so remain invisible. While the dataset does clip off the workers who lived in corporate household units, it still shows the divide in the U.S. working class between a privileged group of skilled, U.S.-born workers and the vast majority of unorganized workers.

Table 7.2. Frequency and Percent of Skilled/Unskilled Workers by Nativity

Nativity	Skilled	Unskilled	Total
Immigrant	2 (17%)	5 (71%)	7
U.S.-Born	10 (83%)	2 (29%)	12
Total	12 (100%)	7 (100%)	19

This analysis concentrates on railroad workers, looking at planes of cleavage along lines of craft-skill and nativity, using information gleaned from head-of-household information in the manuscript U.S. Census population schedules, abstracted in the Cypress Project Block Technical Reports. In its emphasis on railroad workers and census heads-of-household, this study does not deal with other workers and forms of labor, notably women and their work. Including women's labor in the study would be more than just a complicating factor, as it is unlikely that it was structured along the same lines as that of railroad workers. Rather it would entail another, fundamentally reoriented, analysis.

Grouping people into abstract analytical categories is necessary so we do not become lost in a welter of detail, but such abstraction is almost an act of violence. The individual experiences and lives become lost. So it is worth emphasizing some of the other distinctions these analytic dichotomies hide.

The Skilled/Unskilled division is obviously not a self-evident one. Every occupation requires some degree of skill, and what constitutes skill is, to a certain extent, a matter of perception. For example, porters required considerable skill in negotiating cultural and social categories in order to do their jobs and to earn an adequate living through tips. Yet they were perceived as unskilled by the traditional craft unions. The sense I use the terms here is the traditional one of craft-based organization; whether the occupation required formal apprenticeship and training and the workers had sufficient control over the labor process that they could not be easily replaced. The reason for using the traditional definition has less to do with any actual judgment of skill but whether the occupation was craft-unionized. While there were sporadic attempts to organize industrial unions in the 19th century, most unions were craft-based, especially with the ascendancy of the conservative American Federation of Labor during this period. The railroad industry brotherhoods were strongholds of craft-unionism.

The U.S.-born/immigrant distinction disguises some ambiguities. Immediately obvious is that the "U.S.-born" category runs the risk of erasing racial distinctions. Nativist ideology sometimes meant redefining exactly what it meant to be "white." For example, in Colorado, the Cripple Creek gold field was a "white man's camp." "White" in this case excluded Asians, southern and eastern Europeans, Mexicans and Hispanics, but not African Americans (Jameson 1998:142). There is one African American household in the Cypress sample used for this study, the Carters, and they were distinct enough to require individual discussion (see below).

The sample emphasizes one immigrant group, the Irish. All but one of the immigrant households were Irish, the exception being Portuguese. Different immigrant groups faced different conditions and had differing responses to the conditions they encountered in the U.S. Nativist discrimination was not as intense for the Irish as it was for some other groups, such as the Chinese, and skilled Irish workers participated extensively in the craft unions of the 19th-century labor movement, as well as in anti-Chinese agitation. Immigration into the U.S. from Ireland was a long-term and complex process. Immigrants coming at the end of the 19th century would have come into established Irish American communities. There was the Catholic Church, numerous Irish fraternal, benevolent, and national associations, and a substantial Irish middle class. Yet the new immigrants were still discriminated against, sometimes by more established Irish immigrants, and still channeled into unskilled industrial jobs (Doyle 1983).

Most of the households in the sample (63%) are those of skilled workers. This number does not reflect the actual proportion of skilled workers in West Oakland, but rather the fact that most of the households for which there is historical documentation were relatively stable and privileged, and thus more visible in the archaeological record than those living in corporate housing units. Nonetheless, the association between immigrants and unskilled labor in this sample is apparent (Table 7.2). Immigrants held 71 percent of the unskilled occupations, even though immigrants were only 37 percent of the sample (Table 7.3). Similarly, U.S.-born workers occupied 83 percent of the craft-skilled positions, even though they were, as noted, 63 percent of the sample.

"REEFS OF ROAST BEEF": DIET

The amount of meat consumed by a household has been a common measure of standard of living (Hobsbawm 1957:62-68; McClymer 1986): the more meat the better the standard. The assumption that U.S. workers ate more meat than workers in other countries has been used to draw profound conclusions about U.S. society, such as the relative conservatism of the U.S. working class compared to Europe. A famous example is Werner Sombart's pronouncement that, "On the reefs of roast beef and apple pie socialist utopias of every sort are sent to their doom" (1976:97).

The analysis of the relationship between meat consumption and class segment consisted of three comparisons, using estimates of meat weight and pricing, which were derived from historical records for Oakland (Gust 2001): meat weight per adult; percentage weights per household of different prices of meat cut (low-, medium- and high-priced cuts); and percentage weights per household of different meat types (beef, mutton, pork, fish, and fowl).

Six of the household assemblages did not yield enough faunal material for analysis and were dropped from the study. Consequently the sample consists of 13 households: 2 skilled immigrant; 4 unskilled immigrant; 6 skilled U.S.-born; and 1 unskilled U.S.-born.

The meat-weight variable consisted of the estimated total pounds of meat in the archaeological feature, divided by the estimated minimum number of individual adults and juveniles in the household. Most of the 13 households that had faunal remains demonstrated minimal to moderate meat consumption, with yields between 23 and 144 pounds of meat per adult (Table 7.3). Two households, Broderick and Haynes, yielded 365 and 274 pounds of meat per adult, respectively. The last two households, Carter and Murray, were extreme outliers, with faunal remains totaling 438 and 582 pounds per adult. Why these households' features contained

Table 7.3. Meat Weight by Household and Class Segment

Name	Household Size	Total Meat Weight	Meat Weight Adjusted for Household Size
Skilled U.S.-born			
Fischer	9	—	—
French	7	780.7 lbs	111.5 lbs
Haynes	3	642.8	294.2
Hickey/Loomis	4	172.5	57.5
Lewis	5	376.6	75.3
McDonald	5	113.0	22.6
Robertson	6	239.0	39.8
Taylor	8	—	—
Van Epps	2	—	—
Vogt	4	—	—
<i>Mean</i>			86.8
<i>Standard Deviation</i>			69.5
Unskilled U.S.-born			
Carter	2	867.3	433.6
Crocker	3	—	—
Skilled Immigrant			
Corrigan	3	433.0	144.3
Quinn	2	141.9	71.0
<i>Mean</i>			107.6
<i>Standard Deviation</i>			51.9
Unskilled Immigrant			
Unknown	2	—	—
Breen	3	284.4	94.8
Broderick	4	890.2	222.6
Murray	3	1712.7	570.9
Tighe	3	122.9	41
<i>Mean</i>			296.1
<i>Standard Deviation</i>			246.4
<i>Overall Mean</i>			171.5
<i>Standard Deviation</i>			169.2

Table 7.4. Meat Type by Household and Class Segment

Name	Species (Percent of Total Meat Weight)			
	Beef	Mutton	Pork	Bird
Skilled U.S.-Born				
Fischer	--	--	--	--
French	38%	26%	18%	12%
Haynes	46	33	16	5
Hickey/Loomis	51	42	1	5
Lewis	35	45	18	2
McDonald	31	27	5	37
Robertson	74	18	4	3
Taylor	--	--	--	--
Van Epps	--	--	--	--
Vogt	--	--	--	--
<i>Mean</i>	48	33	12	10
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	15	9	10	13
Unskilled U.S.-born				
Carter	52%	27%	15%	5%
Crocker	--	--	--	--
Skilled Immigrant				
Corrigan	20%	68%	5%	6%
Quinn	13	63	22	1
<i>Mean</i>	20	65	11	4
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	0	5	8	4
Unskilled Immigrant				
Unknown	--	--	--	--
Breen	59%	27%	5%	8%
Broderick	64	28	6	2
Murray	53	36	4	6
Tighe	64	24	10	2
<i>Mean</i>	59	29	7	5
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	6	5	2	3

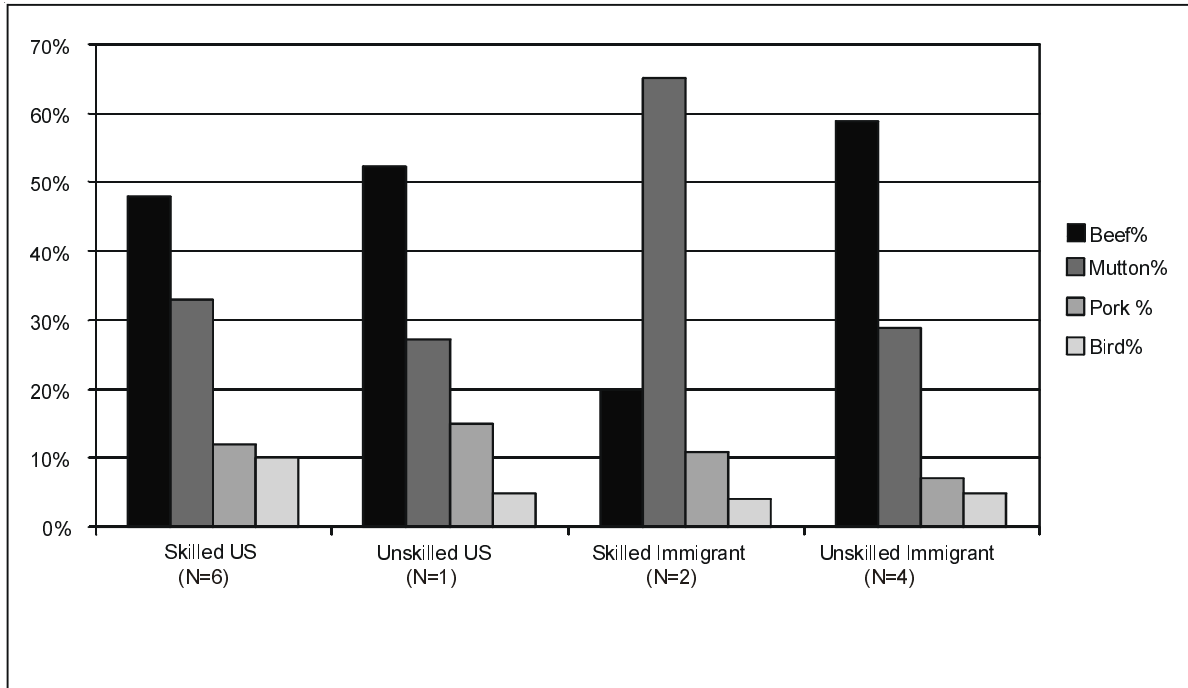


Figure 7.4. Meat-type weight, mean percent by railroad-worker class segment

the remains of so much meat may be due to a number of factors. That they may have actually eaten a lot of meat is certainly a possibility. Other factors to consider are that the household sizes may have been underestimated (probably the case with the Carter house), or that the deposition in the features occurred over a longer period of time than for other features; the date ranges for these features, however, do not indicate particularly long periods of deposition. But taking the outliers into account, and assuming that the various possibilities of error are the same across the overall categories, there is little difference among the various class groupings in the amount of meat consumed. Statistically they are drawn from the same population, at least as far as can be told with these sample sizes.

Dietary preferences, in terms of beef, mutton, pork, and fowl, show little difference between skilled and unskilled U.S.-born workers and unskilled immigrant workers (Table 7.4). Beef, for example, comprises an average of 48 percent of the total meat weight consumed by skilled U.S.-born worker households. The main difference this comparison shows is a strong preference on the part of skilled immigrant workers for mutton over beef (Figure 7.4). This category was represented by two Irish households, the Corrigan and the Quinns. In both these households, beef comprises 20 percent or less of the meat weight, as compared to a range of averages of 48 to 59 percent for the other households. Mutton, however, is 68 and 63 percent of the meat weight in the Corrigan and Quinn households, while the range in the other households is 26 to 45. Except for these two Irish households, the overall trend is the same: beef, followed by mutton, then pork, and, last of all, fowl.

The observation that the two relatively affluent Irish worker households consumed considerably more mutton than the other four Irish households may suggest at first glance a cultural preference for mutton, but that it was too expensive for most Irish families to eat regularly. However, the fact that mutton is a common meat in the assemblages regardless of skill or ethnicity indicates that it was probably not all that expensive in Oakland, an observation borne out by

Table 7.5. Meat-cut Cost by Household and Class Segment

Name	Meat Cut Price (Percent of Total Meat Weight)		
	High	Medium	Low
Skilled U.S.-born			
Fischer	--	--	--
French	27%	43%	30%
Haynes	31	48	21
Hickey/Loomis	14	59	26
Lewis	15	48	37
McDonald	35	37	27
Robertson	19	48	33
Taylor	--	--	--
Van Epps	--	--	--
Vogt	--	--	--
<i>Mean</i>	24	47	29
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	9	7	6
Unskilled U.S.-born			
Carter	33%	41%	26%
Crocker	--	--	--
Skilled Immigrant			
Corrigan	48%	28%	27%
Quinn	9	49	42
<i>Mean</i>	29	38	33
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	27	15	13
Unskilled Immigrant			
Unknown	--	--	--
Breen	64%	27%	9%
Broderick	37	32	32
Murray	34	40	26
Tighe	43	53	4
<i>Mean</i>	45	33	22
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	17	7	12

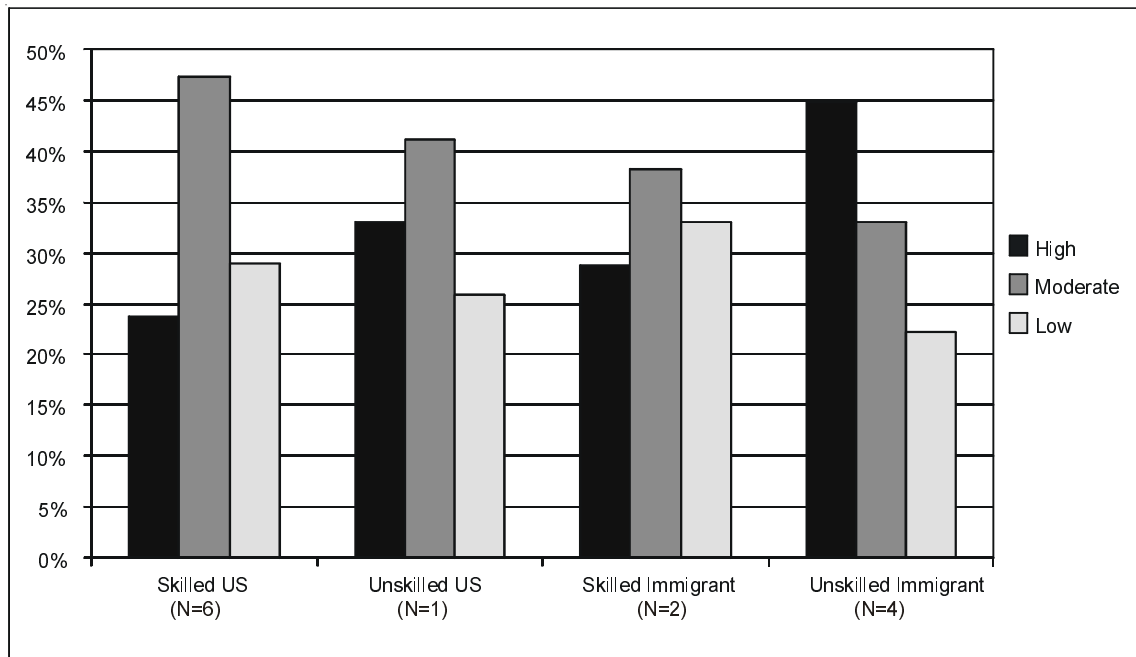


Figure 7.5. Meat price, mean percent by railroad-worker class segment

historical pricing lists. It is possible that there was a greater interest in expressing a nationalist identity on the part of the organized and better-off Irish workers, although this, given the small sample size (two), remains speculative.

Comparing the mean prices of cuts of meat across the class segments (Table 7.5, Figure 7.5) shows a significant and interesting difference between the skilled U.S.-born and the unskilled immigrant workers. The latter group has more high-quality cuts of meat than the former. Expensive cuts average 45 percent of the immigrant unskilled worker assemblages and only 24 percent of the skilled, U.S.-born worker assemblages. This result may parallel findings from the Boott Mill in Massachusetts and New York's Five Points, where more privileged workers consumed poorer cuts of meat than predicted (Griggs 1999; Mrozowski, Ziesing, and Beaudry 1996:64).

This pattern is the reverse of what we would expect if cuts of meat corresponded to income or what a social scientist would define as economically rational behavior. The intransigence of working-class people in the face of what seem to be self-evident assumptions was a source of continual distress to many middle-class observers, such as domestic reformers. For these observers, social mobility was a matter of frugality and self-improvement, conventional Victorian values. Yet working people often frittered their money away on extravagances such as alcohol, idle entertainments, and an inappropriate diet (Cohen 1986; Oddy 1970:322). In a study of working-class family budgets in late 19th-century England, Oddy (1970) estimated that meat consumed 29 percent of the family budget, while providing only 11 percent of the calories. In contrast, starchy energy sources such as bread, flour, and potatoes were cheap energy sources, providing 61 percent of the calories in Oddy's sample, while items such as bread and flour accounted for only 20 percent of the expenditures on food (Oddy 1970:322).

We have little historical information on working-class diet in the U.S. from this period, but what we do have suggests that here, too, the amount spent on meat outweighed its nutritional importance. Most working-class households, however, had meals with meat or fish at least once

a day, twice a day if they could (McClymer 1986:385). Income and household budgets obviously played an important role in how much meat was consumed. But regardless of income, meat was consumed at special meals, such as Sunday dinner, and this was generally a disproportionately expensive cut for the family's budget (Byington 1910:63-65). In short, any straight "reading off" of social status or class from faunal remains confronts us with a number of other issues.

The first issue is that of palatability. For example, a continual high-starch diet, however frugal and nutritious for workers, was, as one reformer found, utterly unappetizing after a morning in a Pittsburgh factory:

I am beginning to understand why the meager lunches of preserve-sandwiches and pickles more than satisfy the girls whom I was prepared to accuse of spending their money on gewgaws rather than on nourishment. It is fatigue that steals the appetite. I can hardly taste what I put in my mouth; the food sticks in my throat . . . I crave sours and sweets, pickles, cake, anything to excite my numb taste [Shergold 1982:190].

In England the 1904 *Report of The Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration* also noted working-class people's desire for some sort of sensation in their diet (Oddy 1970:322). Meat, in addition to its cultural importance (such as in the Sunday dinner), provided variety and—like pickles, vinegar and sweets—helped to make an otherwise monotonous and dreary diet palatable.

A second issue is that of culture. The greater consumption of high-quality cuts by unskilled immigrants may also represent cultural preferences (in this case Irish) for certain cuts regardless of their cost. The retention of cultural norms by immigrant workers was another frustration for long-suffering reformers.

There may also be straightforward economic considerations. Irregular incomes may have made it necessary for certain households to purchase easily prepared food on a daily basis as the money came in. In her 1906 survey of steel-mill workers in Homestead, Pennsylvania, Byington noted that in some cases the "least nutritious food was purchased in the most expensive way, because of ignorance and of a small and uncertain income" (1910:75). The more expensive cuts of meat found in the present samples may have been quicker and easier to prepare than ones that required extensive stewing or cooking, certainly a consideration if both married partners in a household were wage workers. In addition, the poorer households may also have lacked iceboxes or refrigerators, making it necessary for them to buy individual and more expensive cuts.

It may be that the aberration that requires explanation is not the "extravagance" of the poorer workers, but rather the frugality of the privileged workers. The skilled railroad workers (at least in the Operating Departments) were among the most conservative segments of the U.S. working-class, for whom there was the greatest possibility of social mobility—if not for themselves then for their children (Freeman et al. 1992:64). Their frugality may not be so much a case of economic necessity as an accommodation to certain Victorian ideals of working-class respectability.

It is important to note that the Cypress Archaeological Project faunal assemblages reflect only the diet of the household as a unit, not that of the individuals within the household. Work by British labor historians suggests, although not definitively, that there were often substantial differences between the diets of working-class men and the diets of their families, especially their wives. Men engaged in heavy physical labor got meals with lots of meat, high in protein and fats, while women and children made do with diets along the lines of bread, drippings,

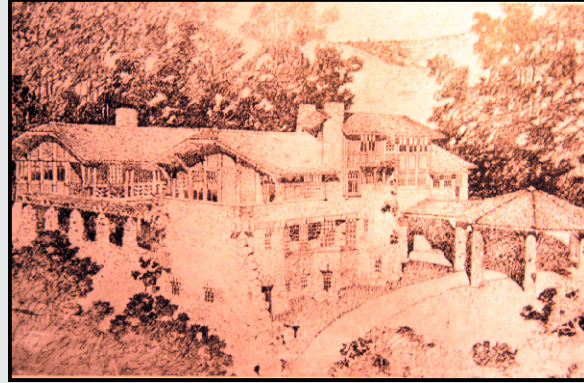
JACK LONDON: OAKLAND'S BOY SOCIALIST

Mary Praetzellis

Jack London marched with “Kelly’s Army” in April 1894, joining a large contingent of able-bodied, unemployed men encroaching upon Washington, D.C., from across the nation to protest failing economic conditions. Upon his return to Oakland he enrolled in high school, discovered the public library, and became active in the Socialist Party. The *San Francisco Examiner* printed a feature article on Jack on Christmas morning 1895: “What Socialism is—The Boy Socialist Describes the Meaning and Intent of the New Philosophy” (Stasz 1988:54-56). Jack London’s letters to the editor expounded on the merits of Socialism, but brought him no pay. An 1897 run for a seat on the Oakland Board of Education likewise proved unsuccessful. Jack went from job to job during this time, performing menial labor to support first his family and second his writing:

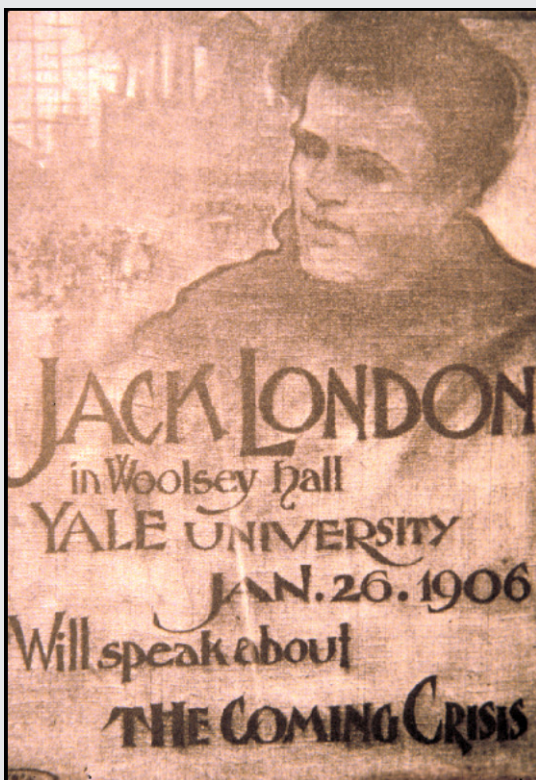
From then on I was mercilessly exploited by other capitalists. I had the muscle, and they made money out of it while I made but a very indifferent living out of it. I was a sailor before the mast, a longshoreman, a roustabout; I worked in canneries, and factories, and laundries; I mowed lawns, and cleaned carpets, and washed windows. And I never got the full product of my toil. I looked at the daughter of the cannery owner, in her carriage, and knew that it was my muscle, in part, that helped drag along that carriage on its rubber tires. I looked at the son of the factory owner, going to college, and knew that it was my muscle that helped, in part, pay for the wine and good fellowship he enjoyed.

I had been born in the working-class, and I was now, at the age of eighteen, beneath the point at which I had started. I was down in the cellar of society, down in the subterranean depths of misery about which it is neither nice nor proper to speak [London 1964 (1906):394-395].



Line drawing by San Francisco architect Albert Farr of Jack London’s dream project, Wolf House, on his Beauty Ranch in Sonoma County. The house burned to the ground on a hot August night just days before Jack and his wife, Charmian, would have moved in. (Illustration courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation)

Eventually, with his monetary success, Jack London moved from Oakland to rural Sonoma County. Oakland became for him a metaphor for the workings of capitalism, its residents the epitome of the downtrodden working class. In various guises, he reconstructed his past in this image, with workingman Jack London defeating, disarming, and exposing the wily capitalists. As a storyteller, Jack wrote about what he knew; as a Socialist he worked toward the revolution. It is not surprising that he recast his own history and that of Oakland in his revolutionary sagas. A historical materialist, Jack focused on social structure and the role of commodification in creating the moral—or in this case, immoral—foundation of both society at large and the individuals which the system debased. Jack loved this particular metaphor and used it generously in his writings. He condemned Capitalism by exaggerating the material deprivations suffered by West Oakland’s working class. This kept them pure in relation to their morally depraved, spiritually dead employers. In missing the materialism and focus on consumer goods that increasingly pervaded all classes in America at the turn of the 19th century, Jack London lost an opportunity to explore deeper consequences of the industrial revolution. Were workers really better off because they ate steak off white ceramics?



This poster advertising Jack London's lecture "Revolution" shocked the campus community, causing the near cancellation of his speaking engagement. Nevertheless, his vivid indictment of the capitalist class sparked a tremendous ovation, and Yale students carried him off the stage on their shoulders (Foner 1964:72-76) (Illustration courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation)

Like many of his contemporaries, he saw that the material benefits of the consumer revolution masked deep inequities and, in so doing, effectively prevented political revolution. Through labor unions, the working class strove to improve their conditions of employment, not to overthrow the capitalist relations of production themselves. According to Jack, some unions—perhaps those of West Oakland—did their job too well. In his futuristic revolutionary tome *The Iron Heel*, he wrote: "The members of the favored unions became the aristocracy of labor. They were set apart from the rest of labor. They were better housed, better clothed, better fed, better treated. They were grab-sharing with a vengeance" (1957 [1908]:199).

Jack London's early Socialist juxtaposition of labor and capital evolved into an artist's conception of the healthy, natural world opposed to the brutal, artificial, man-world that included both labor and capital, by which all human relationships are tainted. His characters' flight from Oakland and its problems to the countryside mirrored his own journey: "When the time comes," he told a reporter for the *Western Comrade* in the summer of 1914, "I'm going to stay right on my ranch at Glen Ellen and let the revolution go to blazes" (Foner 1964:118-119).

treacle, and tea (Bourke 1994:181; Harrison 1989:125; Levine 1985:194; Oddy 1970:320-321). There is little comparable work in the United States, but there are hints that similar situations may have existed. Byington, for example, notes that if the man did not come home for lunch, then it was a light meal, "mush and milk with bread and molasses." She also describes the pains taken by women over their husbands' lunch pails, as well as workers taking steaks to the mill to fry on their hot machinery (Byington 1910:64). It is worth considering that the meat weights identified in the Cypress Project features may not have been distributed equally through the household and that not all household food consumption is reflected in the deposit.

"THEY WILL USE KNIVES AND FORKS": DINING

The consumption of food is both a universal and one of the most particular human activities. Our caloric intake is a biological necessity, yet always conducted in culturally and historically specific ways fraught with public meaning. This is all the more true with Victorian dining etiquette. Eating in an unfamiliar context can be an unnerving experience, and Victorian dining was intended to make it even more so. For the middle class, dining was a public exercise in social competence and boundary maintenance (Fitts 1999; Lucas 1994; Wall 1999). Failure to conform

to the rigid dictates of dining etiquette could have important social, and even professional, consequences. So standard of living should not be conflated with nutritional intake.

As the following passage from a railroad union journal points out, 19th-century working-class Americans were encouraged to aspire to much more than merely getting enough to eat. The article was published to refute the claim of J. R. Dodge, a statistician who concluded that, because the U.S. consumed the most meat, it had the world's highest standard of living.

Mr. Dodge the "scientist" ignores the declaration that "man shall not live by bread alone." There is always something in the standard of living better than meat. Patrick Henry's immortal words were not "Give me meat or give me death . . . Such "scientists" have greatly mistaken the purpose of American workingmen . . . They will continue to eat meat . . . They will use knives and forks, have tables and dishes, sit in chairs, live in houses, dress decently, and do other such things as are becoming. They will be masters of themselves. They will read and think, meet and talk, agitate and organize, and in the near future will dictate policies, enact laws and teach scientists that "the standard of living" means much more than a large supply of meat [*Locomotive Firemen's Magazine* 1890, also in Freeman et al. 1992:100].

At its most basic, this quote illustrates that workers were organizing for more than simply subsistence. For the railroad brotherhoods, an adequate standard of living meant having knives and forks, tables and dishes, houses, decent clothing, and political power. The trappings of Victorian respectability are not simply emulation of the middle class, but proud and even defiant statements of strength: "They will be masters of themselves."

Table settings, the knives and forks and dishes that we find archaeologically, are part of this statement. Victorian dining was a statement of respectability and mastery of social convention. "Complexity was understood by the middle-class to be emblematic of a higher level of civilization, as was apparent in all observable rituals of Victorian life—furnishing the home, calling and visiting, and serving and conducting meals. Around 1850, this cultural value manifested itself in an impulse to own services that were larger and more functionally specific" (Williams 1996:78).

The analysis of tablewares from this sample of railroad workers focuses on the size and complexity of the dining ritual. The size of the service is the Minimum Vessel Count (MVC) for the assemblage, while its complexity is the number of individual vessel functions within the assemblage (e.g., Beaudry, Cook, and Mrozowski 1991:171), or the assemblage richness (Leonard and Jones 1989)—the number of different classes of dining vessels used in the household. The assumption here is that the larger and richer the assemblage, the more the dining ritual approximated the Victorian ideal.

Table 7.6 presents the data used in this analysis: the MVC used in the table setting and the number of vessel functions represented. Vessels whose functions could not be identified or that were probably associated with other vessels (e.g., lids) were dropped from the analysis.

Figure 7.6 shows the individual households plotted against assemblage size and richness. The richness of archaeological assemblages can be a function of assemblage size (Kintigh 1989). For example, richness cannot be larger than the MVC; an assemblage with five vessels will have no more than five functions, and as the assemblage gets larger, there is a greater random chance of different vessel functions. The regression line in Figure 7.6 shows the strong correlation of assemblage MVCs with richness in the Cypress Project railroad-worker sample, with the size of the MVCs accounting for 71 percent of the overall variation in richness.

Table 7.6. Size and Complexity of Table Setting by Household and Class Segment

Name	Minimum Vessel Count (MVC)	Number of Vessel Functions (Richness)
Skilled U.S.-born		
Fischer	43	12
French	78	14
Haynes	31	10
Hickey/Loomis	39	13
Lewis	28	9
McDonald	42	13
Robertson	45	13
Taylor	22	12
Van Epps	15	6
Vogt	25	13
<i>Mean</i>	36.8	11.4
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	17.6	2.5
Unskilled U.S.-born		
Carter	175	20
Crocker	36	9
<i>Mean</i>	105.5	14.0
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	98.3	7.1
Skilled Immigrant		
Corrigan	26	11
Quinn	16	6
<i>Mean</i>	21.0	8.5
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	7.1	3.5
Unskilled Immigrant		
Breen	15	8
Broderick	7	4
Murray	32	9
Tighe	4	4
Unknown	33	10
<i>Mean</i>	18.2	7.0
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	13.7	2.8

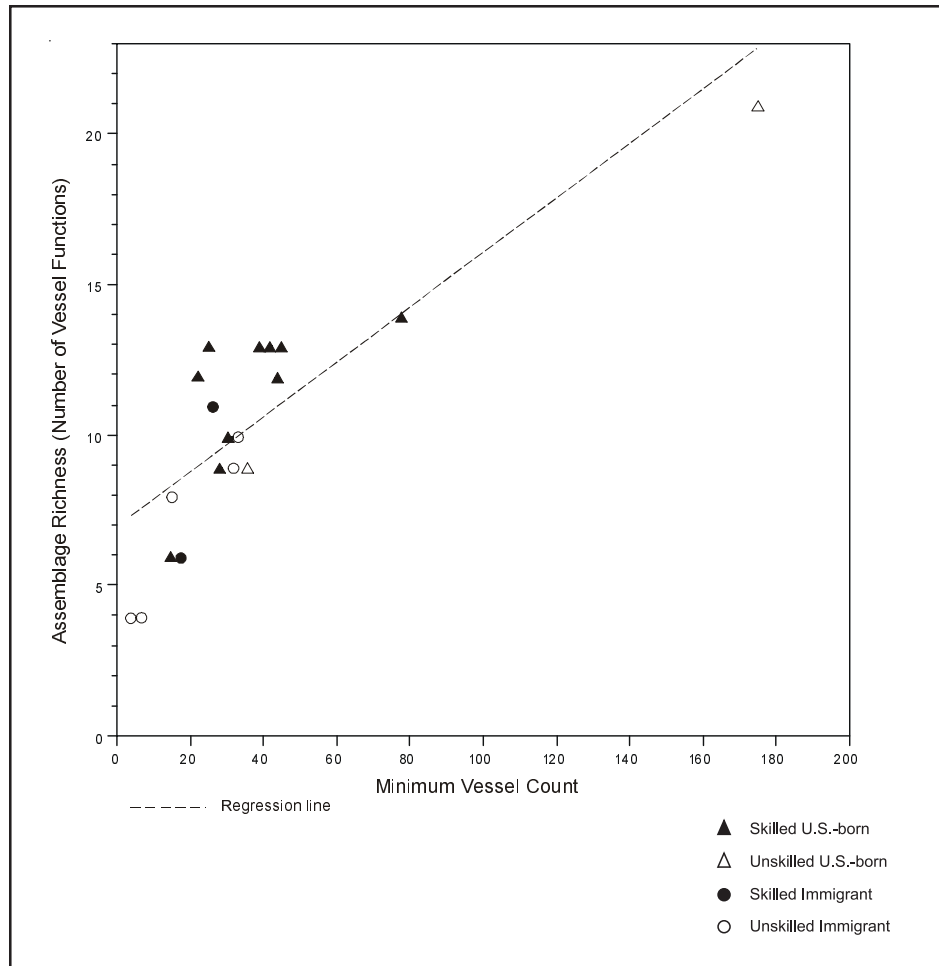


Figure 7.6. Victorian dining by railroad-worker class segment

Although it may not be possible to distinguish noncultural sample-size effects from a culturally significant preference for table settings that are both large and complex, there is patterning in the distribution of the different household types within this overall linear trend. The most distinct cluster is that of the skilled U.S.-born workers. Those with MVCs between 20 and 60 tend to have more complex assemblages (more than 12 vessel functions) than the other households classes in that MVC range. All households with an assemblage richness of greater than 12 were U.S.-born worker households; and, with the exception of the Carter household, all the heads had craft-unionized, skilled occupations. All the immigrant worker households are represented by smaller, less complex tableware assemblages—less than 35 vessels and 12 vessel functions per household assemblage. Again, with the exception of the Carter household, all the unskilled-worker households have an MVC of less than 40 and a richness of less than 10.

Compared to the upper end of the scale, those at the lower end are a mixed group, consisting of all the immigrant households, both skilled and unskilled, and one unskilled and three skilled U.S.-born households. These small, simple assemblages result from a number of factors, but probably relate ultimately to economic considerations and the relative poverty of these households. The simplicity of some of these assemblages may have resulted from the household having simpler table settings while, in other cases, the poorer households may have carefully curated their tablewares, resulting in fewer vessels being recovered from the archaeological contexts.



Figure 7.7. Formal glassware from the family of Abel French, a railroad conductor. The Frenches set a formal table, with matching fancy glass stemware and tumblers and fashionable plates and serving dishes from Staffordshire in the latest "shapes."

and a richness of 20. The closest assemblage is that of the French household, which has 78 vessels and a richness of 14 (Figure 7.7). Abel French was a railroad conductor. Conductors, along with engineers, were the most privileged railroad workers, so the high values for the French assemblage are expected. James Carter, on the other hand, was an African American Pullman porter. Although U.S.-born, African Americans were stigmatized by white Americans, and the skills that porters required to make a living were not those defined as skills within traditional craft definitions.

The size of the Carter household assemblage suggests that unusual circumstances contributed to the formation of this deposit, with discard taking place on a larger scale than with the other households. Comparability with the other households may therefore be limited, but the assemblage is interesting in its own terms, especially given the position of the Pullman porters in the railroad industry. The assemblage is far from a basic one, with expensive teawares, specialized serving items, and possibly separate settings for family dining and formal dining.

The dining assemblage of the Carter household could have conveyed a complex set of meanings. It was a statement of the respectable position that porters had in the African American community, analogous to the claims to respectability made by the white craft unionists. A second claim may simply be of that skill. A porter's income depended on tips gained through "putting on the big hat" (Arnesen 2001:18; Collins 1997c). Conversing with railroad patrons and setting them at their ease entailed a mastery of middle-class "culture" and the niceties of Victorian convention. The Carters' table setting may simply reflect this mastery. The assemblage takes on another cast when considered in the context of racism. The discourse of respectability becomes a statement of self-worth or even humanity. The possibility that the Carters used Victorian dining as a means of distinguishing themselves from immigrants cannot be ignored. Being U.S.-born, African Americans often occupied ambiguous positions in relation to recent immigrants. For example, some African American unions excluded Chinese workers (Yates 1998:109).

The latter is probably the case with those features that have very small assemblages, such as the Broderick and Breen households, which had MVCs of four each.

The skilled Irish Corrigan household had a complex table setting, while the Quinns, the other skilled Irish family, had a very basic one. Between the two unskilled U.S. workers, the Carters (a Pullman porter household) had the largest and most elaborate table setting of the entire sample, while the Crocker household (headed by a laborer) had a setting more in line with the unskilled immigrant group.

Within this sample of railroad workers, the Carter household is an outlier, with an assemblage MVC of 175

Table 7.7. Number of Households with Vessel Type, by Class Segment

Vessel Function	Skilled U.S. (<i>n</i> =10)	Unskilled U.S. (<i>n</i> =2)	Skilled Immigrant (<i>n</i> =2)	Unskilled Immigrant (<i>n</i> =5)
Gravy Dish	2			
Slop Bowl	2			
Butterpat Dish	2			
Butter Dish	1			
Decanter	1			
Basket	1			
Medium Bowl	1			
Relish Dish	1			
Tea Bowl	1			
Small Dish	1			
Goblet	1			
Shot Glass	1			
Dessert Glass	1			
Spoonholder	1		1	
Cordial	1		1	
Sugar Bowl	2			1
Compote	1			1
Oval Dish	7	1		2
Bowl	6	1		2
Stemware	8	1	1	1
Teapot	7	1	1	4
Platter	6	1	2	1
Saucer	10	2	2	4
Cup	9	2	2	5
Dish	9	2	2	4
Plate	9	2	2	3
Tumbler	8	2	1	2
Pitcher	3	2	1	3
Soup Plate	4	2		1
Saltcellar	2	1		
Mug		1	1	1
Creamer	1	1		
Dish Drainer	1	1		
Cruet	2	2		
Salt/Pepper Shaker	1	1		
Celery Holder		1		
Egg Cup		1		

Table 7.7 lists the vessel functions along with the number of households within each class segment that vessels of that type appear in. This gives an idea of what the basic table setting would have commonly contained and which vessels were added as the table settings became more complex. As there are only two households each in the skilled immigrant and unskilled U.S.-born categories, not much can be made of the distributions for these categories. The most common article found in all or nearly all of the households, regardless of skill or ethnicity, were tea or coffee wares: cups, saucers, and teapots. After these were food-consumption items: plates, dishes (regular and oval), soup plates, bowls, and glass tumblers. Glass stemware occurred in at least one household in each segment, but primarily in the skilled U.S.-born ones. The basic serving items were platters and pitchers. The remaining items generally consisted of one to three occurrences of a broad spectrum of specialized objects, mainly concentrated in the skilled U.S.-born category (or, in the unskilled U.S.-born category, the Carter household). These are mainly items for holding condiments, such as butter, relish, celery, and salt and pepper, and some specialized and novelty drinking vessels.

The universality of teapots along with cups and saucers raises some interesting questions. Ceramics associated with tea-drinking are ubiquitous in 19th- and early-20th-century sites. When these wares are recovered from working-class or immigrant sites in the U.S., archaeologists often interpret them as flagging the presence of a middle-class tea ceremony, thus indicating emulation of the middle-class or incorporation of middle-class ideas of respectability and refinement. In some cases this interpretation may be correct, but it should not be applied uncritically and without regard to context.

By the end of the 19th century (and in Britain probably by the end of the 18th), consumption of hot, caffeinated beverages was firmly embedded in the working-class culture: tea in the British Isles (Hobsbawm 1957:57; Mintz 1985:118-119; Oddy 1970:321), coffee in America. Shergold (1982:195) calculated that adult male workers in Pennsylvania in 1901 consumed an average of 16.3 cups of coffee each week and 9.6 cups of tea, while English workers in the Midlands drank 30.7 cups of tea and 1.9 cups of coffee per week. The English workers' tea consumption worried middle-class reformers, who attributed health risks, such as dyspepsia, to excessive tea drinking. As one noted, "Alcohol may slay its' thousands, but tea tortures its tens of thousands." English factories posted rules regulating when and how often tea breaks could take place (Shergold 1982:195-6). While U.S.-born workers overwhelmingly preferred coffee, British immigrants in the U.S. retained a preference for tea.

Assuming that the wares we find in working-class households are in fact for tea and not coffee, we must consider whether the tea wares in working-class households represent emulation of a middle-class tea ceremony or, more likely, the remnants of a social "cuppa." Especially in looking at British and Irish immigrants, there is nothing specifically middle-class in tea consumption. In this context, it is a working-class habit.

It is important to reiterate that neither frugal dining nor the presence of complex Victorian table settings necessarily translates into wholesale acceptance of every aspect of middle-class ideology. Victorianism was a hegemonic construct, a language or a set of rules more than a unitary set of ideas. Within its constraints it could still be used to make very different statements of power, social worth, and humanity. Used by the middle classes and the elite for exclusion ("we are better than you"), Victorian practices could be used by the skilled workers or African American porters to make a statement of equality ("we are as good as you"), or even, maybe, of emulation ("we want to be like you"). It could also be a nativist statement ("we are better than them").

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of historical and archaeological data provides an opportunity to examine the material culture of distinct segments of the working class in Oakland, rather than treating it as a monolithic bloc. The division of the 19th-century U.S. working class by craft-skill and ethnicity was a central element in the labor history of this period. It played out in the struggles between industrial and craft unions and in the nativist movements that periodically rocked the political landscape. These divisions may have been a more significant factor in the supposed conservatism of U.S. workers as a class than the Sombart's "reefs of roast beef and apple pie." As noted above, however, the "skilled" and "unskilled" distinction is arbitrary—an emic category held by white craft-unionists. Many of the occupations that were classed as "unskilled" required considerable skill, although not the kind recognized as such by mechanics or managers. To be a successful porter, for example, required a cultural competence that was not easily mastered. Those who succeeded could manage a comfortable living with tips, at least compared to most other occupations open to African Americans.

This analysis has yielded some other unexpected results. Diet (represented by faunal remains) showed none of the expected class difference—that lower-paid workers ate less food of cheaper quality. The main difference was that the unskilled immigrant workers preferred more expensive cuts of meat than the skilled workers. There are a number of possible explanations for this: (1) that immigrant workers had a cultural preference for certain cuts of meat; (2) that a frugal diet was unsatisfying or even impractical to prepare, after heavy or monotonous labor; or (3) that the skilled workers were conforming more to Victorian ideals of the respectable working class, eating frugally and possibly investing more in the outward signs of respectability. These choices may also be related to the organization of labor and consumption within the household.

There are some caveats to bear in mind. As already mentioned, the very identification of individual households that makes this analysis possible also requires qualification. The study sample leans towards stable households and households residing in houses, rather than tenements or hotels. Thus the unskilled and immigrant households in the sample were probably at the upper end of those class segments.

Food consumption is an important form of social communication, and Victorian dining was certainly no exception. Comparison of the table settings' size and complexity showed that adherence to Victorian dining among railroad workers played out along the lines of craft-skill and ethnicity in different ways. U.S.-born workers, especially the skilled ones, tended to invest more in formal dining, participating in the Victorian discourse of respectability and civilized behavior. Immigrant workers indulged in formal dining to a lesser extent, if at all, either because they did not know the rituals, because they invested more in other areas (such as a better diet), or simply because the trappings of formal dining were not considered worth the investment of scant resources. Except for the assemblage of the Carter household, all the more complex assemblages were those of skilled workers. At the lower end of the scale, all the unskilled workers (again, with the exception of the Carters) had simpler assemblages, but so did a number of skilled workers.

To summarize, the complex Victorian dining ritual was associated with both the perceived skill of the workers and whether they were U.S.-born or immigrants. Heavy investment in elaborate table settings was probably not a high priority for low-paid unskilled workers. But for

those workers in privileged positions—such as the mechanics, conductors, and Pullman porters—these table settings made important statements. Victorian dining was also exclusive. Mastery of its ritual was a signal that one belonged to “civilized” society or, possibly more to the point, a civilized society. One was not an immigrant.

Class is the local working-out of global processes, and is rooted in the material conditions of everyday life. Its contours will vary from locale to locale, depending on the historical conditions and the understanding and actions of people within those conditions. The struggles in the mills of Lowell, Massachusetts (Mrozowski, Ziesing, and Beaudry 1996), the sweatshops and tenements of Five Points (Yamin 2001), the coal camps of Southern Colorado (Ludlow Collective 2001), the armory of Harper’s Ferry (Shackel 1996), and the rail yards and neighborhoods of West Oakland, were all situated within specific historical conditions, and those different working communities interpreted and acted on those conditions in different ways.

The railroad craft-unions of the San Francisco Bay Area represent one possible response to particular historical conditions. Staunchly laborist in relation to the capitalist and middle classes, they also set themselves apart from the mass of unskilled, black or immigrant workers, who they perceived as threats to their standard of living—a standard of living that, within Victorian ideology, was a key part of the craft workers’ identity as Americans. Through their nativism and exclusivity, the craft unions isolated themselves from broader working-class movements. It was ultimately other segments of the working class who played a far greater role in shaping the political and social landscape of 20th-century America, through creating and acting on alternative, more inclusive, visions of what it meant to be American.



CHINESE OAKLANDERS: OVERCOMING THE ODDS

MARY PRAETZELLIS

Archaeological data from the Cypress Project provides an opportunity to examine from a new perspective the lives of the Overseas Chinese on the California frontier and their role in the development of the West. This work joins others in questioning long-standing assumptions about the nature of Chinese immigration and the relationships among the Overseas Chinese in America.

Since the 1970s, historical archaeologists have worked with Asian American historians trained in the “Third World Colleges” movement, which was itself spawned by the call for civil rights and a more inclusive view of the role of minorities in the past. Archaeology provides a positive counterpoint to the often-racist musings contained in newspaper accounts and the careless chronicling of Chinese individuals by bureaucrats in the past, which has contributed to their anonymity in historical records. Historical archaeology in the Cultural Resources Management context works as a spotlight, shining on the individuals who lived in the particular place being studied. In this case, our light focuses on people already known to Chinese American historians but not to the general public: the Ah-Tye family and Lew Hing. We have also brought to light a group of anonymous Chinese laundry workers, as well as a young Asian male who disappeared under suspicious circumstances.

OVERSEAS CHINESE IN 19TH-CENTURY NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND THE SOJOURNER CONCEPT

Modern revisionist historians have recently reinterpreted the assimilationist model of Chinese emigration, which portrayed 19th-century Chinese immigrants as illiterate peasants fleeing desperate conditions in southeastern China. According to Barth (1964), a leading assimilationist scholar, overpopulation, war, natural disaster, and generally unstable living conditions in southeastern China prompted the migration of large numbers of Chinese men to foreign lands during the 19th century. Many of these men originated from rural areas, where this turmoil had strengthened the traditional values of social obligation to family and clan among the resident peasant groups. As conditions made it increasingly difficult to support their families, men were forced to immigrate to more favorable environs. As sojourners, they planned to work hard, send their earnings home, and await eventual homecomings as wealthy, respected individuals.

The revisionist perspective views Chinese immigration and culture as more complex: not all emigrants were from the lowest social classes, not all were illiterate, not all were men, and not all were sojourners; furthermore, Chinese culture is neither static nor backward (Liu 2002).

Some historical archaeologists have been proposing the same model of complexity for many years based upon the results of archaeological investigations across the West (e.g., Farkas and Praetzellis 2000; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1982, 1997; Praetzellis 1999). As constructed from the archaeological record, the culture of the Overseas Chinese is varied, adaptive, sophisticated, multifaceted, and layered in meaning.

Almost on their arrival in California, Chinese immigrants were accused of decreasing the wealth of the country by sending most of their money home, while harboring the desire to return to their native land rather than settle in the New World (Miller 1969; Takaki 1989:10). In their critique, European Americans forgot that sizable numbers of their own ancestors had established similar patterns of return (e.g., Berthoff 1953). Sojourning is an export of people from a region and an import of remittances to family members remaining (Omohundru 1978:113). The Chinese have a long tradition of sojourning in southeast Asia and the Pacific, including California, New Zealand, and Australia. Yet, most Chinese immigrants to California in the mid-19th century were little different from their European counterparts. They came seeking economic opportunity and upward social mobility, eager to compete, willing to work, and hoping to succeed in making a better life for themselves and their families. In the face of unyielding racial discrimination, it is remarkable that so many Chinese decided to stay.

THE RISE OF CHINESE DISTRICTS

Frontier California, with its lure of gold and demand for laborers, attracted a large proportion of Chinese immigrants in the 1850s. Most worked as river miners in remote portions of the Sierra Nevada. They lived in mining camps that usually contained between 10 and 30 men. With the decline of river mining in the 1860s, the predominant structure of the Chinese labor force shifted, from these relatively small groups of independent miners connected with Chinese district companies, to large gangs of contract laborers on mining, railroad, irrigation, and road-construction projects. Through their research, archaeologists have fleshed out the lives of these miners and contract laborers (Table 8.1).

The economic dominance of gold mining through the early 1860s led to a two-tiered social hierarchy in the Chinese community; here, large numbers of Chinese miners depended on a small group of Chinese entrepreneurs and providers of services for their subsistence and personal needs. At this time, only a relatively small group of cooks, servants, and laundrymen relied on the Euroamerican community for their earnings. The Overseas Chinese community as a whole was a fairly self-sufficient population. Later, the demand for cheap labor in agriculture, light-manufacturing, and heavy construction broke down this structure and changed the composition of "Chinatown." Chinese districts no longer merely supplied goods and services to a population dominated by transient miners; they now housed a relatively permanent population of cheap manual laborers for use in construction, "cottage industries," and seasonal agriculture. The decline in independent Chinese entrepreneurs and miners and the rise in manual laborers in both the town and countryside reflected the change in the economic orientation of both the Chinese community and the state as a whole (Chan 1981).

By the 1860s most sizeable communities in northern California had a Chinese district within their city limits, usually adjacent to a creek or lake. These Chinatowns provided lodging, supplies, services, and entertainment to the itinerant Chinese labor force. In larger cities these districts could be quite exotic. Merchants and itinerant peddlers commonly displayed their

Table 8.1. Archaeological Projects on Overseas Chinese Sites

Reference	Location
<i>Urban, general:</i>	
Thomas and Thomas 1975; Hampson and Greenwood 1988	Napa, CA
Praetzellis 1976	Sonoma, CA
Olsen 1978; Lister and Lister 1989	Tucson, AZ
Helvey and Felton 1979	Yreka, CA
Jones, Davis, and Ling 1979; Jones 1980	Boise, ID
Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1982	Sacramento, CA
Pastron, Pritchett, and Ziebarth 1981; Garaventa and Pastron 1983	San Francisco, CA
Staski 1985	El Paso, TX
Jordan, Praetzellis, and Praetzellis 1987	Santa Rosa, CA
Maniery and Costello 1986; Costello and Maniery 1988	Walnut Grove, CA
Great Basin Foundation 1987	Riverside, CA
Roop 1988	San Jose, CA
McIlroy 1988	Cossack, W. Australia
Rogge 1992	Phoenix, AZ
Maniery 1992	Folsom, CA
Greenwood 1993, 1996	Los Angeles, CA
Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997	Sacramento, CA (boardinghouses)
Costello et al. 1998; Costello 1999	Los Angeles, CA (vegetable sellers)
Lydon 1999	Sydney, Australia
Wegars 2001	Centerville, ID
Allen et al. 2002	San Jose, CA
<i>Urban, laundry:</i>	
Greenwood 1975, 1976, 1980; Benté 1976	Ventura, CA
Hattori, Rusco, and Touhy 1979	Lovelock, NV
Felton, Lortie, and Schulz 1984	Woodland, CA
Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990a	Sacramento, CA
Greenwood 1997, 1999	Santa Barbara, CA
Yang 1999; Praetzellis and Stewart 2001	Oakland, CA
Anthropological Studies Center, in progress	Stockton, CA
<i>Rural, mining town:</i>	
Felton, Porter, and Hines 1979	N. Bloomfield, CA
Langenwaller 1980	Madera Co., CA
Brott 1982	Weaverville, CA
Hardesty 1982	Cortez, NV
Ritchie 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986	Arrowtown, New Zealand
O'Conner, Speer, and Dondero 1986; Tordoff 1987	Drytown, CA
Costello 1988	Fiddletown, CA
Earls and Robert 1993	Lemhi Co., ID
<i>Rural, mining:</i>	
Teague and Schenk 1977	Death Valley, CA
LaLande 1981, 1982	Oregon
Benté and Smith 1983; Johnson and Theodoratus 1984; Tordoff with Seldner 1987	NW California
Steevens 1984; Wegars 1995	NE Oregon
Tordoff and Maniery 1986, 1989	Butte Co., CA

(continued on next page)

Table 8.1: Archaeological Projects on Overseas Chinese Sites (continued)

Reference	Location
<i>Rural, mining (continued)</i>	
Strapp, Longenecker, and Ehrenreich 1984	Idaho
Ritter 1986	Shasta Co., CA
Markley 1992; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1993	Sierra Co., CA
Maniery 1992; Maniery and Brown 1994	Sacramento Co., CA
Sundahl and Ritter 1997	Shasta Co., CA
Maniery and Maniery 1998	NE California
<i>Rural, other:</i>	
Whitlow 1981	Aptos, CA (farming)
Schulz 1981, 1984a, 1984b	Marin Co., CA (fishing)
Elston, Hardesty, and Zeier 1982	Truckee, CA (charcoal camp)
Thiel 1997	Tucson, AZ (gardening)
<i>Labor camp:</i>	
Chace and Evans 1969; Evans 1980	Truckee, CA
Briggs 1974	Texas (railroad)
Miller 1981, 1983	San Leandro, CA
Rogers 1997	Carson City, NV (railroad)



Figure 8.1. A Street in Chinatown, San Francisco. Chinese merchants accentuated the exotic qualities of their neighborhood to attract shoppers, such as these two Victorian ladies on a stroll. (Source: *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 15 August 1891)

wares in front of shops, exposing passersby to sights and smells of foods and other goods that would have been strange to the uninitiated (Figure 8.1). Street vendors carried their wares in baskets suspended on bamboo poles; buildings sported cloth or paper banners in bright yellow, red, and gold and signs painted with Chinese characters. Alleyways flanked with flimsy wooden shacks housed the poor. The distinctively Chinese landscape defined by the built environment and its embellishments resulted in the creation of a social and cultural boundary with clear material indicators. At a time when the Chinese were considered fair game for assault and even murder, the borders of Chinatown represented a zone of comparative safety (Chen 1982; Heizer and Almquist 1971). Chinese merchants controlled these districts and benefited economically from the exclusivity. Historical archaeology in Sacramento's historic Chinese district has shown the dynamic use of material culture in this setting to establish connections and alliances while maintaining separateness and control (Figure 8.2; Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1997).

Although Chinese labor played an essential role in the creation of Oakland's railroads, shipyards, and infrastructure, and in developing mills, factories,



Figure 8.2. I Street "Chinadom," Sacramento. In the mid-1850s, Sacramento's Chinese district centered on I Street between 5th and 6th streets. ASC Archaeologists have conducted excavations on both sides of this street, recovering material associated with various Chinese merchants (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1982, 1997). (Source: *Sacramento Illustrated*, Barber and Baker 1855)

farms, and fisheries, the Chinese themselves were driven from neighborhood to neighborhood. By 1900 Oakland's Chinese community had shrunk to around 1,000 individuals and their district was confined to Eighth and Webster streets. The Chinese communities on San Pablo at 19th and 22nd streets, at Telegraph Avenue and 17th Street, at First Street, and the shrimp camp along the estuary had disappeared. Oakland's present-day Chinatown developed shortly after the 1906 earthquake, as many displaced San Franciscans decided to rebuild in the city across the bay (Chen 1982:255; Ma with Ma 1982).

ANTI-CHINESE MOVEMENT AND THE EXCLUSION ACT

Since 1852, when the influx of Chinese immigrants to the gold mines coincided with the peak and subsequent downward productivity of surface mining, small groups on the Pacific Coast had been pushing for restrictions on Chinese immigration. In this context, movements against the Chinese arose in times and places when they threatened, or were believed to threaten, the economic well-being of their Euroamerican neighbors. By the 1870s, economic depression had set in and sentiments in favor of Chinese exclusion appear to have been nearly universal. Californians voted overwhelmingly against Chinese immigration in 1879, with 150,000 against and less than 900 in favor (Sandmeyer 1939:62; Saxton 1971:139).

During the Gold Rush, labor had been scarce and very well paid. With increased immigration and the applications of labor-saving technology, the cost of labor declined. Chinese laborers worked for less than did their Euroamerican counterparts and filled the demand in agriculture, light manufacturing, and construction. With the completion of the railroads and the resulting increased competition from eastern goods, vast numbers of people were unemployed, particularly in San Francisco. These unemployed men saw the Chinese as the reason for lowered wages and the poor job market. As more Chinese arrived, and former Chinese railroad workers turned to

other sectors of the economy, a new wave of anti-Chinese sentiment flared (Saxton 1971:113-131).

Residents of the Pacific Coast tried various methods to restrict, exclude, and evict their Chinese populations. Not infrequently, violence and the threat of violence were used to force the Chinese to move on. Many Chinatowns were razed by arson; others were surely destroyed by riot. Town meetings often served as the birthplaces of anti-Chinese organizations. From here sprang many "anti-coolie clubs," which organized consumer boycotts of the Chinese, their products and services, and those of their employers. Petitions, pledges, speeches, meetings, and parades served to show the strength, determination, and number of these forces (Jordan, Praetzellis, and Praetzellis 1987:26-34).

To discourage those Chinese already living in California and those who might have been contemplating it, Californians lobbied for discriminatory legislation on local, state, and national levels. By the late 1870s, many politicians were riding the anti-Chinese wave to victory. The issue was non-partisan; in fact, a third faction, the Workingman's Party, gained support with a violent "anti-coolie" program, citing the lack of effective restrictive legislation by either of the established political parties (Saxton 1971:113-117).

In 1878 Californians elected representatives to rewrite the State constitution. At the constitutional convention, a large number of Workingman's Party delegates passed the strongest anti-Chinese legislation to date. They declared it illegal to give direct or indirect employment to any "Chinese or Mongolian," except as punishment for a crime. Chinese Americans were denied the vote and, by "indirect statement," the right to own or inherit land. Furthermore, the constitution promised to aid in the removal of the Chinese and to legislate against further Chinese immigration (Sandmeyer 1939:72; Saxton 1971:128).

The Workingmen's Party had briefly gained control of the Oakland area in 1877, when they won the State senate. Speakers at an anti-Chinese rally at city hall that year threatened to burn down the Eighth and Webster street Chinatown and to kill its residents; a mob reportedly numbering some 12,000 marched to the Central Pacific Railroad headquarters and demanded the dismissal of all Chinese employees. By 1882 Oakland's mayor and four of seven city councilmen belonged to the Workingmen's Party. Continuing anti-Chinese sentiment reduced the number of occupations available in Oakland; eventually, only the dangerous explosives industry continued to hire Chinese. Laundry work or domestic service became among the few remaining employment opportunities (Ma with Ma 1982:18-23).

As must have been expected by many legislators, the section of the state constitution dealing with the employment of Chinese was quickly declared unconstitutional by the United States Circuit Court (Sandmeyer 1939:72). The higher courts also struck down local restrictive ordinances. The "Chinese Question" reached into the Federal arena, and it was there that the residents of the Pacific Coast pressed for relief. Finally, after much lobbying, demonstrations, and threats of violence, President Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. This bill suspended, with only a few exceptions, the immigration of Chinese, and denied the option of naturalization to all. The anti-Chinese movement waned with the passage of the Exclusion Act, only to gain new strength a few years later when it was found that the "wall of exclusion" had many holes, and Chinese immigrants still found numerous opportunities to enter the country, both legally and illegally.

The expulsion of the Chinese continued to be presented as a panacea for California's problems. In 1885 anti-Chinese leagues formed again in a renewed effort to successfully boycott

YEE AH-TYE FAMILY: SIX GENERATIONS AND COUNTING

Yee Ah Tye is an excellent example of a Chinese pioneer who remained in America and contributed to the settling of the West. According to family history, Yee Ah Tye arrived in San Francisco—then Yerba Buena—a few years before the Gold Rush, making him among the first Chinese to reach the Bay Area. His original name was Yee Dy, which became Ah Tye to the ears of the non-Chinese in America. His descendants have varied the spelling of their last name to Ahtye, Ah Tye, or Ah-Tye (Ah-Tye 1999). Originally from Kwangtung Province, Ah Tye served as an agent for the Sze Yup District Association, first in San Francisco, then in Sacramento, and later in La Porte in the high Sierras. Ah Tye had learned English as a boy in Canton—he was one of the middlemen merchants who represented the Overseas Chinese community in business and legal transactions. A progressive businessman, he



The only photograph of Yee Ah Tye was taken after he died in April 1896. Upon reporting his death, the local paper wrote: “Ah Tye had been a prominent figure in the La Porte country for a quarter of a century or more. Many years ago, he was engaged in business at Oroville. At La Porte, he conducted a store and operated numerous mines, at times having probably 100 men in his employ. He was a Chinese of unusual intelligence and business capacity, and a courteous gentleman. He leaves quite a family, all of the children being good English scholars, and the girls accomplished musicians” (*Plumas National Bulletin* 23 April 1896). (Photo courtesy of Lani Ah Tye Farkas)



Howard Ah-Tye, Oakland historian and journalist, was one of six sons of Dilly and Rose Ah-Tye to serve in the military in World War II. He passed the test to be a radar yeoman, but when the recruiters discovered that he had worked in the grocery business, they made him a cook, despite his protests. It was either cook or spend the war in the brig! (Farkas 1998:116). (Photo courtesy of Lani Ah Tye Farkas)

was one of the first Chinese to engage in hydraulic mining, where he made considerable money, and he educated his daughters as well as his sons. Before Ah Tye died in 1896, rather than have his bones returned to China as was the tradition, he asked that his “body be buried here and my bones lie undisturbed for all times in the land where I have lived” (Farkas 1998). Archaeologists have followed Ah Tye from Sacramento (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1982, 1997) to La Porte (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1993), excavating materials associated with his boardinghouse in the city and a gold-mining campsite in Plumas County. Their evidence showed that Ah Tye had mastered the grammar of American material culture as well as that of the English language. His contributions were many, but perhaps his biggest success stems from the lineage that followed him. The marriage of Yee Ah Tye and Chan Shee has produced more than 160 descendants through six generations, and counting. The surname can be found throughout northern California (Farkas 1998:141).

Ah Tye’s son Dilly married Rose Wong in a traditional Chinese wedding in 1908 in Oakland, where the family lived from 1912 to 1917, after which they moved to Stockton. The couple had 15 children, including two sets of twins. All six sons served in the armed forces during World War II (Farkas 1998). Howard Ah-Tye, their second son, lived in Oakland for most of his life and served as Treasurer for the Oakland Chinese History Research Committee in the 1970s. The committee collected oral and written information on the history of the Chinese community in Oakland and funded the publication of a book on the subject (Ma with Ma 1982). A journalist and free-lance writer, Howard Ah-Tye published a book titled *Resourceful Chinese* in 1999, “in defense of all the Chinese who contributed to the growth and development of Oakland.”

Chinese businesses and employers who used Chinese labor. The anti-Chinese movement reached its height in late January 1886, when sensational press coverage of the alleged murder of a couple by their Chinese cook fired public opinion strongly against the Chinese. Communities across California held anti-Chinese meetings, gathering crowds in the thousands, where they collected boycott pledges and issued ultimatums to the area's Chinese to leave immediately. Many Chinatowns were abandoned at this time, never to be reoccupied. Although some of the Chinese residents may have returned to China, as was desired by the organizers, many just moved elsewhere within the state. The initial outrage over the murdered couple subsided, and within a few months, the boycott was largely forgotten.

Gradually, the legal and extralegal means reduced the Chinese labor force and, thus, the pool of cheap labor. Those Chinese who remained, or who managed to achieve entrance, now had relatively little trouble securing work. More recent immigrant groups, such as Japanese and Italians, gradually replaced the Chinese as seasonal agricultural laborers. Since the smaller Chinatowns had few women and families, these districts disappeared as the elderly Chinese men died. By 1940 Chinese districts remained only in the larger cities of the Pacific Coast, having disappeared from scores of smaller communities.

CHINESE LAUNDRIES

Chinese immigrants exploited a lucrative niche by providing meals and clean laundry to the primarily male population of the California Gold Rush (Figure 8.3). Wah Lee is given credit for setting up the first large Chinese hand laundry in San Francisco in 1851; by 1870 there were some 2,000 Chinese laundries in that city alone (Chen 1982:58). Chinese men, pushed out of work in the mines, factories, and fields, increasingly found work in laundries. In China, as in



Figure 8.3. Laundry workers during the Gold Rush. During the California Gold Rush, few women had made the journey and fewer still were willing to take on the arduous task of washing clothes, linen, and so on. Chinese men took over the role and quietly put aside their earnings. (From the Special Collections of the Sacramento Public Library)

America, laundry was women's work (Takaki 1989:92). The aversion to this work on the part of others, small capital outlay, and minimal required skills drew generation after generation of Chinese men and their families into this occupation. Chinese laundries were inexpensive and labor-intensive, while their proprietors were efficient and thrifty, making a profit through practicality and hard work. Continued specialization in "whites" that required washing, whitening, and ironing but no other special care provided a successful adaptation even in light of increased competition from mechanized steam laundries and dry cleaners after 1900. Light-colored washable linens, shirts, blouses, and underwear, particularly from bachelors, provided Chinese laundries with their stock in trade. Some 30 percent of Chinese in America were employed in laundries in 1920 (Chen 1982:198). In the 19th century, women's formal attire was not generally washable; it was aired and perfumed, or taken to a more expensive and sophisticated "French" laundry—the forerunner of dry cleaners.

Due to their dispersed locations scattered throughout the urban and suburban landscape, Chinese laundries often bore the brunt of anti-Chinese agitation. In February 1886, an "anti-coolie" band of 40 to 50 men visited all of the Chinese laundries in Santa Rosa, California, and told the occupants to leave town, for within a month they would have no patrons (Jordan, Praetzellis, and Praetzellis 1987:32). Residents of Milwaukee took matters even further in the spring of 1889. Whipped into a riotous frenzy by salacious newspaper articles alleging sexual assaults on local children by Chinese laundrymen, mobs raided the city's Chinese laundries destroying property and terrorizing the occupants (Jew 2002). Between 1850 and 1908, 153 instances of anti-Chinese violence were recorded in the U.S., claiming 143 lives, and displacing 10,525 individuals from their homes and businesses (Jew 2002:78).

As elsewhere in northern California, there were probably Chinese laundries in Oakland from the town's beginning. These businesses served their local neighborhoods and did not advertise in newspapers or city directories. The documentary record is confined to notations on Sanborn Insurance maps, as boiling water and hot irons were viewed as fire hazards; anti-Chinese newspaper articles and editorials decrying sanitary conditions and other political issues associated with Chinese laundries; and to municipal legislation posing solutions to the laundry issue. By the mid-1870s, 35 Chinese laundries operated in Oakland; 10 years later, there were more than 60 (Ma with Ma 1982:13).

A laundrymen's guild, the Tongxingtang (Tung Hing Tong), was formed in San Francisco by the late 1860s and also operated in Oakland. The guild set uniform prices, divided up neighborhoods, and collected funds to hire attorneys to fight anti-Chinese laundry ordinances (Chan 1991:67). In Oakland a laundry could be no closer than 10 doors to a neighboring laundry, and Chinese proprietors could not go into business with a Euroamerican partner (Ma with Ma 1982:13). San Francisco began passing anti-Chinese laundry ordinances in the 1870s. One in 1873 raised the quarterly schedule of fees on horse-drawn laundry vehicles so that the highest fees were levied on those laundries that employed no horse drawn-vehicles at all. The laundry guild fought this and won, the judge ruling that the law was clearly written to illegally discriminate against Chinese laundries. Other test cases followed (McClain 1994:51-54). In 1880 San Francisco passed a city ordinance making it unlawful for anyone to "establish, maintain or carry on a laundry" within the city limits without the consent of the Board of Supervisors unless the laundry was located in a building constructed of brick or stone. Violators were subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and prison for up to six months. This law was clearly designed to affect the small, neighborhood Chinese operations conducted in wood-frame buildings. The Tung Hing Tong

attorneys fought this one all the way to the Supreme Court, where they won in May 1886 (McClain 1994:101-126).

Like most cities on the Pacific Coast, the Oakland City Council took on the Chinese question again in January 1886, when they sought to level "lower Chinatown" at Grove and First streets through nuisance abatement and to remove Chinese laundries through restrictive legislation. Oakland based its laundry ordinance on San Francisco's—it required brick buildings or approval of the City Council, forbade scaffolding on roofs to outlaw drying racks, and came up with a fine not to exceed \$100 or imprisonment at the rate of one day per \$2 (*Oakland Tribune* 18 January 1886, 1:1). Both ordinances sparked lively debate at the council meeting. Dr. Buck of the Health Department had already declared lower Chinatown to be a nuisance and ordered the residents to leave, which they did not. The ordinance's proponent, Mr. Hackett, declared the Health Department to be a "fraud from the dead jump. It is the biggest nuisance in the city. This old Dr. Buck don't know anything about his business." Police Captain Thomas interjected that "lower Chinatown is one of the most stinking nuisances on the face of the earth"; he was declared just the man to get the job done with full backing of the council, and the resolution passed unanimously.

The laundry ordinance provoked even more discussion. Mr. Barker objected that the phrasing might prevent an individual from erecting scaffolding to replace a chimney, and wanted the matter reviewed by the City Attorney, Mr. Johns. The City Attorney agreed with Mr. Hackett's plea that the exercise of common sense in the administration of the ordinance would suffice. The matter was postponed for review and Mr. Hackett apologized for implying that the City Attorney lacked common sense (*Oakland Tribune* 19 January 1886, 1:1-2).

The Alameda County Anti-Chinese League set February 17 as the beginning of a new boycott, requesting specifically that no one use Chinese laundries or purchase vegetables from Chinese peddlers. Meanwhile, the Chinese Laundry Association met at their rooms on Seventh Street near Franklin and assessed themselves for a sufficient sum to hire an attorney to fight the Hackett laundry ordinance (*Oakland Tribune* 20 January 1886, 3:2). The City Council passed the laundry ordinance at its next meeting, despite the City Attorney's advice that the scaffolding section was very doubtful. In his speech, Mr. Hackett made mention of the Chinese hiring an attorney to fight the ordinance: "They fight every ordinance and every law that does not suit them. They are not law-abiding citizens" (*Oakland Tribune* 22 January 1886, 3:2-3).

By mid-February the laundry ordinance had yet to be enforced, as Captain Thomas saw no enacting clause within it, had no room in the prisons—with two men already sharing a cell—and lacked manpower. Captain Thomas stated that he would willingly enforce the ordinance with "a clean sweep of the laundries" as soon as 25 policeman could do the work. As to where the laundrymen would be detained, there was no provision for "herding them in a corral. He might put them under the shed in the stone yard" (*Oakland Tribune* 12 February 1886, 3:2). On 21 February, Captain Thomas began his arrests; meanwhile, the Wan Kee Associates raised \$1,000 to hire legal representation (*Oakland Tribune* 22 February 1886, 3:3-4). Within a month, more than 100 arrests were made; Henry Vrooman represented the Chinese laundrymen who generally pleaded not guilty and had their cases continued (*Oakland Tribune* 24 March 1886, 3:2). The Chinese developed a communication system to keep informed on the issue. An employee of a store on Washington near Eighth translated any anti-Chinese news from the morning papers; this synopsis was copied, posted, and sent to the nearest Chinese business, where it was again copied, posted, and sent forward (McClain 1994:331, 161).

A MYSTERY ON BLOCK 6

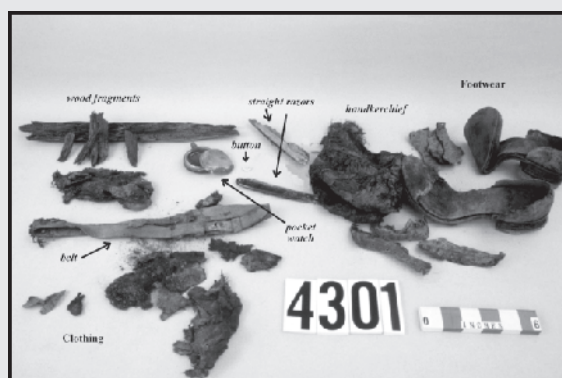
Archaeologists excavated the remains of a well-dressed, young Asian man in the former backyard of 815 Filbert Street. The burial cut two earlier privies and two pits and was itself cut by two later pits, providing a tight stratigraphic sequence. The burial had been excavated into the two privies and backfilled with soil from the privies. Lime may have been used in these privies, accounting for the poor preservation of the remains. Bone preservation appeared best in areas covered by clothing, which perhaps protected the bone from corrosive elements in the soil. Interestingly, there was only one shirt button and no jacket buttons.

Although many of the bones were absent or fragmentary, it was determined that the individual was a 17- to 21-year-old of Asian heritage, 5'4" to 5'6" in height, who had suffered from malnutrition as a young child. The sex of the individual could not be determined because the pelvis bone was missing, but clothing in the burial included men's size 7 boots with rubber heels, a 29-in. leather belt with a copper buckle embossed with the letter "B," Union-suit type undergarments, and wool flannel trousers. He (as inferred from the clothing) carried a coin-silver pocket watch and an expensive black silk handkerchief. The hinge of the pocket watch appears to be gold; the interior cover is copper and was likely silver-plated. This was probably a low-to medium-priced watch with a relatively plain case, of the type sold by Sears Roebuck & Co. in 1897. The silk handkerchief was the most expensive sold by Sears Roebuck, "such handkerchiefs have never before been sold for less than \$1.00." At their price of \$0.47, it was still twice the cost of a white silk or linen one, and eight times the cost of their least-expensive plain cotton ones (Sears, Roebuck & Co. 1897:226). Two men's straight razors were also found within the burial. One of the razors had a finely polished bone handle; it was of a type available from Weinstock, Lubin & Co. in 1891. From the clothing and from dates on other artifacts found in the privy below, the burial was roughly dated to between 1895 and 1910, when a cottage covered the area.

Although the property owners, James and Sarah Corbett, lived at 815 Filbert at the front of the lot until their deaths in the 1890s, their rental cottage in the back saw frequent changes in tenants. In the early 1900s, spinster sisters Mary and Katie Corbett lived at 815, and the Krieger family rented the backyard cottage. Members of

the Krieger family lived in the cottage from 1899 through 1904. In 1900 Jacob Krieger, an unemployed cigar maker, lived there with two sons, who worked as bakers, and two sons still in school. As the burial cannot be precisely dated and the tenants changed so frequently, it will probably never be possible to identify the occupant at the time of the burial. Jacob Krieger did, however, work in an occupation dominated by Overseas Chinese. Chinese supplied the majority of the labor force in both White- and Chinese-owned cigar factories, although recent Irish and German immigrants competed with them for employment in East Coast factories. Chinese labor continued to dominate the industry on the West Coast until increased competition from the less-expensive cigarette led to a general decline. In 1892 the cigar industry in California employed a workforce of 1,200, of whom 700 were Chinese; as late as 1905 there were still five cigar factories in San Francisco employing 140 workers, with 80 of them Chinese (Chen 1982:110). Could there be a connection between Jacob Krieger's occupation as a cigar maker and the burial of a young Asian man beneath his residence?

Of course we cannot say for certain. What we do know is that sometime around 1900 a young, well-dressed Asian man, about 5 feet 5 inches tall with a slim build, was buried under a cottage at the back of 815 Filbert Street. In the 1950s the cottage was torn down and Caltrans built the Cypress freeway, which sealed the burial and kept it secret. Finally, after nearly 100 years, archaeological investigations in advance of the reconstruction of the Cypress freeway discovered the burial and brought this incident to light.



This small collection of artifacts was excavated from the burial at the back of 815 Filbert Street. The type of clothing suggests the interned individual was a man, and the location of the burial pit beneath a cottage led investigators to surmise that the man may have met with foul play.

Things did not go well for the City; at the end of March, the City Attorney ordered new complaints be made against all of the Chinese violators of the City ordinance: "Why this is necessary is a mystery... but it is probable that there is some technicality stalking abroad in the prosecution and threatening its overthrow or perhaps it is an informality that flaws the complaints like a crack in a China teacup. Some of these Chinaman have already been arrested three times on the same charge" (*Oakland Tribune* 29 March 1886, 3:3). In mid-February, the Supreme Court had ruled that the City of Stockton's laundry ordinance was unconstitutional; by May of that year, Oakland dropped charges against its Chinese arrested under a similar piece of legislation (*Oakland Tribune* 17 May 1886, 3:2).

1813 SEVENTH STREET LAUNDRY

The 1889 Sanborn Map shows an iron-clad Chinese laundry building at 1813 Seventh Street (Figure 8.4). Jeannie Yang, in her Master's thesis on the site, has provided a detailed analysis of the site and its cultural context (Yang 1999). A butchershop had formerly operated at this address into the 1880s, and the sheet-metal cladding was probably a remodeling attempt to circumvent anti-Chinese ordinances by presenting a more fire-resistant façade. The one-story building had a back porch and stable in the rear yard. By 1902 the stable was gone, and by 1912 the building was vacant. The laundry workers were not listed on the 1900 or 1910 censuses and may have lived elsewhere, although they may have spent many nights sleeping in the building, putting in long days to keep up with demand. They rented the building from the heirs of the original owner, Edward Murphy, a butcher. Some of Murphy's heirs lived just a few blocks away, at 881 Cedar Street.

The Chinese provided an easy target for the local gangs of youths who roamed the streets of West Oakland. Attacking Chinese laundries, or teasing and abusing the Chinese themselves, was part of their widespread hoodlum activity. In an imagined historic walking tour of the neighborhood, Dr. Ed Anthony recalled this laundry:

We are now coming to an old oak tree projecting out over the street, right by that Chinese laundry.

"Why is the front of that Chinese laundry so battered and the doors and windows barricaded?"

A favorite after school diversion of the boys is to board the steam train at Pine Street, that is if the baggage car is the last car, otherwise they go to the forward car, previously providing themselves with a supply of stones. When the train passes this laundry they let fly a barrage of rocks at the front of the Chinese laundry, throwing the stones through the baggage car.

When the train passes Campbell Street they jump from the train while it is still in motion [*West of Market Boys' Journal* November 1939].

Another former resident remembered that Father McNally would spank a Protestant or Jewish kid, as well as those of his own flock, for throwing rocks at Chinese laundry wagons and as a result was much loved by West Oakland parents (George Dow, in *West of Market Boys' Journal*, February 1937). As a boy, Jack London lived just around the corner from this laundry, and his boyhood friend wrote a remembrance probably relating to it: The two shot a pair of mudhens while hunting out by the bay and sold them as ducks on the way home to a Chinese laundryman for fifty cents (Atherton n.d.: 65-66).

According to another West of Market Boy,

Another little game the boys would play was to get on the Seventh Street local train and sit behind some Chinaman and tie his queue to the seat, grab the Chinaman's stiff brim hat and jump off, leaving the Chinaman screaming for his lost property. In 1895 John L. Davie became the Mayor of Oakland; he forced the railroad company to put gates on the local trains. This spoiled the boys' fun... and made it safer for the Chinaman to travel [W. L. Gallagher, in *West of Market Boys' Journal*, January 1939].

Thus, from the documentary record we know that the Chinese laundry operated from around the mid-1880s until shortly after the beginning of the 20th century. Located along Seventh Street's commercial row with stores, saloons, bakeries, restaurants, boardinghouses and hotels, their walk-in trade would have come from the single working men residing in the commercial lodgings on Seventh or from families living on the smaller side streets. The nearest Chinese laundry was located 11 doors away at 1769 Seventh (Yang 1999:30). We know that these Chinese laundry workers were discriminated against by City ordinances and harassed by local youths. What can the archaeological record from four laundry sites in the West, in combination with dissertation research on Chinese laundry workers in Chicago conducted in the late 1930s (Siu 1987) and the recollections of Maxine Hong Kingston (1976), add to the history of these nameless workers?

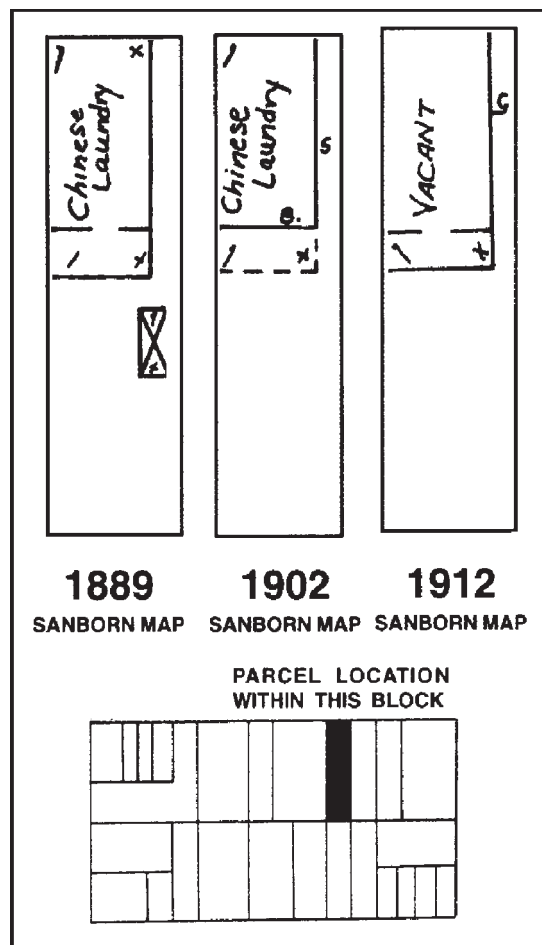


Figure 8.4. Mapping the Chinese Laundry. Field agents of the Sanborn Map Company meticulously noted Chinese laundries, as the boilers and hot irons used there were designated fire hazards. The building behind the laundry covered with an "X" was a stable; it disappeared by 1902, and by 1912 the main building was vacant.

LIFE OF THE CHINESE LAUNDRY WORKER

In addition to our laundry in West Oakland (Praetzellis and Stewart 2001:55-84), three other laundries of similar dates will be used to flesh out the way of life of the ubiquitous, but virtually invisible, turn-of-the-century Chinese laundryman (Figure 8.5). In 1977 archaeologists from the Nevada State Museum excavated a site in Lovelock associated with the Hop Lee laundry dating from ca. 1904 to the 1930s. Although the artifact quantities are difficult to extract from the report, the site is remarkable for a cache of materials discovered in the laundry's loft ("bldg 2"), including paper and personal objects not usually found below ground (Hattori, Rusco, and Touhy 1979). Archaeologists from the ASC excavated deposits at the San Fong Chong laundry site in Sacramento in 1988, a Chinese laundry operated here from 1895 through 1954 (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990a). The rear yard of the Sing Lee laundry in Stockton was excavated in 2000, also by ASC archaeologists (report in progress); a laundry operated in this location from 1900 through 1936, and possibly from as early as 1886.



Figure 8.5. Excavation a drying-rack trench. In the fall of 1995, archaeologists excavated a trench containing the charred remains of a drying rack from the backyard of the Chinese laundry at 1813 Seventh Street in Oakland.

The laundry building at 1813 Seventh Street, with its wood frame sheathed in sheet metal, was of moderately sturdy construction. The San Fong Chong laundry at 814 I Street in Sacramento was the most well-built—a simple, brick, one-story, vernacular commercial building with Italianate influences—that survived from 1895 until it was demolished for new construction in the 1980s. An earlier wood-frame laundry had reportedly operated next door from the 1850s. A 30 x 45 foot “drying platform,” with a stable beneath, faced directly onto I Street and connected with the main building. One of the rallying cries against Chinese laundries had always been their fire danger. The brick building was an auspicious one for a Chinese laundry—new and

clean and attached to the sewer line—assuring its success into the future (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1990a:17). The Sing Lee laundry at 123 E. Channel Street in Stockton was housed in a commercial building adapted to its purpose. The laundrymen constructed a planked yard at the rear as a drying rack with a boiler, thus heating the water outside of the building. A flue-related fire at the Sam Lee laundry around the corner had killed five laundry workers who were unable to escape the building in 1904 (*Stockton Daily Independent* 25 February 1904, 5:3). The Sing Lee archaeological deposit included the brick boiler platform, clinker, and household debris discarded over the years beneath the wooden platform. The Hop Lee laundry in Lovelock, Nevada, was located in a small, simple shack, with dirt floors in some of the rooms. Water was obtained from a well and heated in a small brick fireplace (Rusco 1979).

Chinese laundries often persisted for decades in the same location, staffed by the chain migration of family and fellow villagers from China over the years. The proprietor of the San Fong Chong laundry claimed to have been born in California in 1850 on his 1910 census listing. The earthquake and fire of 1906 had destroyed San Francisco’s Chinatown and Hall of Records, destroying records and providing many aliens with an opportunity to claim citizenship. Mr. Chong used his citizenship to sponsor the immigration of his two sons in 1908. The family lived and worked in the laundry, both sons spoke English; one worked as an ironer, while the other drove the laundry wagon. Sing Lee’s Stockton laundry also appears to have been staffed by middle-aged men and their teenaged sons, who spoke English and attended school during the year. Most wives remained in China, as the Exclusion Act of 1882 in various incarnations prohibited the immigration of the wives of Chinese laborers; the act was repealed in 1943. Nevertheless, it is clear from the archaeological record that women and children were a part of these laundry ventures. An assortment of toys, infant’s feeding bottles, bottles from patent

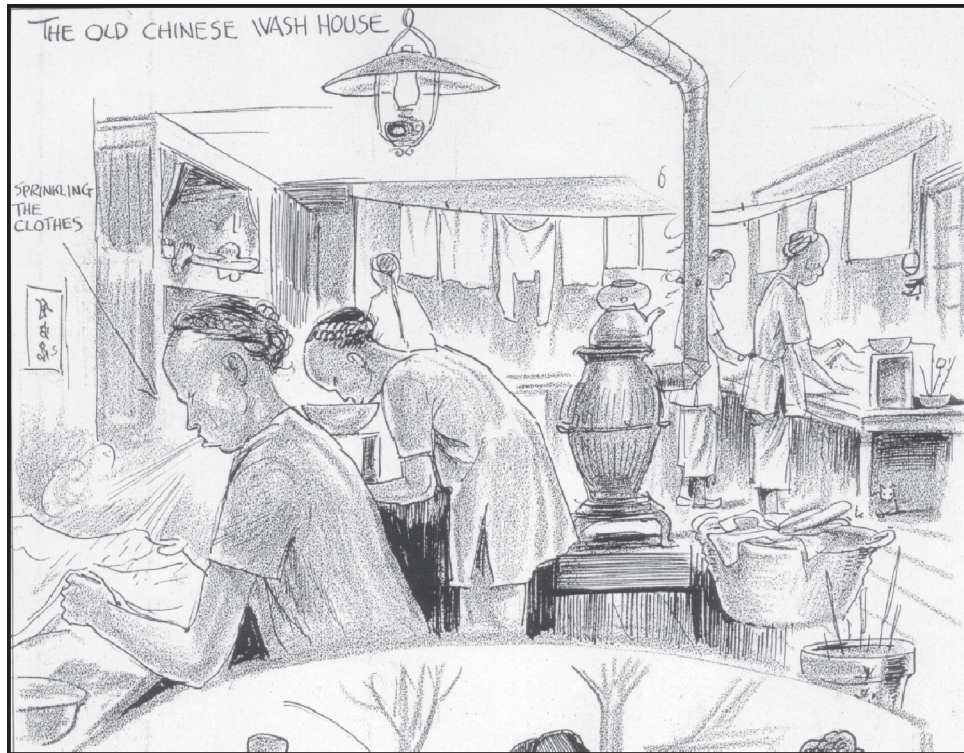


Figure 8.6. Men at work in a 19th-century Chinese laundry, Stockton. This rendering of a laundry around the corner from Sing Lee's was drawn from memory in the 1930s. (Ralph Yardley drawing, courtesy Haggin Museum, Stockton, California; #LB67-7406-46)

medicines targeted to childhood illnesses, and women's jewelry and clothing fasteners were recovered from the Lovelock excavation, while imported cosmetics and women's health-care items were found in a decorative Chinese hairdressing stand in the laundry's loft (Rusco 1979:649). The archaeological evidence from Stockton is less compelling, but a piggy bank, infant food bottle, marbles, and women's jewelry (including a Chinese jade bracelet) suggest their presence here as well. A porcelain doll and two clay marbles are the only suggestions that children might have been present at the Seventh Street laundry in West Oakland.

After the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, laundrymen preferred to live with their families in the neighborhood of their shops rather than in Chinatown. If they could afford it, a house next door or a floor in the same building was preferred; otherwise a room at the rear of the shop might serve as their residence. Wives often worked in the laundries (Siu 1987:207), as did children when they were old enough (Kingston 1976).

Laundry work was considered menial labor in China, undertaken by women but not men. The laundry workers had often pursued different careers in their former lives in China, not necessarily as laborers. Many were educated; Maxine Hong Kingston's father had been a teacher; her mother was trained as a midwife. Most of the employees at Stockton's Sing Lee laundry in 1910 could read and write; many also spoke English (Figure 8.6). A total of 27 writing-related artifacts was recovered from their backyard, including two inkstones, pencils, pens, and inkbottles. The loft of the Hop Lee laundry in Lovelock contained Chinese and English language newspapers, including copies of the *San Francisco Examiner*, along with a business ledger with Chinese and English entries, receipts, and correspondence in Chinese. Two Chinese paperback books titled

"Guide to Letter Writing" gave advice on letter styles, along with maxims and funeral directions (Brown 1979:575). Writing implements included an inkstone encased in a carved rosewood case, calligraphy brush, ink (both Chinese and American made), brass inkpad, blotter, and sealing wax (Brown and Rusco 1979:621). Pencils, tablets, and an inkbottle were also recovered from the San Fong Chong laundry in Sacramento.

Workers at the laundry at 1813 Seventh Street in West Oakland used a slate Chinese inkstone for writing and tallied up their sales on an abacus (Figure 8.7). While Euroamerican businesses used manual adding machines, the use of an abacus was standard practice as late as the 1940s in Chinese laundries: "A laundry without an abacus would be like a business office without a typewriter" (Siu 1987:65).

The limited number of accoutrements needed to run a Chinese laundry was one of the attractions of the business. With the exception of such amenities as running water and electricity, the requirements changed little over the years: a boiler to heat the water, a stove to heat the irons and food, drying racks (outdoors into the early 20th century), sinks, shelves, ironing beds, dining table, and sleeping beds. Even when the laundry workers lived elsewhere, the long hours often left workers too tired to return home:

Then five or six people would crowd into the bed together. Some slept on the ironing tables, and the small children slept on the shelves. The shades would be pulled over the display windows and the door. The laundry would become a cozy new home, almost safe from the night footsteps, the traffic, the city outside. The boiler would rest, and no ghost would know that there were Chinese asleep in their laundry [Kingston 1976:137-138].

The tools also experienced little change, except for replacement of the Chinese mouth-blower by American-made sprinklers. From the beginning, Chinese laundry workers had blown water through brass tubes to sprinkle clothes for ironing. While providing great merriment to youngsters everywhere, this practice also supplied a main focus for anti-Chinese laundry movements over the years. Archaeologists have yet to recognize a traditional sprinkler tube, but they have recovered other tools of the laundry trade. Refuse in the backyard of Stockton's Sing Lee laundry included dye bottles, hundreds of safety and straight pins, clothespins, blueing



Figure 8.7. Tools of the laundry trade. The recovery of a Chinese inkstone, abacus beads, and a Chinese ceramic lamp connect with the day-to-day work of these Chinese laundry workers and demonstrate a degree of literacy (Trench 5237).

balls, scissors, soapstone clothes markers, a sad iron, and a pleat roller (Figure 8.8). In addition, a starch box and a laundry stamp were recovered from Hop Lee's loft in Lovelock, while hundreds of blueing balls were recovered in West Oakland. The large quantity of plain, white buttons and collar studs from everyday cotton shirts and dresses found at all four laundries indicate that they specialized in "whites." Hop Lee, in fact, advertised his specialty as "white cuffs and shirts" (Brown and Rusco 1979:630).

Operating a Chinese laundry outside the confines of Chinatown was a dangerous business, as anti-Chinese vandalism often focused on laundries. During a parade by the local Stockton militia to celebrate the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, every window was broken at the Sam Lee laundry just around the corner from Sing Lee (Minnick 1988:134-135). Broken windows would have been a perennial problem for the laundry on Seventh Street in West Oakland (*West of Market Boys' Journal* November 1939). The trench excavated by archaeologists behind the laundry may have



Figure 8.8. A Chinese-laundry assemblage from Stockton. Over the years, the workers at the Sing Lee laundry in Stockton discarded refuse in the rear of their parcel. Archaeologists recovered only a portion of this material in advance of construction of a cinema complex.

been part of an outdoor drying rack. Extending from a few feet south of the back porch through the west-central part of the parcel, it ran parallel to the lot line. The trench fill had been burned and contained charred wood and other construction debris. Given the documented persecution of these Chinese workers, it is possible that a fire was set in their yard as a prank, destroying the drying rack. Although horses were still needed to deliver laundry, the stable disappeared from the property between 1889 and 1902. The iron-clad laundry building itself did not burn, and was still standing in 1912. Other structures associated with the laundry, however, may have been destroyed by fire, encouraging the Chinese launderers to move on.

Robbers also frequently targeted Chinese laundries. As a precaution, the cash drawer generally only contained small change for the day's use (Siu 1987:61). Only a few Chinese and American coins of small denomination were found behind the laundries in Stockton and West Oakland. A cache of 24 small-denomination American and Chinese coins was found in the dirt floor of Hop Lee's laundry in Lovelock, while a Weyman's snuff jar with a Chinese brown-glazed stoneware lid containing \$1,865 in gold coins was found hidden in a pit beneath the small cottage next door (Hattori 1979:426). It was not uncommon for the Chinese to hide their wealth rather than to trust American banking institutions.

Deposits from all four of the laundries contained both traditional Chinese and English/American ceramics. At 1813 Seventh Street, almost equal proportions of each were discovered, with all the common patterns present—Double Happiness, Celadon, Four Flowers, and Bamboo from China, and decal, molded, plain white, and transfer-printed ceramics from England (Figure 8.9). The laundry workers ate and drank from a mishmash of plates, bowls, saucers, tumblers, and cups in all sizes, shapes, and patterns. The meager ceramic collection from behind the San Fong Chong laundry in Sacramento also included about equal portions of Chinese and English/American tableware; while the workers at Sing Lee's in Stockton discarded a wider range of Asian tableware in many patterns with fewer pieces of English or American origin. The Lovelock collection contained the usual Overseas Chinese tableware patterns, supplemented with

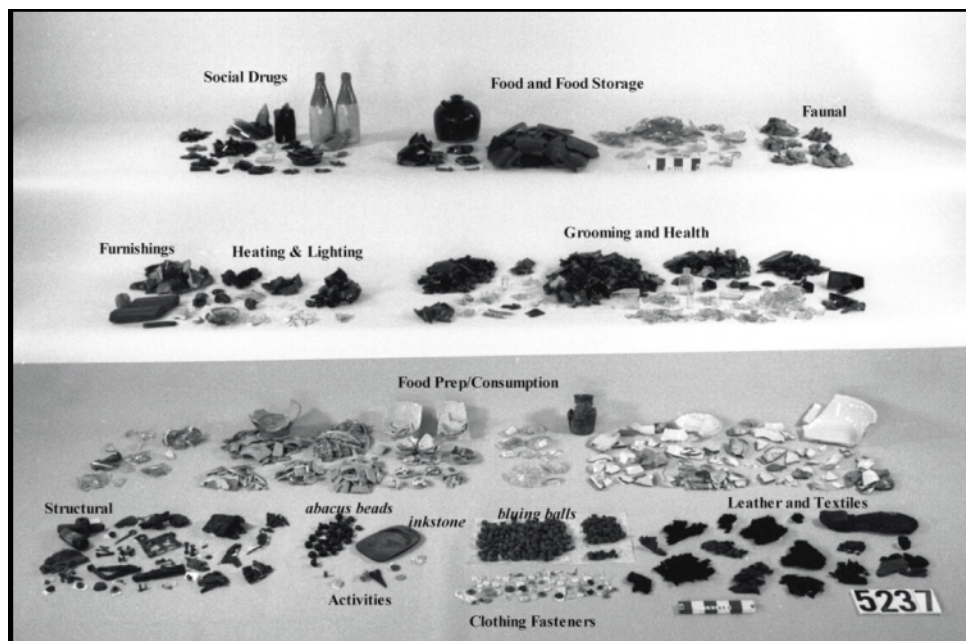


Figure 8.9. The Seventh Street Chinese laundry assemblage. A large quantity and variety of materials were found in the long trench associated with the Chinese laundry on Seventh Street in West Oakland around the turn of the 20th century. Many items represent the laundry trade, including blueing balls, quantities of buttons, clothing remnants, and wood abacus beads.

inexpensive Staffordshire whitewares and some more expensive pieces of Chinese and European origin (Table 8.2).

The relatively small collection of bone from the trench behind the West Oakland laundry provides a glimpse into the meals served. Bones of cow, sheep, and pig were represented in approximately equivalent numbers; in addition, there were a few chicken bones. About half the beef bones were steaks from the porterhouse, sirloin, and rib. The remainder was soup bones. Most of the mutton and pork were also soup bones, with a couple of steaks and roasts from higher priced cuts. Overall, this accumulation of food bone demonstrates acquisition of low-priced meat items, with an occasional purchase of a high-priced cut. While the majority of the butchering marks are those of standard, commercial butchering of the time, there are a couple of knife scores indicating removal of meat from steak bones (Gust 1993). This probably reflects cutting up the steak meat into small pieces for stir-fry or soups. Such a practice would be consistent with cooking for a group on a small budget, which is also represented by the large amount of soup bones present. Residents of the Hop Lee laundry in Lovelock emphasized traditional Chinese meat preferences of pork and chicken, as well as pond turtle and squid. While pork cuts of all price ranges were eaten, high-cost cuts of beef predominated over lower-priced cuts (Rusco 1979:650-651). Pork cuts also predominated in the diets of Stockton workers at Sing Lee's, although when they opted for high-cost cuts, they chose mutton. The remains of two butchered cats were also recovered from their refuse deposit.

Flotation samples from the trench at 1813 Seventh Street show that the laundry workers ate local fruits (peach, fig, tomato) and imported Chinese olives. The numerous Chinese brown-glazed stoneware containers would have contained a wide variety of traditional foodstuffs imported from China. Probable contents include soy sauce, black vinegar, peanut oil, preserved tofu,

Table 8.2. Frequencies and Percentages of Various Artifacts at Overseas Chinese Laundry Sites

Artifact	Lovelock*		Sacramento		Stockton		Oakland	
	Hop Lee #	%	San Fong Chong #	%	Sing Lee #	%	1813 Seventh St. #	%
Double Happiness	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1.6
Bamboo	21	.8	3	2	4	.4	4	2.2
Four Flowers	131	4.9	5	3.4	21	1.8	4	2.2
Celadon	198	7.4	1	.7	32	2.8	8	4.3
Other Chinese tableware	40	1.5	2	1.3	23	2	0	0
Japanese tableware	0	0	0	0	4	.4	2	1.1
English/American tableware	800**	30	8	5.4	22	1.9	29	15.7
Chinese brown-glazed stoneware	57†	2.1	31	20.8	19	1.6	9	4.9
Bitters bottles	2	0	3	2	59	5.1	22	11.9
Chinese medicine containers	77	2.9	2	1.3	34	2.9	0	0
Chinese wine	25	.9	1	.7	128	11.1	5	2.7
Other alcohol	361	13.6	4	2.7	230	19.9	11	6
Clothing fasteners	742	27.8	89	59.7	571	49.3	87	47
Opium-related	91	3.4	0	0	7	.6	1	.5
Gaming pieces	120	4.5	0	0	3	.3	0	0
Totals	2665	99.8	149	100	1158	100.1	185	100.1

* counts for Lovelock ceramics are by sherd; other sites are by vessel

** approximate number

† vessels

sweet bean paste, beans, pickled turnips, cabbage, carrots, scallions, salted cabbage, melons, cucumbers, ginger, salty duck eggs, shrimp paste, sheet sugar, and soybeans (Hellmann and Yang 1997:182-190). These vessels are the most common component of all the sites discussed here; many can still be purchased in only slightly updated forms at Chinese markets today.

The workers at 1813 Seventh Street drank bitters (22 bottles in the collection, mainly Hostetter's), beer, wine, and Chinese liquor for their health and relaxation, and smoked opium and tobacco on occasion. Their counterparts in Stockton also consumed large quantities of bitters, Chinese liquor, American and Japanese beers, and other liquors. The Stockton laundry workers smoked opium on the premises, but the evidence of this indulgence is much less striking than that of their alcohol consumption. Meanwhile, at the Hop Lee laundry in Lovelock, individuals drank Chinese wine and other alcoholic beverages, but did not exhibit a preference for bitters. Quantities of opium were consumed on the premises; written and artifactual information suggests that Hop Lee imported and distributed opium (Kuffner 1979). Artifacts from the floor of Hop Lee's laundry ("bldg 2") indicate that opium-smoking and gambling occurred more frequently in this building than elsewhere on the Lovelock property. The lack of evidence for opium and gambling in Oakland and Sacramento may be due more to the outside location of the excavated deposits than to any lack of gambling by these laundry workers. In fact, the bail bondsman who took over the San Fong Chong laundry in Sacramento recalled that opium pipes and other items had been found abandoned in the building's cellar. Gambling is an ancient Chinese pastime, according to a Chinese laundry worker in Chicago: "We Chinese

people in America—there is no gambling if one person is alone, but as soon as two persons get together, there is gambling” (Siu 1987:227).

From the historic archaeological studies described here, the Chinese laundryman may be best characterized as a pioneer outside the confines of Chinatown, often educated and working with family members and with fellow villagers treated as family. Increasingly in the 20th century, families managed laundries while living in or adjacent to the premises. The laundry proprietors were often successful businessmen who undertook other activities from their laundries and who formed business guilds to protect and promote themselves. They had connections with other Chinese businessmen throughout the West and back in China. Laundrymen were frugal in their business investments, but less so in their personal lives. Luxury foodstuffs, jewelry, and clothing were purchased on occasion, and expensive bitters and other alcoholic beverages were commonplace at all the laundries studied. A hybrid of Chinese traditional foodways combined with local products, cooked in and served on what was readily available seems to best portray the eating habits of laundry workers.

Despite constant harassment from youths and thugs, as well as discrimination by local authorities, many Chinese laundry ventures persevered for decades in the same location and eventually rewarded their proprietors with a relatively comfortable standard of living, as reflected archaeologically in their consumption patterns. Whether this adequately compensated their hard work and personal trials is not knowable—each individual’s history, priorities, and goals would influence their view in this regard. If “success” is measured by their descendants, then many Chinese laundry workers may be said to have succeeded.

RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINESE LAUNDRY WORKERS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

Little is known of the relationships between Chinese laundrymen and their customers and neighbors, except for easily documented incidents of racial discrimination and harassment. The subtitle of Paul Siu’s study of laundrymen is, in fact, “A Study of Social Isolation”; Siu (1987:272) believed that, with some exceptions, social barriers prevented such personal contacts. While archaeology is not generally in a good position to make contributions to this discussion, the large scale of the Cypress Project provides an opportunity to look at the material culture of both the Chinese laundrymen and their landlords, who lived only a few blocks away.

When Irish butcher Edward Murphy died in 1879, he left his shop at 1813 Seventh Street to his two sisters and 11 nieces and nephews. Five of the nieces and nephews were living with their father, Michael McLaughlin, at 881 Cedar Street. Michael, an unemployed laborer, had received custody of his four minor children, who ranged in age from 7 to 16 years. Two of the children, Martha O’Brien and her family and Edward McLaughlin, remained in the family home for the next 40 years—a period that spanned the laundry’s period of operation from before 1889, when it is shown on the Sanborn map, until as late as 1912, when the Sanborn map labels the building as “vacant.” By 1914 Edward McLaughlin had moved his business into the former laundry, converting it into a plumbing shop.

A cache of domestic artifacts associated with the McLaughlin and O’Brien families around 1900 was recovered during the Cypress Project excavations. These materials, the contents of Pits 2870 and 2800, show the family’s interest in things Chinese by the quantity and variety of Asian ceramic vessels that they collected and eventually discarded. Seven Asian porcelain tableware vessels were found, including a Bamboo bowl, a handpainted Chinese bowl and

*LEW HING:
OAKLAND ENTREPRENEUR AND RENAISSANCE MAN*

One of the pivotal figures in Oakland's Chinese community was Lew Hing. This early entrepreneur made his mark in West Oakland and employed many people who once lived in the Cypress Project area. Like his Euroamerican neighbors, Lew Hing prospered by his proximity to the railroad, the region's agricultural potential, and its cheap locally available immigrant labor.

Lew Hing's father had traveled to San Francisco during the Gold Rush, but returned home disappointed after a few months. In the late 1860s, Lew's oldest brother came to San Francisco to seek his fortune, establishing a small business on Commercial Street between Kearney Street and Grant Avenue. After a few years, the brother wished to return to China to visit his family and sent for Lew Hing to run the business in his absence. Lew Hing arrived in San Francisco in 1871, but the brother drowned when his ship sank off the coast of Japan, leaving Lew Hing in charge of the small business at age 13. The young man learned English by attending a church mission school in the evenings and became associated with a small cannery on the corner of Sacramento and Stockton streets. Here he experimented on canning foodstuffs and eventually developed a successful method (Liu 1981).

In 1904 Lew Hing organized the Pacific Coast Canning Company at 12th and Pine streets, adjacent to the railroad tracks in West Oakland. A loading spur ran into the complex, where the cannery processed asparagus, tomatoes, and local fruits for shipment throughout the United States, Europe, and Latin America under the "Buckskin" label. The company principals were Lew Hing, his relatives, and others from his region in China, as well as several local Euroamerican businessmen.

The cannery employed many Portuguese and Italian women during the season. In the 1920s, 250 employees worked year round, with up to 1,000 during the summer months. One of Oakland's largest businesses, the Pacific Coast Canning Company, had holdings of more than \$250,000 at its height (Ma with Ma 1982:50-51). The cannery figures prominently in the memories of many of those interviewed for the Cypress Project.

The earthquake and fire of 1906 destroyed San Francisco's Chinatown, and tens of thousands of Chinese fled to Oakland. Lew Hing set up a tent camp at his cannery and arranged for meals for many of the refugees. The disaster also destroyed Lew Hing's home; fortunately, his family was traveling in China at the time. Like many others, Lew Hing decided to move to Oakland, but he did so in a novel way. Spotting a two-story residence on Eighth between Harrison and Alice streets, Lew Hing offered the owner a few thousand dollars. The man accepted, packed his suitcase, and left the residence fully furnished for Lew Hing's family to move into on their return (Liu 1981).

The cannery prospered and Lew Hing continued to diversify; he co-founded the China Mail Steamship Company, opened a sardine cannery in Monterey on what became Cannery Row, expanded to the West Coast Canning Company in Antioch, developed a cotton plantation in Mexicali known as Wah Muck, invested in the import of art goods and wholesale foodstuffs from China, and developed two hotels in San Francisco's Chinatown along with other ventures (Liu 1981). The stock-market crash and the Depression ruined Lew Hing's businesses before he died in 1934 (Ma with Ma 1982:51).



Figure 8.10. An unusual Mandarin take-off on Rebekah. The Chinese laundry workers in West Oakland rented from the Edward Murphy estate. Many of his heirs lived a few blocks away at 881 Cedar Street. The connection with their tenants appears to have inspired a liking for things Chinese, including this Mandarin take-off on the ubiquitous Rebekah-at-the-well teapot (Pits 2870 and 2800).

unidentified vessel, three handpainted Asian bowls, and a Japanese handpainted dish. Food storage vessels included a Chinese stoneware ginger jar and Chinese brown-glazed stoneware container. The family's Mandarin Rebekah teapot, which features a Chinese man in the place of the biblical Rebekah, is very unusual (Figure 8.10). Of the dozens of Rebekah teapots found during the Cypress Project, this is the only Chinese variation. This deposit contained more Asian ceramics than any other excavated for the Cypress Project, including features associated with the McLaughlin family and deposited some 20 years earlier that contained no items of Chinese origin or motif.

The 1880s were the height of the anti-Chinese movement and, in spite of appeals from the era's tastemakers, the aesthetics of the Irish-American

McLaughlin family were thoroughly oriented toward Europe. Yet, by 1900 popular taste had changed sufficiently to accommodate these conventionally exotic artifacts. What may have brought about this change? The perceived threat of Chinese immigrants to the American status



Figure 8.11. "Oakland: A California Wonder," 1907. By the early 20th century, Oakland boosters advertised the exotic character of its Chinese- and Japanese-American neighborhoods. (Courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

quo had declined to be sure. However, the decades-long relationship with the Chinese laundrymen who rented their Seventh Street property may have engendered in the McLaughlin family an affinity with things Asian. As elsewhere in West Oakland of the era, residential propinquity seems to have fostered a level of neighborly acceptance of ethnic heterogeneity. By the early 20th century, Oakland boosters were touting the exotic “wonders” of their town’s Asian-American residents (Figure 8.11).

MATERIAL REMAINS OF THE “RESOURCEFUL CHINESE”

Despite overt racial prejudice and discriminatory legislation that persisted into the mid-20th century, the Overseas Chinese contributed to the growth and development of Oakland in numerous ways. Many elements of the mid-19th-century local infrastructure—railroads, irrigation projects, roads, and agricultural plantings—were created by Chinese labor. In a pioneer region lacking female inhabitants, Chinese men took over the roles of cook and launderer. Their skills as problem solvers and inventors enabled advances in mining, food-processing, and elsewhere. While serial migration and remittances to China were practiced, this was (and is) a near universal adaptation on the part of families throughout the world to economic uncertainties at home and abroad. Careful study of the historical and archaeological records adds character and weight to the often anonymous Chinese immigrants of the past, and situates them firmly in particular California cities and neighborhoods. These men, women, and children came and contributed their various skills and efforts in remarkable ways.

Questions regarding the “ethnic markers” of Overseas Chinese material culture were resolved by archaeologists decades ago: the Overseas Chinese brought with them distinctive ceramics and foodways. The important issues for historical archaeology—or local history for that matter—are not *which* goods the Overseas Chinese used, but *how* this group used, reused, and adapted them, in what quantities, and for what outcomes in particular locations. How did individual Overseas Chinese households function within the community in which they settled, and how did this articulate with and contribute to the development of that community? Chinese districts disappeared from many places in the early 20th century and only reappeared many decades later when favorable immigration laws prompted new waves of immigration. It is important that the role of early Asian immigrants in the development of California be reaffirmed and celebrated as a message to this group of new arrivals.

Historical archaeology, broadly defined as infused with archival research and oral history, ties the contributions of the Overseas Chinese to the lives of particular people and enhances with material remains the evidence of their successes and sacrifices. The Overseas Chinese were instrumental in the settlement and development of the West. The magnitude of this accomplishment can be viewed in the cultural landscape of remote areas throughout the region as ditches, mine tailings, levies, roads, railroads, stone fences, irrigated fields and vineyards, cabins, hearths, and camps. Artifactual evidence can be found in privies, wells, and refuse middens protected beneath the parking lots, freeways, and open spaces of today’s urban centers and of now forgotten 19th-century communities. Historical archaeology has an important role to play in uncovering and telling the stories of the Chinese immigrants who helped make Oakland and California what they are today.



THE LANDSCAPE(S) OF LODGING IN WEST OAKLAND

MARTA GUTMAN

The men, women, and children who lived in what would become the Cypress Freeway Replacement Project area could find accommodations in a variety of buildings during the final decades of the 19th century. By the 1880s and 1890s, working-class cottages, flats and apartments, Almost-polite houses, substantial middle-class homes, boardinghouses, lodging houses, and hotels filled out streets in a district where residential buildings usually were framed of wood and ranged in height from one to three stories. In this heterogeneous landscape, a person who preferred (or needed) to rent a room could find a place to stay in any of the dwellings just mentioned, with rooms available to rent from a brief to an extended period of time. While West Oakland may have been principally a neighborhood of family homes during the late 19th century, the fabric accommodated the housing needs of a variety of people (Groth 1997:85): the native-born boilermaker who rented a hotel room on Seventh Street; the widowed dressmaker who roomed with an Irish American family near the railroad yards; the African American couple who lodged in a flat, rented by another couple of color from a single, middle-aged, Irish woman; and the young German saloonkeeper who boarded with the owner of a local brewery, also a German immigrant. The presence of this rental-housing culture in West Oakland added to the social diversity of the neighborhood—a diversity that echoed the heterogeneity of the district’s residential architecture, where incremental construction (lot-by-lot development) and mixed uses were common.

This essay examines room-renting in West Oakland between 1880 and 1900, directing attention to the gender and material culture of room-renters at select sites during a period of transition and change. The terms “room-renting” and “room-renters” encompass the extent of rental-housing culture for men and women in West Oakland, where room-renters included boarders—whose rent generally included meals—and roomers, who purchased meals separately from housing (and could also be known as lodgers). During the period under study, great changes occurred with respect to this aspect of rental-housing culture in the United States, as boarding fell out of favor and rooming became the preferred practice among many tenants across the nation (Groth 1997:90). Although Eva Carlin, one of the reformers who visited West Oakland around 1900, missed this aspect of housing culture in the neighborhood (Carlin 1900a, 1900b), reformers elsewhere in the country bemoaned the rapid development of lodging districts in the nation’s cities and complained about the manner of inhabitation and its contribution to the perceived dissolution of family and civic life (Wolfe 1906, 1907; Woods 1907; Zorbaugh 1929). More recently, historians have taken issue with reform proscriptions, finding architectural, economic, and social merit in downtown rooming-house districts (Groth 1986, 1994; Meyerowitz 1988; Peel 1986).

The Cypress Project offers the opportunity to examine the gender and material culture of boarders and roomers at this time of transition, by comparing the artifacts used by hotel residents with those from family settings, where room-renting took place. The surveys of boarding and rooming, undertaken for the Cypress Project before the excavation reports were written, focused on



Figure 9.1. Boardinghouse row on Seventh Street, east of Pine Street, in 1940. From left to right, the establishments were the Burlington House Hotel (Bartlett's Hotel), est. 1892; West Oakland Hotel (or House), est. 1869; and Grand Western Hotel (James Block), est. 1873. (Photo courtesy of the Bancroft Library)

commercial establishments that were built before, during, and after the transition to rooming (Groth 1997; Woods 1994). Aicha Woods and Paul Groth detailed the development of a third-class hotel (or lodging) district along Seventh Street, which Groth showed continued to be inhabited until the 1950s (Figure 9.1). Groth and Woods explored the historical reasons for the development of the spine of commercial hotels in West Oakland: the transcontinental railroad, which ran along Seventh Street, attracted skilled and unskilled workers to the neighborhood, starting in the 1870s. At the end of the 19th century, the string of Seventh Street hotels, which ranged in size from modest buildings to grand structures, three stories high, and 75 feet wide, catered almost

exclusively to single, white, working-class men, most of whom worked for the railroad. The “unattached” persons—the term used by reformers in the 20th century to describe single non-family men and women who lived in inexpensive hotels and lodging houses (Rose 1947)—relied on commercial services to meet their needs for food, clothing, and entertainment. In West Oakland, entrepreneurs opened restaurants, saloons, laundries, and so forth to meet the needs of hotel residents (and others) who frequented Seventh Street, with most of the establishments concentrated at the western end of the street, near the railroad yards. Often, the owner of an upstairs rooming house opened a saloon on the ground floor of the establishment (Figure 9.2). Rental rooms were located upstairs.

Since Groth and Woods scrutinized the development of this landscape of lodging in West Oakland, the excavation reports have brought to light the extent of boarding and rooming in family households across the Cypress Project—outlined in earlier studies, but not researched in depth. Now that historical associations have been established for archaeological features, it is possible to integrate women, as housing providers and renters of rooms, into the district’s lodging landscapes, more than was possible in prior studies. With respect to this aspect of rental-housing culture, the residential fabric of West Oakland resembled immigrant, working-class districts in many other American cities, where women—mothers for the most part—took boarders and roomers into their homes to earn a living or to augment the meager wages of their husbands, sons, and daughters (Degler 1980:131-138; Kessler-Harris 1982:124-125; Mintz and Kellogg 1988:87-93). While some social critics recognized the need for (and even the merits of) this kind of employment for single and married women (Byington 1910; Woods 1907), many housing reformers condemned the practice, arguing that overcrowded households held deleterious consequences for morality, family life, public health, and the Americanization of immigrants.

The most extreme critics called the practice “lodger evil” (Breckinridge and Abbott 1910-1912, 1911; Veiller 1912), conflating deeply held middle-class convictions about morality and the shape of the urban environment with housing choices and economic need (Boyer 1978; Groth 1994). These critics had in mind, however, far denser, more homogeneous residential neighborhoods than existed in West Oakland between 1880 and 1900, when the number of room-renters in family settings was small—usually one or two people per house, sometimes as many as three or four, if a family rented space. Moreover, in West



Figure 9.2. Outside the Mint Saloon at Seventh and Pine streets in West Oakland. This popular establishment adjoined the Pullman Hotel. (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

Oakland, the practice of renting rooms to relatives and other people persisted in middle-class households, although it declined in many other cities across the nation (Blumin 1989; Degler 1980:393). With the heterogeneous neighborhood in a state of flux in California, middle-class boarders could live on the same street or city block as their working-class counterparts.

Many studies have pointed to the extent and importance of room-renting among working-class families in industrializing U.S. cities. Written principally by social historians, the studies emphasize the important contribution that women make to the economy of working-class families by letting and maintaining rooms for rent in their homes (Groneman 1977; Jensen 1980; Kleinberg 1996; Yans-McLaughlin 1982). The research also makes clear the arduous demands boarding and rooming placed on the female sex, usually mothers, older girls, and widows. They cooked, cleaned house, and washed laundry for tenants, as well as for their own family members (Bodnar 1982; Cowan 1981; Strasser 1982), and found themselves pressed for sexual favors (Davidoff 1979). Yet, historians’ analyses of room-renters and family life appear to have not been integrated with material culture studies by historical archaeologists, who have included boarders in their investigations. Best-known is the excavation of the Boott Mills complex in Lowell, Massachusetts, directed by Mary Beaudry and Stephen Mrozowski, who examined ideology in concert with the practices of everyday life, as revealed through material culture. The data uncovered led Beaudry and Mrozowski to question the power and efficacy of corporate ideology, especially the capability of factory owners to regulate every aspect of the daily lives of immigrant textile workers who lived in company-owned boardinghouses (Beaudry 1989, 1993; Mrozowski and Beaudry 1990; Mrozowski, Ziesing, and Beaudry 1996). The conclusions are startling. Men and women lived in the boardinghouses, once assumed to be sex segregated, and tenants consumed alcohol, contrary to all published rules. As illuminating as the Lowell study is, it focuses on the material culture of working-class tenants in purpose-built boardinghouses. The study area did not include room-renters in informal settings (present in other Lowell neighborhoods).

In West Oakland, comparing the material culture of room-renters who lived in informal and formal sites has its difficulties, with evidence scattered unevenly across study sites. Census data, however, suggest that boarding and rooming existed side by side during this period of transition, adding clout to Paul Groth's argument that housing definitions depend on the place (site) of dining as well as the kind and character of sleeping rooms (Groth 1997:85). In West Oakland, room-renters were scattered throughout the Cypress Project area, taking rooms in hotels along Seventh Street and finding space in other dwellings to the south and north of the district's major commercial street. Most of the archaeological deposits in West Oakland date between 1880 and 1900, when relatively few people rented rooms in family settings. After 1900 tenants increased (many single-family homes were converted to rooming houses), but few useful deposits of this time period were found. These circumstances make it difficult to discern the precise effect of room-renting on the material culture of family households, where boarders or roomers were present. The artifacts do not indicate the gender of roomers or other social complexities of these households, as revealed by the decennial census, city directories, voting registers, and other archival sources. Nonetheless, even though the material evidence is sparse, room-renters seem to have used the same items and eaten the same food as other members of the household in family settings. Such a finding is consistent with practices associated with boarding, where boarders in a family setting and in purpose-built boardinghouses were treated more or less like other members of the extended household (Groth 1994; Modell and Hareven 1973; Peel 1986). A very different situation existed in the commercial establishments along Seventh Street, where deposits give a clear sense of the material culture of hotel residents, who were in the main, white, working-class men.

RENTING A ROOM OFF SEVENTH STREET

In West Oakland, men and women who traversed city streets looking for a room to rent found many possibilities off Seventh Street, where the scale and type of residential architecture varied greatly toward the end of the 19th century. In this neighborhood of family homes, the sign, "room for rent," could be posted in the window of a side-street dwelling, just as readily as it could be hung outside a Seventh Street hotel. On side streets, rooms were available for rent within many family homes and in upstairs rooming houses, which were usually built in concert with corner saloons. Close to the railroad yards, the density of the latter buildings contributed to reform concern about the prevalence of saloons in West Oakland and their proximity to family houses (Carlin 1900a, 1900b; Gutman 1999, 2000). Often, several establishments could stand on one city block. For example, in the late 1880s, four rooming houses stood on Fifth Street between Henry and Peralta streets, with each corner building standing above a saloon or grocery store, which were commonly used as informal saloons in the late 19th century (Rosenzweig 1983). James Davidson, a carpenter and speculator, built an especially impressive establishment at the southwest corner of Fifth and Peralta; he hired an immigrant woman (called a housekeeper on the census) to manage the upstairs rooming house for him, and probably ran the saloon himself (Gutman 1997b, 2000). West Oakland also contained several purpose-built boardinghouses, such as the Scott House on Market Street and the sanitarium at the corner of Chestnut and Seventh streets (Groth 1997:90, 100).

Gender entered the geography of rental-housing culture in West Oakland, shaping the housing choices of single men and women, and of families as well. The relationship between people and property in Davidson's lodging house was the most typical: male property-owner,

ANNIE PATTERSON'S ROOMING HOUSE

Marta Gutman

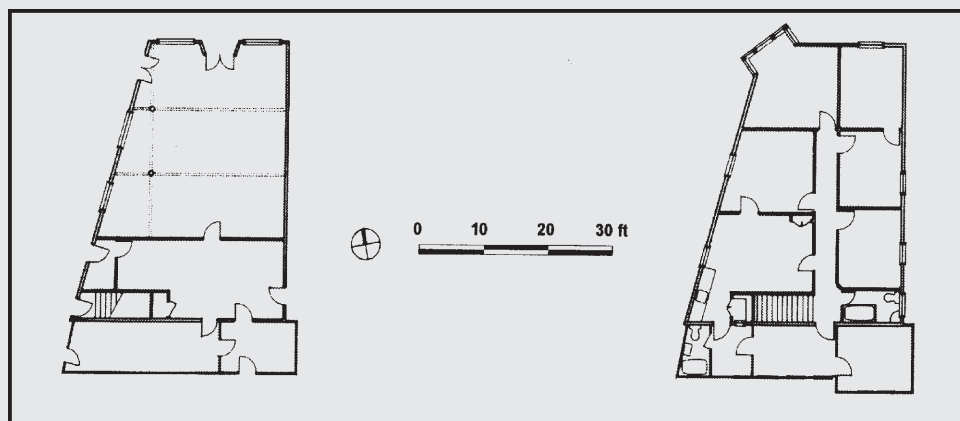


The Davidson/Patterson Rooming House still stands at the corner of Peralta and Fifth streets. (Photo credit: Paul Groth)

When Annie Mae Dugger Patterson arrived in West Oakland in 1938, she and her family moved into a rooming house that had stood at the corner of Peralta and Fifth streets for about 50 years. In its architectural form and through its mixed social uses, the aging, two-story building suited the immediate needs of this African American family, providing work and shelter at one and the same time. Quite soon after she arrived in the city, Mrs. Patterson found a job running the rooming house for its elderly, white, male owner. Auspiciously, the position came with housing: a large, ground-floor room that the entire family would use as its home for many years. Mrs. Patterson likely considered herself fortunate to have found a place to live, with the housing shortage growing day by day in West Oakland as migrants streamed into the city. Although her landlord previously used the one-room apartment as a storeroom for his grocery store (also on the ground floor), a dedicated entry offered the Patterson family a modicum of privacy, shielding children from the grocery-store customers and tenants who lived upstairs. Plus, Prescott School, a public elementary school, was within walking distance; the New Century Recreation Center and playground was across the street; and rooming-house managers usually lived rent-free in the establishments where they worked (Groth 1994; Gutman 1999; Patterson 1995a).

Annie Patterson participated in a social process that historians call the Great Migration: the diasporic movement of a disenfranchised people north “to reap,” what one historian calls, “the fruits of liberty” (Venkatesh 2000:5). Like many African Americans who moved to Oakland as the Great Depression spread across the land, Mrs. Patterson’s journey started in a farmhouse outside of a small southern town, in Arkansas in her case. The starting point would be a familiar one for people of color who came to the San Francisco Bay Area during this time of economic hardship. Not surprisingly, Mrs. Patterson took the lead in making the decision for the family to leave the Deep South. She had been a school teacher in Mississippi before marrying a sharecropper, and she, especially, did not want her children to grow up in an “environment as hopeless as Arkansas” was for black people in the 1930s (Patterson 1995b).

The move north did not eradicate racial discrimination from the Pattersons’ lives. Mrs. Patterson did not seek employment as a school teacher excluded from this profession by virtue of her marital status and her race (Albrier 1979; Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:19; Pittman 1974:33). Plus, parts of the California city were as racially segregated as the towns the family knew in Arkansas, and it can be argued that the family’s standard of living decreased, at



Floorplan of the Davidson/Patterson Rooming House in the 1940s. The first floor, with its large grocery store, is on the left; the second floor, with its individual bedrooms, is on the right. (Illustration credit: Sibel Zandi-Sayek)

least to begin with. Three generations crowded into one room behind a grocery store was a far cry from living in a shotgun house in Arkansas (Patterson 1995b).

Yet, Mrs. Patterson's story brings to light the means by which married women of color extracted economic opportunity from West Oakland's mixed-use landscape in the interwar years. Her strategies differed from those employed by women of color who arrived in Oakland during World War II, ready to challenge gender conventions by working for wages in shipyards and factories (Johnson 1993; Lemke-Santangelo 1996). Like women who made the trek north during World War II, Mrs. Patterson found a job easily enough in West Oakland, but in her case the work (rooming-house manager) was conventional for members of her sex, race, and class. She washed, ironed, cooked, cleaned, and, one suspects, interviewed applicants for rooms that cost about \$10.50 a month to rent (Oakland Real Property Survey 1936). For the most part, single African American men employed in the railroad yards or in war-related work knocked on her door looking for a place to live, although on occasion a woman would also rent a room in the boardinghouse (Patterson 1995a, 1995b).

The Pattersons lived in a building that resembled many other corner rooming houses in the community: built toward the end of the 19th century, with a large grocery store (formerly a saloon) and storage room on the ground floor, and a kitchen, two bathrooms (one for the family, one for tenants), and individual bedrooms for rent upstairs. James Davidson constructed this

establishment in the late 1880s, straddling the southeast corner of Peralta and Fifth streets. It was one in a string of five residential buildings that the carpenter, who also called himself a capitalist, erected to improve his properties (Gutman 1997b). For the most part, these were plain, wood-frame buildings. The carpenter-cum-capitalist, however, added to the façade of the rooming house a grand, cantilevered bay window that projected over the street corner to catch the attention of passers-by. After Davidson's death, the rooming house changed hands several times; John Fretas probably owned it in the late 1930s when Mrs. Patterson, her husband, their children, and, eventually, her father moved in (Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey 1992a; Patterson 1995a, 1995b).

The family economy prevailed in the Patterson household, as it did in other working-class households associated with the Cypress Project blocks. Mrs. Patterson worked for wages; her husband, James, held various jobs, and so did their children, who worked after school and during summers. In due course, and as times improved, the Patterson family would put as much income as possible into savings and toward the purchase of property (Patterson 1995a, 1995b). Room-renting, as a means for women to accumulate capital and come to own homes, had an established place in West Oakland's housing culture—a place that stands out in the archival material uncovered through the Cypress excavations and in oral histories (Bargiacchi and King 1981; Cumbelich and Cumbelich 1996; Ericsson 1981; Kosmos 1995; Mousalimas and

Mousalimas 1996; Santee 1981). This material helps us to discern that, with respect to the structure of her work, her living arrangements, and her relationship to the family economy, Annie Patterson's urban experience bore some resemblance to that of working-class women in white immigrant families who preceded her to West Oakland. Yet, her material living conditions were much worse, with her race intensifying her experience of social and spatial inequalities. Seen from that perspective, her story closely resembles that of other working-class women of color who lived on project blocks or who migrated to other northern cities during this period (Hine 1991).

The 1940s and 1950s were difficult times for the Patterson family as they struggled to establish themselves in a new community and conserve their resources. Yet the Pattersons, taking advantage of relatively depressed property values, accumulated a fair amount of residential real estate. By 1945 they had purchased the rooming house and, over time, they came to own the five buildings constructed by James Davidson and four other adjacent lots on Fifth and Lewis streets, vacant at the time of purchase (Gutman 1997b). Without doubt, property ownership gave the Pattersons a much-needed emotional and financial anchor in West Oakland. As might be expected, Annie Patterson assumed the brunt of the property management work, especially with respect to the rooming house. Her son, Arthur Patterson, recalls that she consistently worked 12-hour days, rising at four o'clock in the morning to make breakfast for the roomers (the meal was included in the rent) and then take care of her own family. Mrs. Patterson also cleaned the building, washed her tenants' clothes, and even ironed them (for an extra fee). Despite the strict divide between family and business life, sometimes roomers helped by cleaning their bedrooms and the shared bathroom (Patterson 1995b).

The experience of this African American family, which embraced rental-housing culture as a means to homeownership, counters prevailing images of West Oakland as a neighborhood in decline during the middle decades of the 20th century. It also counters the assertion, made by the city's long-term, middle-class, African American residents, that migrants to West Oakland from the Deep South needed assistance

and guidance to help them accommodate to northern urban life and customs. We must "help our new neighbors, to overcome restrictions and handicaps imbedded in them from the Southern way of living, Social and Political," one woman insisted (Armstrong, Huson, and Nottage 1945; Gutman 2002c). Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo has disputed this characterization of female migrant life (and questioned the scholarship that substantiates it); her analysis holds for earlier arrivals as well for women who went to work in the shipyards (Lemann 1991; Lemke-Santangelo 1996). The practice of boarding and rooming in West Oakland, which continued well into the 20th century, allowed migrant women of color to extract economic opportunity from an incrementally built, heterogeneous landscape as they sought to create some measure of liberty in their new northern lives.



Arthur Patterson shared his remembrances of his mother and her rooming house with Project researchers.



Figure 9.3. Two of West Oakland's hotels. Pictured on the left (the building on the right-hand side of the street) is the Centennial House at Cedar and Seventh streets in the 1880s. On the right is the Railroad Exchange Hotel at Seventh and Bay streets after 1890. (Photos courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

male lodgers, and immigrant female manager of the establishment. A woman who lived on her own usually elected to board or room with a family and was therefore more likely to live in a side-street house than in a corner lodging house or in a hotel on the district's main commercial thoroughfare. If a woman (or a family for that matter) chose to rent space in a purpose-built hotel, there was either the genteel Centennial House or the well-regarded Railroad Exchange Hotel (Figure 9.3); women rarely sought lodging at the neighborhood's rougher establishments (Woods 1994:146). In the final decades of the 19th century, West Oakland did not yet contain commercial or philanthropic hotels intended to house single women who worked for wages. They were located elsewhere, with the Chabot Woman's Sheltering and Protection Home run by the YWCA in downtown Oakland being one prominent local example (Clark 1939:62). Like working girls, women and girls in West Oakland entered the housing market as room-renters at specific points in their life cycles, although they were probably older or younger than the working girls who lived in downtown Oakland or San Francisco. Very often, the adolescent girls who boarded or roomed with families were servants who faced grueling tasks and other arduous demands associated with their occupation. Young married woman frequently boarded or roomed (with their husbands) in order to accumulate capital, usually for a down payment on a house of their own. Later in life, inadequate income prompted women, especially those who did not own residential property, to become room-renters. Such women might be single, widowed, or divorced, with or without children living at home.

In this rental-housing landscape, middle- and working-class women found opportunities for employment, although the description "landlady" could be as injurious to a woman's reputation as "lodger" or "servant" (Davidoff 1979). In West Oakland, Jane Dutton, a well-off, single woman who, at end of her life, lived in a small cottage at 914 Fifth Street, had run a boardinghouse in San Francisco during the Gold Rush; she invested her considerable earnings in real estate, becoming quite wealthy in the process (Figure 9.4) (Pit 3137). More common was the married woman or widow who contributed to the family economy by becoming the proprietor of a boarding- or rooming house or by taking room-renters into her home. The Cypress Project blocks are full of examples of middle- and working-class women who made their livelihood in this manner (Gutman 2002b). For the most part, the middle-class women who took boarders or roomers into family homes in West Oakland lived in dwellings large enough to accommodate extra residents without much crowding. Ethnic and racial ties remained

strong within artisan and middle-class households in the racially integrated neighborhood. In 1880 Lucinda Tilghman, a widowed African American mother, rented a cottage at 662 Fifth Street; her boarders included Abraham Holland, an African American railroad porter who also widowed, and a servant (Privy 933/1112). On the same city block and in the same year, two German immigrants boarded at the Bredhoff residence, at 663 Sixth Street (Privy 985). The young woman may have been the Bredhoff's servant; the young man was a saloonkeeper and may have been employed at the Bredhoff brewery. The traditions associated with apprenticeship persisted in this middle-class household, where an employer offered housing to a young employee (Katz 1975, for comparison).

The history of the two-story house at 1708 William Street is especially telling because it reveals the persistent effect of gender and life-cycle needs on room-renting, as lodging replaced boarding (Privy 100, Privy 101). In 1880 John and Ellen Stryker, a young married couple (a mill machinist and a dressmaker, respectively) roomed with Elizabeth Huddleson, a 60-year old widow, and her adult son, Frederick, who worked as a coffee miller in San Francisco. The Strykers may have been saving for a down payment on a house; Elizabeth Huddleson needed to augment her income and reduce housing costs after her husband died. In 1880 she rented out the house on William Street and, in 1881, moved across the street; by the 1890s, she let furnished rooms at 1787 Seventh Street. In the meantime, the Strykers had moved, and Henry and Elizabeth King (a carpenter and his wife) became tenants at 1708 William Street, renting the 1,140-square-foot building from 1881 to 1905. At some point, the Kings benefited from the construction of a kitchen addition and a handsome new bay window. The Kings took in boarders; in 1900, a divorced mother, working as a bookkeeper, and her school-age daughter lived with the Kings, who may have been her parents. In 1905 Ellen Brown, a widowed Irish immigrant, purchased the house; in 1910, she headed a household of four male lodgers, one of whom was her nephew. All the men were Irish laborers, who worked building streets or for the railroad.

The collection from the privy at 1708 William Street offers only a few clues about the renters who lived in this setting in 1880, when the Huddleson and Stryker families shared the house. The five pairs of shoes, well-worn and in various sizes (including that of a child), indicate that men, women, and children lived in the house on William Street; the fabric and dressmaker's tools suggest that Ellen Stryker worked at home.

At the other end of the project area, boarders lived in several of the dwellings that Joseph Fogg, a carpenter, built near the corner of Market and Fifth streets in the 1860s. In 1870 Fogg lived in one of the houses with his wife, their child, a Chinese servant, and multiple tenants. The tenants included Charles Lufkin, a police inspector with a law degree, who moved into one of



Figure 9.4. The Dutton tract for sale. Jane Dutton's San Leandro ranch was put up for auction in 1889, after her death.

the Fogg houses in 1869. Lufkin seems to have settled at 817 Market Street, a large, two-story house (2,300 square feet); in 1880 he lived there or possibly next door at 819 Market Street, another Fogg property, with his wife, Elizabeth, their young children, a 15-year-old adopted daughter, and a boarder, Grace Ellis, a dressmaker. According to the Oakland city directory, 817 Market Street was used as a boardinghouse in 1879-1880. The rambling building, with extensive rear additions, could have accommodated the Lufkin family, their boarder, and the five men listed in the directory as residents: Michael Kelleher, a salesman with Strange & Hink; August Legler; Gustave Legler, confectioner; Henry T. Legler, physician and surgeon, and member of the Board of Health; and Harvey Lovejoy, carpenter. All of the men moved within the year.

The deposit in the backyard of 817 Market Street may date from 1875, but it offers a sense of daily life for the boarders who lived in the dwelling in 1880, a middle-class home by most standards (Pit 3382). With income from boarders augmenting her husband's relatively high salary, Elizabeth Lufkin could afford to pay attention to presentation at her dining table, following the precepts of the time (Ames 1992; Grover 1987). She used an elegant molded porcelain soup tureen, as well as plainer porcelain and earthenware serving dishes. Porcelain figurines and a fruit basket also decorated the parlor (Figure 9.5). The deposits make it clear that women in this household also worked for wages. Grace Ellis, and perhaps other dressmakers who boarded with the Lufkins, left direct evidence in this house of their trade—many beads of several varieties, a darning egg, and straight pins.

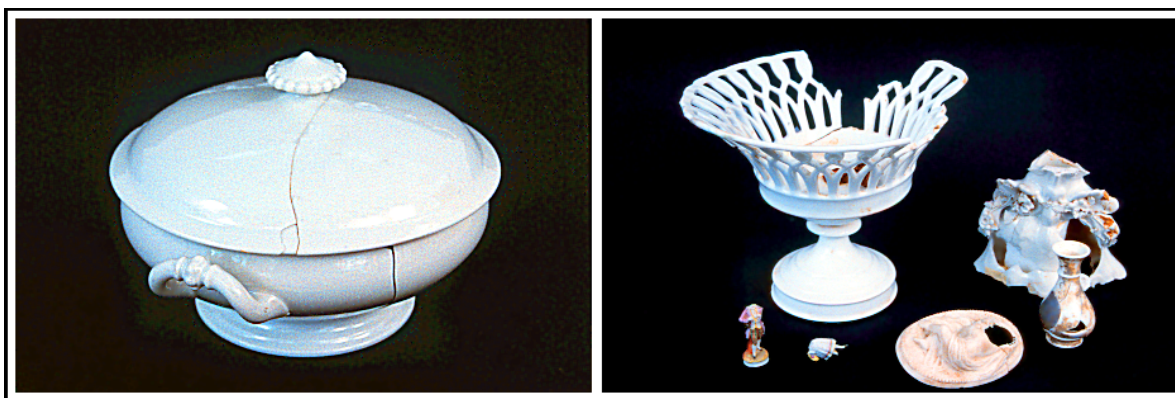


Figure 9.5. Signs of elegant living. Elizabeth Lufkin could afford to indulge in some of the trappings of gentility, such as this soup tureen (left) and fruit basket and figurines (right); these artifacts were excavated from a refuse pit in her backyard on Market Street (Pit 3382).

In West Oakland's working-class households, room-renters contributed to the family economy, where the need to pay bills, save for a house down payment, and provide for security in old age compelled men and women to make space for boarders and roomers in very small houses. Not surprisingly, many, although not all, room-renters in working-class houses lived in more cramped housing than their middle-class counterparts. In these households, ethnic and racial ties persisted in tenant selection, although a few landlords displayed some tolerance of social difference. In 1880 Frederick Leonhard, a German cooper, and his wife, Louise, rented 1821 William Street from Kate McNamara, an Irish immigrant widow who recently inherited the property from her husband. Two single men both German carpenters, boarded with the Leonard family; four adults and two children lived in the 500-square-foot dwelling (Privy 6260). Similarly, single working-class women—often relatively elderly, Irish immigrants—turned to

room-renting to pay bills, both as tenants and as landladies. Mary Kinsella, who owned her house at 806 Brush Street, had separated from her husband by 1900 when she lived with her sister and one boarder, an elderly Irish widower, in the small one-story building (Pit 1317). Kate Tierney, who lived down the street at 812 Brush Street, was a domestic servant who owned her house. She remodeled the building into two stories around 1900, creating two flats (720 square feet each). Tierney lived in one apartment and rented the other to an African American couple, who took in lodgers—another couple, plus a single man (Pit 1469).



Figure 9.6. A table setting from the McLaughlin household (Privy 2822).

Once again, the artifacts associated with working-class households where roomers lived suggest that tenants and landlords used the same objects and ate the same food. The clearest example comes from artifacts uncovered in the backyard of 881 Cedar Street where the McLaughlin family and boarders (some of whom were family members) lived in what was initially a 1,120 square feet one-and-one-half story house (Pit 2870, Pit 2880, Pit 2800, Privy 2822, Pit 2812, Pit 2809). In 1870 four Irish carpenters boarded with Michael and Mary McLaughlin and their four young children; Michael's brother, Thomas, lived there as well. The McLaughlin brothers were laborers who profited from the building boom spawned by the arrival of the transcontinental railroad. By 1880 sickness and death visited this family: Edward Murphy, Mary's brother, who boarded with the McLaughlin family in the late 1870s, had died, as had his sister. In the housecleaning episode that followed the two deaths, members of the McLaughlin family tossed out simple, serviceable tableware, not so different from that found in local hotels and saloons (Figure 9.6). The family and its tenants may have used items procured for the saloon and restaurant that operated out of one of the buildings that Murphy owned on Seventh Street. Few serving platters were found—surprising, given the number of people who lived in this household. Evidence of Murphy's trade as a professional butcher, however, is plentiful and informative. The patterns of butcher marks on the extensive specimens of meat indicate that residents were not served individualized portions of meat. This was often the case in boardinghouses, where family-style meals were common.

LODGING ON SEVENTH STREET

Gender relations also helped to construct the material culture of the men and women who lived and worked in Seventh Street hotels. Even though men dominated West Oakland's hotel landscape at the turn of the century, the commercial landscape on Seventh Street was not divided into spheres strictly separated by sex. While reformers (and some immigrant men) may have feared the dangers Seventh Street posed to girls and women (Carlin 1900a, 1900b), members of the female sex frequented the street and entered the hotel landscape as workers, tenants, and even owners. Women were hotel proprietors (renting establishments from male owners); they found employment as hired help (cooks, servants, and laundresses); they rented rooms; and even, on occasion, co-owned establishments with their husbands. The one or two houses of prostitution in West



Figure 9.7. A man's world. No women appear in this interior view of the Mint Saloon on Seventh Street. (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

Oakland (called "female lodging houses" on fire insurance maps) were located at this time on side streets, near the railroad yards, not on or close to Seventh Street (Solari 1997).

In fact, some of the upstairs rooming houses on Seventh Street offered men and women an "inexpensive compromise on respectability," as Aicha Woods has asserted, citing arguments made by Paul Groth and drawing on her studies of architecture, land use, and social geography along the street (Woods 1994:141). As both authors have described, the variety of working-class hotels

that lined Seventh Street at the turn of the century ranged from the "plain and rough" Charter Oak Hotel (Groth 1997:93), a fourth-class hotel, to more prestigious third-class establishments. According to Groth, the most expensive third-class hotels in American cities had a dedicated entry, with a recessed door, and perhaps a lobby, whereas tenants usually entered a fourth-class hotel through a saloon or an inexpensive restaurant. In West Oakland, the Railroad Exchange Hotel (Well 4600) and the Pullman Hotel (Well 559) were third-class hotels with lobbies and offices on the ground floor, as well as saloons with separate entries. The material residue of hotel life in these two establishments bears out the point about working-class respectability being possible in third-class hotels. This would have been the case for male tenants, who rented most of the rooms in these hotels, although women also did so, on occasion. The architectural resolution of the entry sequence to the Railroad Exchange Hotel and the Pullman Hotel made it possible for a respectable woman to enter the establishments without compromising her reputation. In late-19th-century American cities, saloons were almost exclusively male preserves (Figure 9.7), and a woman who walked into a drinking establishment on her own was aware she could be taken for a prostitute (Deutsch 2000; Gilfoyle 1992; Rosenzweig 1983).

In 1865 John Frese opened one of the first hotels in West Oakland, the Railroad Exchange Hotel, located at the corner of Seventh and Bay streets. The German immigrant selected a fortuitous location—four large lots near what would become the vast yards of the Central Pacific Railroad—and elected to manage his own property, unlike most hotel owners who leased their property to proprietors. Shortly after the Railroad Exchange Hotel opened, Frese took out an advertisement in the Oakland city directory, which read, "This Pioneer Establishment is a First Mechanic's Hotel" (Woods 1994:143, citing Oakland city directory 1869). The claim proved to be accurate. In short order, skilled working-class men, many of them pile drivers who built and repaired bridges, wharves, and docks for the railroad, came to reside in Frese's establishment. "All of the bridges, stations, wharves, and culverts were made of wood in those days and it kept quite a gang of men busy rebuilding these wooden structures," one West Oakland resident recalled, remembering these workers preferred to live in the "Frese building" (Woods 1994:144, citing *West of Market Boys' Journal*, February 1937). Frese and his family lived next door to the hotel (his wife, Margaret, also emigrated from

Germany), and in 1887, a few years after Margaret's death, he decided to sell the property to Olaf and Johanna Anderson, two Scandinavian immigrants. They remodeled the house and other buildings on the property in 1890, thereby doubling the size of the establishment (see Figure 9.3). The appearance of the two wood-framed buildings offered no clues that they shared an owner and a common purpose—the initial hotel being a sober, two-and-one-half story building with a gable-roof, and a handsome front porch; the second structure was graced with elegant bay windows and a false front that made the building seem to be three stories tall. The Andersons lived in one of the small buildings on the property and managed the hotel, as John Frese had done beforehand. They hired a servant, Mary Peterson (a single German immigrant), to take care of chores.

The materials found in the abandoned well in the backyard of the hotel come from this time of transition, having been deposited in two phases, probably in the late 1880s after the Andersons purchased the property, and again in the early 1890s after they expanded the hotel complex. In 1894, 27 men lived at the newly refurbished hotel; half of them were born in the United States and the rest had emigrated from Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia. They worked as carpenters, seamen, blacksmiths, laborers, and painters, and evidently appreciated the quality of service as some patrons stayed for quite a long time. Henry Mead, a painter for the Central Pacific Railroad, lived in the hotel for 4 years; Denis Strain, an Irish blacksmith, for 10 years; and Edward Powers, an Irish carpenter, lived in the Railroad Exchange Hotel for more than 15 years. The tenants of other hotels and boardinghouses changed residences far more frequently.

Coupled with the archival data, the materials recovered from the well suggest that a manly culture of fashionable working-class respectability prevailed in the Railroad Exchange Hotel. The garments, used by men who called the hotel home during the 1880s and 1890s, make this point especially clear (Figure 9.8). Other artifacts suggest that male residents probably enjoyed a drink and a smoke in the hotel's saloon after work (Figure 9.9).

Without doubt, the accoutrements of manly culture—felt hats, checked jackets, clay pipes, and Cuban cigars—appealed to the respectable working-class men who



Figure 9.8. The uniform of the Seventh Street working man. This hat and jacket were excavated from the abandoned well behind the Railroad Exchange Hotel. We can see the “uniform” of the average 1880s working man as he marches off to the work in his matching jacket and trousers, a buttoned vest, white shirt, and ever-present hat. For dress, he might have worn another jacket, possibly checkered, or pinstriped trousers. After a long day of work, he relaxed in his more comfortable slide-on slippers before retiring in a basic nightshirt (Well 4600).



Figure 9.9. Taking tobacco. Numerous items associated with smoking were found in the abandoned well behind the Railroad Exchange Hotel. Pictured here are snuff bottles, remnants of a cigar box, clay pipe fragments, and abundant matches (Well 4600).



Figure 9.10. Hotelware. This heavy, functional china and glassware from the abandoned Railroad Exchange Hotel well was selected for their boarders by the Frese family, who ran the establishment between 1865 and 1887 (Well 4600).

tenants also included women: in 1894 Sophia Hansen lived at the hotel; in 1900 Phillipina Rothenbusch stayed at the hotel with her son, August. The women who lived at the establishment were not impoverished; like their male counterparts, they dressed in stylish clothes and paid attention to grooming, using perfume, other scents, toothbrushes, and combs.

Given prevailing cultural norms and the fact that the Frese family lived on the hotel property, it makes sense that the Railroad Exchange Hotel seems to have been run as a boardinghouse during the Frese proprietorship. The Freses selected plain, white “hotelware” for the dining room (Figure 9.10), probably purchasing the sturdy utilitarian dishes in the 1860s when the hotel opened. The dishes were gradually discarded over the years; a large number of them were



Figure 9.11. The Pullman Hotel around 1912. The hotel can be seen in the background, across Seventh Street; the Mint Saloon operated out of the ground floor. The Buhsen Hotel is in the foreground. (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

dominated the public and private spaces of this hotel in the late 19th century. We can even imagine that their attire and other aspects of their material culture demonstrated the power of working-class manhood in the early 1890s. It was a time of great political strife in the neighborhood, although the Railroad Exchange Hotel was not particularly associated with union organizing (as some other hotels were). The establishment was also not gender-segregated or removed from family life. The archival records indicate that the Frese and the Anderson families lived on the site; thus, it is not surprising that children’s shoes were recovered from the well. The Andersons’

tossed out during Anderson’s renovation. Tenants ate well and seem to have been served family-style meals. The kitchen served fresh fruit and vegetables, along with more exotic imported items: peach, grape, apricot, plum, squash, cherry, blackberry/raspberry, peanut, watermelon, strawberry, tomato, walnut, almond, Brazil nut, and coconut. The cooks liberally used peppersauce, Worcestershire sauce, and kitchen oils on cuts of beef and mutton. High- and moderate-priced cuts of meat, equally divided between steak and roast cuts, were secondarily butchered and served at the hotel. Also served at the hotel were domestic and wild fowl, as well as

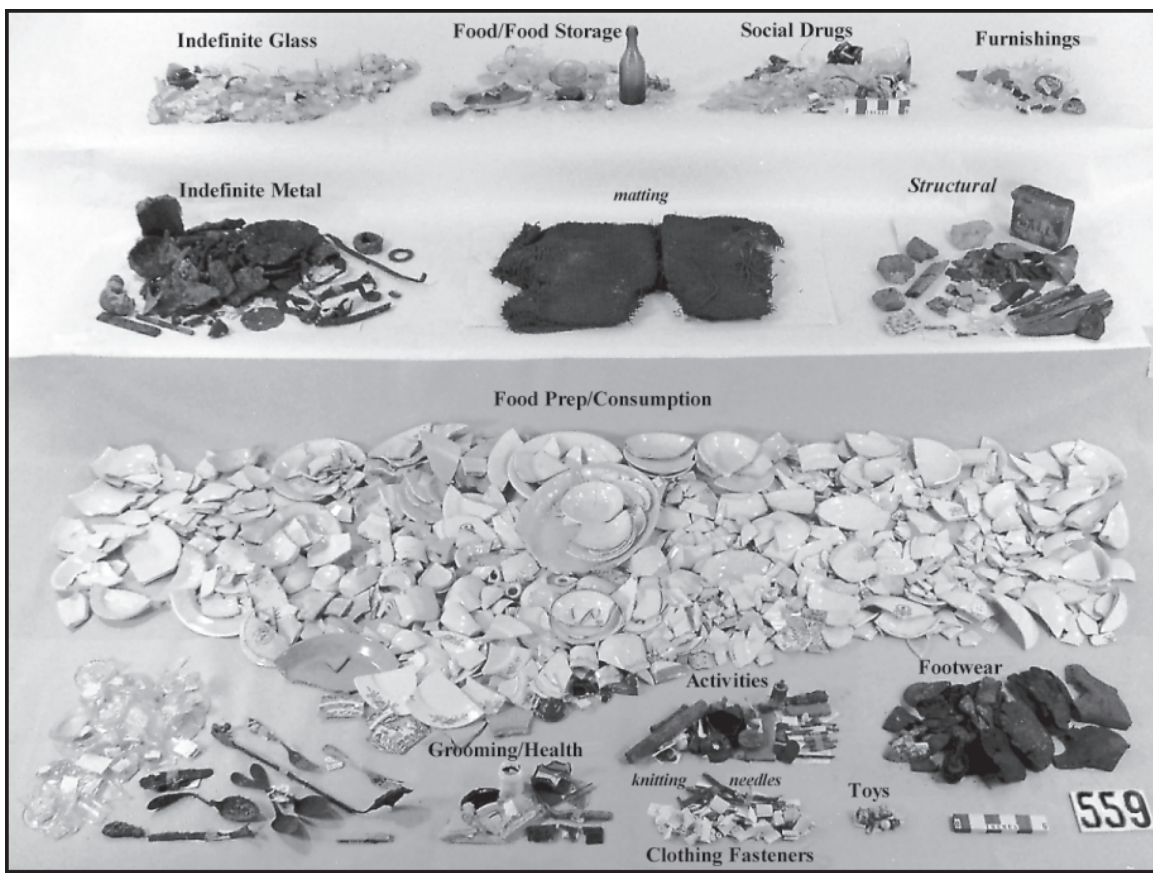


Figure 9.12. Artifacts excavated from the backyard of the Pullman Hotel. Dating from about 1900 to 1915, the assemblage is dominated by dishes used to serve the dining-room customers their meals. Not only heavy hotelware, the collection contains a range of decorated nonutilitarian wares (Well 559).

domestic and imported fish—white hake, sturgeon, cod, Chinook salmon, and salted Atlantic mackerel.

After 1900 a very different situation existed at the Pullman Hotel, one of the other more expensive “third rank” hotels in West Oakland (Figure 9.11). This establishment, which had opened by 1870, was located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Pine and Seventh streets—the last stop the train made before it reached the yards. By 1878 John Levaggi purchased the establishment; he leased the saloon to several proprietors—including Dan Loud, who ran the Mint Saloon (see Figures 9.2 and 9.7)—and the hotel to a succession of male and female proprietors. In the 1880s and 1890s, the price of a room probably included a meal, given that the proprietors hired a cook and several servants. The ground floor contained a kitchen and a dining room that were entered from within the establishment (not from the street). Most of the clients were American-born railroad workers or associated with the railroad (Woods 1994:149-150).

After the turn of the century, the hotel management changed the services it offered to patrons, a decision that precipitated interior alterations. In 1904 the hotel advertised “furnished rooms,” a good indication that a tenant’s rent no longer included meals. Architectural change accompanied this shift—the dining room and kitchen were entered directly from Pine Street, rather than through the hotel lobby, as had been the case previously. This transition from boarding to rooming is born out by the archaeological deposit found in the hotel backyard (Figure 9.12).

Dating from 1900 to 1915, a great number of dishes were discarded in the abandoned well, giving some sense of the number of people who ate at the restaurant over the years; many of the vessels had been in use for nearly 20 years before being thrown away. In contrast to the plain, white hotelware used by the boarders at the Railroad Exchange Hotel, diners at the Pullman Hotel had eaten from plates decorated with gilded, handpainted, or transfer-print designs; their meals were not served on the least-expensive utilitarian dishware available. They also used glassware with etched or pressed decorations. Moreover, the cuts of meat indicate that the dining room served individual portions, that is, portions prepared according to a patron's request. Family-style meals were no longer the norm. In addition, the social landscape of the hotel changed when Melanie Savy (a French widow) became the hotel proprietor from 1907 to 1915. Mrs. Savy, who lived at the hotel with her four children, ran an establishment integrated by race and sex. In 1910 her lodgers included 12 biracial men and women (called mulattoes on the census), 3 African American men, and 10 white men (immigrants and native born). The tolerance of social difference had ended by 1920, when the census shows that the new proprietors, also of French descent, did not accept African American lodgers or hire black employees (Groth 1997:94-95; Woods 1994:150). As was the case elsewhere in Oakland, racial segregation intensified as the Great Migration began (Gutman 2002a, 2002c).

Statistical analysis of faunal data found significant differences between the hotels and the other residences within the Cypress Project area (see Appendix F). Hotels had significantly higher percentages of beef than did other dwellings. Hotels also had lower percentages of low-priced cuts than Almost-polite houses and Informal workers' cottages. People eating at hotels, seemed to have consumed different meats (more beef, less mutton and pork), and better cuts (especially avoiding the low-cost ones) than did people eating in family homes. Statistical analysis of glass bottle data indicated that hotels recycled less than residential households and had relatively higher proportions of hard-liquor bottles in their refuse (see Appendix G). These findings, however, did not rise to statistical significance, possibly because the delvings of bottle collectors had compromised the Pullman Hotel well deposit prior to our excavation.

HETEROGENEITY IN LANDSCAPE AND PRACTICE

The material residue of rental-housing culture in West Oakland directs us to recognize the importance of third-class hotel districts in working-class neighborhoods across the United States. The tangible evidence uncovered through the Cypress Project excavations makes us aware of an important piece of urban life that has now largely disappeared from the U.S. urban landscape (Woods 1994:139) and counters critique by reformers of this (most) reasonable approach to urban living. Reformers advocated homogeneity in urban life, taking the middle-class family (Katz 1975; Peel 1986) and single-use districts (Groth 1997:86-88) as the preferred model for modern city living. Clearly, other alternatives existed. The artifacts uncovered in West Oakland also bring to life the importance of the transition from boarding to rooming, which held great consequences for the physical fabric of cities and the social lives of "unattached persons," whether male or female, and for families as well. The proliferation of commercial services in districts like West Oakland—public dining, public laundry, public cleaning—proved to be a harbinger of great changes to come, as middle-class women entered the labor force in greater and greater numbers and thus depended on commercial services to meet family needs (Hayden 1981).

At the same time, we need to exercise a certain caution and not simplify the story of rental-housing culture by focusing on single-use settings, like hotels, where we can discern clear ties between material culture, social life, and residential architecture. We must not be swayed by the power of artifacts to think in single-use (or single-sex) terms, just because the material evidence of one approach to (or user of) urban housing is present and others are harder to find. That it is hard to find artifacts specifically assigned to the women and men who roomed and boarded in houses is due in part to changing circumstances of urban life, in this case, the delivery of urban infrastructure (and other municipal services). It is difficult to examine artifacts associated with the transition from boarding to rooming in private homes since most dwellings were turned into full-fledged rooming houses only *after* municipal services were put in place in West Oakland's neighborhoods. With collective garbage collection possible, tenants and homeowners no longer needed to toss their trash into the backyard. The absence of artifacts also speaks to the fluid state of the city in the 1880s and 1890s—to a time when middle-class and working-class families swelled to accommodate a boarder or roomer at a time of economic or social need and shrunk back down again, as needs changed.

Just as important, we need to recognize that the story of boarding and rooming in West Oakland continued in its gendered dimensions well into the 20th century. As the social composition of West Oakland changed, new migrants to the community—who included African Americans and immigrants from southeastern Europe, Mexico, and Central America—found advantage in the practice of rooming; as tenants and landlords, they used existing sites and sought new ones (Cumbelich and Cumbelich 1996:27-28; Patterson 1995b:25-29). Paul Groth has traced the effects of the persistence of room-renting largely with respect to single men—the workers who found housing in the upstairs rooming houses on Seventh Street and elsewhere in the neighborhood through the 1950s. Room-renting also offered advantages to working-class women, as well as to their husbands, sons, fathers, brothers, and other male relations. At least until the 1950s and probably afterwards, women worked in and managed side-street lodging houses in West Oakland, using the proceeds of their labor to purchase property and garner economic benefits for themselves and their extended families (Gutman 1997b). They likely took room-renters into their homes, as well.

I conclude by emphasizing that the practice of room-renting counters prevailing characterizations of West Oakland as a neighborhood in decline. After World War II, the pattern of female property ownership and entrepreneurship persisted in parts of West Oakland, untouched by urban renewal. The incrementally built, heterogeneous landscape, a tolerance of land-use mixture, and a variety of malleable, wood-framed buildings (including many corner rooming houses), allowed women to take in lodgers and thereby meet human needs. As had been the case historically, room-renting proved to be a reasonable solution to the housing and employment needs of men and women, at one and the same time.

"BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL": FROM PORTERS TO PANTHERS IN WEST OAKLAND

MARY PRAETZELLIS AND ADRIAN PRAETZELLIS

One of West Oakland's stories is the development, florescence, and decline of a black middle class. Born of the industrial development of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this numerically dominant, sophisticated, and influential group was hard hit by the post-World War II decline in skilled industrial jobs. By the 1960s, the neighborhood had been decimated by unemployment and the government policy of urban redevelopment. The theme of this chapter is neighborhood change and continuity over one century, as seen through the material culture of the people who lived there.

Neighborhood people—porters, barbers, hairdressers, musicians, and others—worked hard to give their children a better life. They created comfortable living spaces and a network of support organizations, religious and secular, that united the community, including the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (see also Chapter 7), the California Federated Colored Women's Clubs, and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. These subjects are covered within this chapter and by essays on "race work," unionism, music, and barbers. Despite the disruptions of urban redevelopment, we can see continuity in these themes from the 1860s to the present day through archaeological remains—the unintentional testaments to everyday life—as well as through oral accounts of a neighborhood in transition.

BLACK RAILROADERS IN WEST OAKLAND

West Oakland already had a fledgling African American community with a school and church when it became the western terminus of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869. Along with the railroad came the Pullman Palace Car Company (Pullman Company), whose sumptuous dining and sleeping cars catered to well-healed travelers. The Pullman car was a Victorian home on wheels and the context for genteel social interactions. Attended by porters, the Pullman passenger passed through a series of formal and increasingly intimate stages from parlor to dining car to sleeping cubicle, mirroring the structure of the Victorian home. By Pullman Company policy, only African Americans were hired as Pullman porters. These jobs were highly sought after and highly regarded—they paid relatively well and provided travel and the opportunity to wear the symbols of white-color jobs and to interact with the sophisticated. Although these were service positions whose role mimicked in microcosm the racist structure of American society at the time, oral-history interviews with men who held these jobs reflect the pride they took in their work and the emphasis they placed on maintaining personal dignity under difficult circumstances (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:10; Spires 1994:205-207). The West Oakland railyard became a hub in the Pullman system, and many African American porters settled there with their families.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BLACK FAMILIES

In 1880 the U.S. Census recorded that Lucinda Tilghman lived in a simple residence at 662 Fifth Street within walking distance of Oakland's first African American church. Tilghman's late husband had been a successful barber. An African American widow with three children, including a 22-year-old son who was mentally retarded and living in an asylum, Tilghman took in boarders: Abraham Holland—a Pullman porter—and his college-student son. Holland had been part of a successful African American mining company during the Gold Rush; he and his partners reportedly used some of their earnings to purchase freedom for members of their families from slavery. As an Oakland resident, Holland was socially and politically active. He joined the Literary & Aid Society and an African American lodge of Freemasons, and was an influential member of the community throughout his lifetime (Wheeler 1993:86). The Tilghman family was influential in its own right in the struggle for racial equality in California (see essay this chapter).

The artifact collection from Lucinda Tilghman's backyard privy complex (933/1112) provides a window on her household's domestic practices in around 1880 (Figure 10.1). Dining was formal, as was the tea and liquor service. Meals featured high-priced beef loin steaks and roasts, ham, and leg of mutton. Mrs. Tilghman also served cheaper meals of ribs, pork shoulder, soups, stews, spareribs, and pig's feet. Bones of elk, goat, ground squirrel, and rabbits were also found in their privy, along with those of chicken, duck, northern pintail, and grouse; some of these may have been acquired on hunting trips. Unlike some of their neighbors, however, Mrs. Tilghman served expensive varieties of fish, including sardines, white bass, Chinook salmon, and California barracuda. In contrast, the jacksmelt and rockfish found in the deposit could have been the result of a local angler's catch. Many personal items also found their way into the refuse, including an elegant toiletry set, cuff link, gold pendant, and gold earring—all of which speak to the refinement of the household. Together, and probably separately, Lucinda Tilghman



Figure 10.1. The Tilghman/Holland collection. When the household abandoned the privies in their backyard to hook up to the city sewer system in about 1880, they threw away an abundance of household items, pictured here (Privy 933/Privy1112).

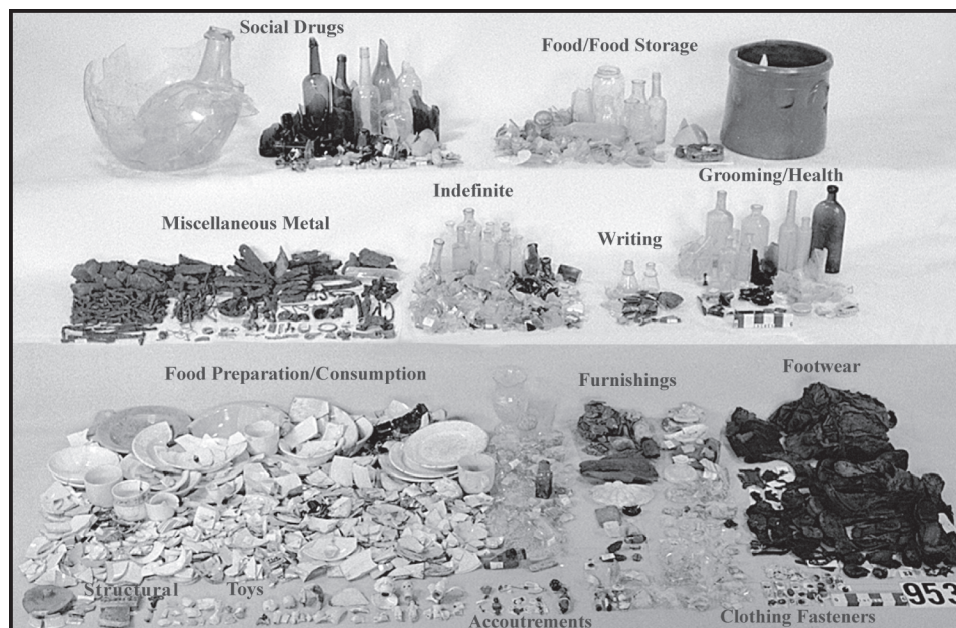


Figure 10.2. Collection from an African American porter's household. The well at 668 Fifth Street was filled during the mid-1890s with goods from the Carter household, among others (Well 953).

and Abraham Holland could afford to set a fashionable table, eat expensive meals, and wear stylish clothing.

Some 20 years later and two doors down the street, we find the household of James William Carter, another African American Pullman porter, and his wife Nellie. Although we do not know who lived with the family when the deposit was created in the 1890s, the Carters, it appears, also took in boarders: in 1900, their household included Nellie's brother (who worked as a railroad mechanic); an insurance agent; a pharmacist, his wife, and daughter; a railroad porter and his wife; and a second railroad porter. The archaeological collection from the Carter household's backfilled well (953) is remarkable for its quantity, quality, and variety (Figure 10.2). The shoes, clothing, and toys reflect a household containing several workingmen and women, as well as children. The adults—all of whom the U.S. Census reported as literate—held high-status jobs with the railroad or as professionals within the community. They discarded a large quantity of unique teawares, dolls, buttons, and other memorabilia that had been collected and displayed over the years. They ate well, sometimes in a formal setting, and served tea and alcohol in a variety of styles from plain to festive. To generalize from these two assemblages, we might venture that, in keeping with their relatively high social and economic status within the community, African American porter households strove to the best of their ability to replicate in their homes the Victorian formality and opulence found in the Pullman cars where they worked.

Also during the 1890s, but living closer to the railroad yard than the Carters, Irish widow Mary Heaney rented her new, fashionably styled residence to a household composed of various African American Pullman porters, who presumably lived there with their families. The remarkable archaeological collection from these households, deposited in a disused well (7511), provides another glimpse into the sophisticated domestic arrangements of the participants in George Pullman's widely advertised "miles of smiles," where porters set the stage for hospitality. Scarlet pimpernel and geranium grew in the yard, and flowers graced the household in matching

(continued on page 288)

THE TILGHMAN FAMILY AND "RACE WORK" IN WEST OAKLAND

Marta Gutman

*Among the sayings of our Race,
Suggestive and inspiring,
That fill a most exalted place
Is, "Tell them we are Rising"
[Tilghman 1916-1917].*

In 1916 Charles F. Tilghman, Jr., published this poem in the first *Colored Directory of the Leading Cities of Northern California (Colored Directory)*, which the black teenager produced on a printing press set up in his family home at 1670 Thirteenth Street in Oakland (Beasley 1919:228-229).¹ "Tell them we are Rising," the poet (perhaps a Tilghman family member) advised, giving voice to the determination of black elites to work for cultural progress and racial justice in northern California (Tilghman 1916-1917:13). Across the United States, middle-class Americans of color shared these aspirations. Confronted with violent racism in Jim Crow America, African American elites endorsed what historian Kevin Gaines calls "uplift ideology" (Gaines 1996), asserting that racial uplift, self-betterment, and social service would ameliorate black-white relations and improve the social conditions of black working-class men, women, and children. Gaines emphasizes that the focus on class distinctions and patriarchal authority in the movement for racial uplift restricted its political effectiveness in the battle to eradicate white racism. To some extent, these observations apply to the northern California uplift movement, although they do not fully explain the complexity of the movement or the achievements of women of color. After the turn of the 20th century, black women rose to prominence in the heretofore male-led movement for racial justice in California and staked a claim

on shaping its objectives. Charles's mother, Hettie Blonde Tilghman, was one such activist; the club-woman and institution builder established in West Oakland charities for African American women and children at the same time as she worked to expand the political rights of black Californians (Gutman 2002c; Hausler 1985, 1986, 1987-1988).

Other members of the Tilghman family were also no strangers to West Oakland or to the cause of race improvement and justice. In the late 1870s, Lucinda Tilghman, Hettie's widowed mother-in-law, shared with Abraham Holland a rented dwelling at 662 Fifth Street. The family had been involved in black cultural and political organizations since the Gold Rush. In 1850 Robert Tilghman arrived in northern California along with hundreds of other African Americans, gripped by gold fever and the desire for liberty. The black barber was born in Maryland—he shared a last name with a prominent, white, slaveholding family—and he moved to California during the year the Fugitive Slave Act became law of the land.² We don't know if Tilghman was enslaved, free-born, or self-purchased; we don't know if he escaped from his birthplace to a northern seaport friendly to the anti-slavery

1. Charles F. Tilghman, Jr., developed his printing business into the most prominent black press on the West Coast. There are four generations of men in the Tilghman family with the same name—Charles Francis Tilghman—and the designations "Senior" and "Junior" are not consistently used in publications. I refer to the press-owner's father, the first Charles Francis Tilghman, as Charles F. Tilghman, Sr. (1868-1924?); to his son, the press owner, as Charles F. Tilghman, Jr. (1897-1985); to his grandson as Charles F. Tilghman III (1922-?); and to his great-grandson, who was killed in a motorcycle accident in the mid-1970s, as Charles F. Tilghman IV.

2. The Tilghman family descended from English barons who signed the Magna Carta. The best-known white member of the American branch of the family is Tench Tilghman (1744-1786), who served as aide-de-camp to George Washington during the Revolutionary War. He is included in the Charles Willson Peale portrait of Washington at Yorktown (1784) commissioned by the Maryland State Legislature (for a reproduction of the Peale portrait, see Maryland Commission on Artistic Property 2003). Tench Tilghman's descendants served in the Confederate Army. Black and white Tilghmans shared the same name in Maryland; the 1870 census reports that Robert T. Tilghman (black, 33 years old) lived in Somerset County and Robert Tilghman (white, 23 years old) lived in Worcester County. Both men were born in Maryland (Maryland State Archives 2003).

movement, and then made his way west by sea, or if he traveled west on an overland route, attached through indenture or bondage to a white family. We do know that following the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act, African Americans in eastern states construed California to be a safe haven, as well as full of economic opportunity. Northern California was “a place of refuge,” as one New England newspaper claimed (Lapp 1977:19).

The men who came in 1849 and went straight to the mines looking for gold encountered a landscape threaded with the effects of racism, as did the black business- and tradesmen who followed in the early 1850s. In 1850, after protracted debate, California joined the Union as a free state, and abolitionists claimed a place in California’s political culture. Even so, in the 1850s the State tolerated slavery, the legislature passed a local Fugitive Slave law, and it contemplated, but did not make law, an anti-immigration bill that would have prohibited free blacks, as well as slaves, from entering the state. Moreover, public schools were racially segregated by statute, and African Americans were denied the right to vote and to offer court testimony in cases where white citizens were parties (Lapp 1977:128-129, 166, 186).

By 1853 Robert Tilghman had probably married (the name of his first wife is not known; Lucinda was his second wife), and the family settled in Marysville, the county seat of Yuba County. Rudolph Lapp reports that the location of the town, at the confluence of the Yuba and Feather rivers and near the north end of the gold mines, made it attractive to black business men and women serving African American miners. Barbers and hairdressers predominated among settlers of color in Marysville, where there was a “moral strictness” in the black population. Lapp writes that “there were at least two thriving black-owned barber shops” in 1853; about 20 percent of the town’s black residents were involved in these trades by the late 1850s (Lapp 1977:111-112, 114). During this period, Robert Tilghman may have met Abraham Holland (Lucinda’s housemate), when both men worked in the gold country, one as a skilled tradesman, the other as a miner. Holland, who was born in Pennsylvania, joined the first wave of black migration to the California gold mines, arriving in 1849. He became part owner of the Sweet Vengeance Mine, a very successful African American mining company in

Brown’s Valley (near Marysville). “Judging from the title,” Delilah Beasley wrote, “it would seem ... that they were bent on proving to the world that colored men were capable of conducting successfully a mining business, even in the pioneer days of California” (Beasley 1919:104). At this early date, Holland, who was given the middle name, “Freeman,” made evident his political commitments. He and his partners used some of their considerable profits—as much as \$1,200 a week in 1852—to purchase the freedom of enslaved African Americans who subsequently immigrated to California (Wheeler 1993:68-69, 86).

Robert Tilghman’s documented connection with “race work” in California began in 1856, also a year of tragedy for this man. Thieves murdered his first wife during a foiled stagecoach robbery near Marysville (Lapp 1977:84). Probably after his wife’s death, Tilghman moved to Butte County, where, following the rallying cry of the Colored Citizen Conventions (Eterovich 1856:55), he agreed to circulate petitions that sought white support for political reforms. Drawing on East Coast precedents, African American men convened these public political meetings (the first was held in Sacramento in 1855) to secure civil rights for racial minorities. That men dominated the conventions may have been due, in part, to the extreme gender imbalance that characterized black, as well as white, migration to California in the 1850s. To begin with, the organizers focused on securing the right to testify in court, which the legislature agreed to grant to blacks, but not to Asians or Native Americans, during the Civil War (Daniels 1980; Lapp 1977:117, 186, 192-194).

Robert Tilghman did not experience firsthand the fruits of this political victory because he lived in Canada, having joined the exodus of black miners and their families who moved north to Victoria (British Columbia) in 1858 and 1859. The political situation for African Americans worsened in California in the late 1850s, when the State legislature passed a law requiring “all colored men to wear a distinctive badge” (Provincial Association of Social Studies Teachers et al. 1996). In 1858 the U.S. Supreme Court also made clear in the Dred Scott decision that African Americans had “no claim on American law or rights that white men must respect” (Lapp 1977:204). Between 400 and 800 men and women of color emigrated from California to western Canada, where the Fraser River gold rush was underway. By the time he emigrated, Robert had

probably married Lucinda (she, too, was born in Maryland); two children were born in quick succession, Robert, Jr., in 1858 and Selina, in 1860.³ After the Civil War the Tilghmans, like many other émigrés, returned to the United States, making their way down the Pacific coast to California. In 1868 Charles Francis was born in Oregon; the family lived in Pescadero in 1870 and moved to Oakland, where they lived on Lydia Street, in the mid-1870s (Lapp 1977:246; Oakland City Directory 1875).

A decade after the Civil War, the political climate in California had improved for African Americans: they had won the demands for civil rights put forth at the Colored Conventions in the 1850s and 1860s. African American men exercised the right to vote (as guaranteed by the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution); slavery had been outlawed; public schools were racially integrated (although racial exclusion continued to be applied to Asian and Native American children); and blacks were allowed to testify in court cases (Lapp 1977). Moreover, Californians of color formed a variety of political and cultural associations. Abraham Holland, who moved to Oakland in 1874 after he became a Central Pacific Railroad porter, took an active role in several of them. He was Grandmaster of the African American Lodge of the California Freemasons from 1878 to 1880; he served as president of the Literary and Aid Society of Oakland in 1886; he addressed the Los Angeles Freemasons in 1888; and he directed Colored Colonization Association of Fresno County in 1891 (Praetzellis 2001:80).

In 1877 Holland lived at the one-and-a-half story, wood-frame dwelling at 662 Fifth Street, owned by Joseph Gillardin—the building that would become Lucinda Tilghman's home in the next year. When Lucinda joined Holland in 1878 she was widowed, her husband having died at sea, near the Philippine Islands. The 1880 Census describes Abraham Holland as Lucinda Tilghman's boarder, even though his tenancy

preceded hers and he continued to reside at this address after the Tilghmans moved to San Francisco (Oakland City Directory 1877-1878; 1878-1879; 1879-1880; 1880-1881). We don't know what brought the two people to inhabit the same dwelling for a brief period—both were widowed and both experienced a fair measure of personal hardship. Lucinda's husband died when she was 45 years old and her oldest child, Robert, was severely disabled. Labeled "idiot" in some documents, he lived in an asylum. Holland's son, Albert, died of pneumonia when he was 18 years old while attending college in Red Bluff (Praetzellis 2001:80, 86).

Nevertheless, the misfortune and hard luck that shadowed the Tilghman and Holland families in the late 1870s and early 1880s should not blind us to their relative affluence. The 1,200 square foot house on Fifth Street, which is shown on the 1889 Sanborn map with a front porch, a kitchen addition, and a back shed, was larger and more fully appointed than many other dwellings in West Oakland at the time (Groth and Gutman 1997). In addition, the material culture of this African American household replicated that of well-off white neighbors—the Mann family, for example, who came from New England and lived on the same city block in West Oakland—and other fashionable Victorians, who lived in cities and towns across the English-speaking world. Lucinda Tilghman and Abraham Holland lived comfortably and with some style. Even so, the recently widowed 45-year-old woman, described as a mulatto in the 1880 Census, faced considerable expenses. According to the census, her 22-year old son, Robert, was institutionalized; her 20-year old daughter, Selina, lived at home, as did her 12-year old son Charles, also described as a mulatto, who attended school. Lucinda may have taken in boarders, like Holland and Fannie Hopson, another tenant, to augment the legacy left to her by her husband. Hopson may also have been the Tilghmans' domestic servant (Praetzellis 2001:80-86).

3. According to the 1880 census, the Tilghmans' first child, Robert, Jr., was born in Texas in 1858. This appears to be a mistake. Other evidence establishes that the Tilghmans lived in Canada at this time (Provincial Association of Social Studies Teachers et al. 1996). Additionally, it would have made little sense for a black family from Maryland, with the same last name as well-known slaveholders, to have returned to a slave state in 1858 only to move to Canada, where Selina was born, two years later.

By the early 1880s, Lucinda had moved to San Francisco with Charles, where he finished school and found his first job. He worked as a bellboy at the Baldwin Hotel when he was 14 years old (San Francisco City Directory 1883-1884). By 1889 Charles had stepped up in the world, having secured a job as a clerk in the Southern Pacific Railroad paymaster's office—respectable work suited to an upwardly mobile young African

American man in late-19th-century California (Daniels 1980; Wheeler 1993). Charles worked as a clerk or a mail clerk for most of his life, although he would also find employment as a porter, a janitor, and a messenger (San Francisco City Directory 1889). The Tilghmans, who moved frequently in San Francisco, lived at 505 Hyde Street from 1889 to 1892. This put them next door to John Jones—very likely, the John Jones who was the father of Hettie Blonde Jones (soon to be Charles’s wife).⁴ In 1890 Hettie Jones married Charles Tilghman, and the young couple moved in with Lucinda. They established a separate household in 1896; Hilda, their first child, had already been born, and Charles Francis, Jr., followed in 1897 (Beasley 1919:228; San Francisco City Directory 1896).

Hettie Tilghman seems to have come from a family with resolutely middle-class aspirations (Tilghman 1929). We don’t know much about Hettie’s parents, Captain John and Rebecca Jones, but their daughter (one of three) lived and went to school in San Francisco and taught English to Chinese boys through a private language school she ran out of her San Francisco home (with her mother’s permission, Beasley assured her readers!). She also volunteered in the Sunday school at the Beth El A.M.E. Church. After her marriage, Mrs. Tilghman severed connections with work (volunteer and otherwise) to give full attention to motherhood. In Beasley’s words, she “retired from active church and club life until the children were quite advanced in life, preferring to consider them as a gift from God which should receive the undivided attention of their mother” (Beasley 1919:228). Waged labor may have loomed large in the lives of most African American women, but the Tilghmans did not depend on monetary contributions from Hettie, either in San Francisco or in Oakland. By 1902 the family had moved across the bay, establishing the household on Thirteenth Street.

The Tilghmans joined the approximately 1,100 African Americans who lived in the East Bay, with by far the vast majority residing in Oakland where

“a stratified, complex, and rich black society was in place” by the turn of the 20th century (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:15). The Tilghmans claimed a place among the elites of color in the Oakland community, who were fully aware of the bitter debates between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington about strategies for race improvement. Lawrence Crouchett and the other authors of *Visions of Tomorrow: The History of the East Bay Afro-American Community*, argue that ideological differences, which divided African American politics on the East Coast, did not resonate as strongly among blacks who lived in northern California. As Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker write, “In California, the black community was not large enough to support an autonomous black-controlled economy, suffrage was a reality [for men only until 1920], and [higher] education was available to those who were willing to endure the loneliness of mostly-white environment” (1989:31). In Oakland black elites ascribed to what Kevin Gaines calls socially conservative “uplift ideology,” endorsing religious faith, technical education (for some), and personal achievement as tools for racial uplift and improvement. At the same time, the political battle for full equality continued, with elites construing it to be a continuation of struggle for civil rights, started during the Colored Convention Movement (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:31). In the 20th century, women, as well as men, were active, bringing gendered claims to the forefront of black cultural organizations and political movements.

After she moved to Oakland, Hettie B. Tilghman returned to public service, winning a reputation for being “a very intense and an untiring worker in anything she undertakes” (Beasley 1919:229). Financially privileged (relatively speaking), she was able to join other middle-class African American women, known as “race women,” in forming a wide range of women’s clubs and developing community-building projects. Her embrace of separatism, by gender, race, and class, was due as much to political circumstance as it was to the effects of patriarchy or the desire to build race pride. For the most part, white women in the San Francisco Bay Area refused to admit black women to social clubs and charitable organizations, a common practice in the United States at the time. Even so, in northern California, white women intensified the overt race prejudice in elite voluntary organizations by expressing preferences for female members with a “pioneer” pedigree

4. There are many John Joneses in the San Francisco and Oakland directories. In 1890 one of these families lived at 503 Hyde Street when the Tilghmans lived at 505 Hyde (San Francisco City Directory 1890). Beasley states that Hettie Tilghman moved to Oakland when she turned 14, but directory searches indicate Beasley is mistaken.



MRS. HETTIE B. TILGHMAN
President California Federated
Colored Women's Clubs.

"Mrs. Hettie B. Tilghman, President of California Federated Women's Clubs," as pictured in *The Negro Trail Blazers of California* (Beasley 1919:166).

(Crawford 1909:120-125; Gibson 1927). Drawing on similar rhetoric (and thus undermining racist arguments), Hettie Tilghman and her colleagues repeatedly asserted their pioneer heritage (Tilghman 1929). Mrs. Tilghman was "a native daughter," Delilah Beasley put it, of the "distinguished" black pioneers, John and Rebecca Jones (Beasley 1919:228). Women, like Mrs. Tilghman, also used these claims to cement their status in northern California's growing black community, leading to condescension and exclusion on the basis of birthplace and social class among women of color (Lemke-Santangelo 1996).

Still, the range of achievement by "race women" within a segregated civic landscape is impressive. In 1899 female descendants of black pioneers, who were members of the prestigious Beth Eden Church in West Oakland, founded the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club. Named after a freed slave who became a teacher in an industrial school in Philadelphia, this club was the first all-black women's organization in Oakland (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:14; Davis 1933:116-118). Its members dedicated it to art and cultural improvement, following the lead of African American women in other areas of the

United States who had established a national federation of black women's clubs and social service organizations. The dictum of this group, the National Association of Colored Women, was "Lifting as We Climb," giving clear indication of the interest of black clubwomen in social service, as well as cultural improvement (Davis 1933; Scott 1993).

Hettie Blonde Tilghman plunged into club work after she moved to Oakland. She joined the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club, the Art and Industrial Club—which black women founded in 1906 with the motto, "Deeds, Not Words"—and the Mother's Charity Club, organized in 1907 (Fanny Wall Children's Home 1916). This group took its motto, "Lifting as We Climb," from the national black women's organization (Tilghman 1916-1917:44). Mrs. Tilghman joined other organizations (including the Phillis Wheatley Young Women's Club of Oakland) and served on the board of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People, which black women opened in 1897 near Mills College. She was also elected president of the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in 1917 (Winnacker 1993:895-897).

Tilghman encouraged the state organization, formed from the merger of the Southern and Northern Federation of California Colored Women's Clubs, to participate in war relief work and pursue its interest in institution building, as suggested by the motto it adopted, "Lifting as We Climb, Service Deeds Not Words" (Winnacker 1993:896). Hettie Tilghman's son, Charles, alluded to those aspirations, when he described in the *Colored Directory* the federation's purpose:

The Women's Clubs, organized under the high standard of "Lifting as we climb," and governed by Womanly Instincts and Principles and "Deeds, not words," are aiding the sick and needy, the fallen and depressed, lifting from the dark sides of life to sunshine and happiness their less fortunate sisters and assisting in large proportions in the Industrial, Educational, Social, and Economic Development of their Race ... such is the California State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs [Tilghman 1916-1917:14].

Delilah Beasley also wrote, "When the California Colored Women's Federated Clubs decided to federate, they also determined to do some monumental work of interest to the race, in both the northern part of the state and also the southern" (Beasley 1919:228).

In short order, Northern Federation clubwomen opened an orphanage in Oakland, which would be known as the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery (1918); they also helped to found the Linden Street Branch Y.W.C.A. (1920), known as the "Colored Y." These establishments met the needs of African American women and children who were excluded on the basis of race from other charitable organizations in the city (Gutman 2002c; Hausler 1986, 1987-1988). In the 1920s Hettie Tilghman took a leadership position in both establishments and was elected president of the Alameda County League of Colored Women Voters and to the Board of Directors of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Oakland branch of the NAACP formed in 1910 (Beasley 1933:247-248).

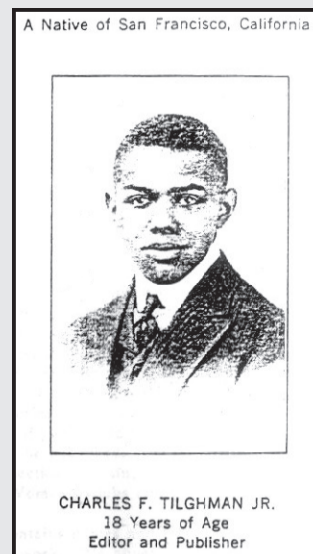
The interest in cultural improvement, social service, and political activism extended to the next generation of the Tilghman family. The two children, described as precocious and talented by Delilah Beasley, completed high school, where they won academic honors. They also learned marketable skills necessary even for men and women with elite aspirations in the African American community (Beasley 1919:228). Hilda, who graduated from Oakland Commercial High School, became a bookkeeper, working first for J. M. Bridges in 1911 and then for the family printing business. In 1931 Hilda became the first black salesclerk hired by Safeway Stores in Oakland (Tilghman Family n.d.). Charles, Jr., whose father gave him a small press as a 10th birthday gift (Fields 1976), worked on the *Colored Directory* while in high school. In 1919, after his discharge from the Army, he opened a printing business at 725 Market Street; a few years later he moved the press to another family property at 1177 Seventh Street.⁵ The location was fortuitous: Seventh Street, west of Market, was the spine for black-owned businesses in the city (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:11, 15; Oakland City Directory 1926).

In 1920 Charles, Jr., married Ione Looney (from Marysville, where his grandfather had worked as a barber in the early 1850s). The young couple and their two children lived with Charles's parents and his sister, after the family moved to

5. Sarah C. Tilghman (widow of John J.) resided at 1177 Seventh Street in 1912 (Oakland City Directory 1912).

Ashby Street in Berkeley in 1922. When Charles, Sr., died in 1924, the family continued to live on Ashby Street, and Hettie and Hilda remained at this address after Charles, Jr., and Ione moved in 1928 to their own home on Acton Street. Hilda remained in the Ashby Street house after her mother's death in 1933.

Charles F. Tilghman, Jr., who connected race improvement with commercial success, developed the family printing business into the most prominent black press on the West Coast.⁶ He also worked in political organizations, ranging from the NAACP to the American Legion—the latter giving some indication of his social conservatism. The descriptions of his achievements, periodically published in the Oakland press, link his success with his family's longevity in the northern California black community—"Oakland's Black Printing Pioneer" is the title of one article (Fields 1976; Hildebrand 1988; Jones 1969; Oakland Branch NAACP 1969). The writings also associate his successes with his mother's considerable accomplishments, giving some sense of the place women claimed in the racial uplift movement in northern California and the respect for female activism in Oakland's African American community.



Charles F. Tilghman, Jr., editor and publisher of the *Colored Directory of the Leading Cities of Northern California*, 1916-1917.

6. Charles F. Tilghman, Jr., invented a device called "expandable furniture," which became standard in the printing business. He sold the Tilghman Press in the mid-1970s (after the death of his grandson, Charles F. Tilghman IV), but the press continued to operate under the Tilghman name (and to employ Charles F. Tilghman III) until at least the late 1980s.



Figure 10.3. A spittoon from Atlantic Street. This spittoon was recovered from an abandoned well at 1774 Atlantic Street, which was occupied by several African American Pullman porters and their families (Well 7511).

vases; the caged bird was well-cared for and was fed a mix including marijuana seeds to encourage it to sing; even the spittoon was of fancy porcelain (Figure 10.3). Food bones in the collection represent an astonishing 1,700 lbs. of meat. These portions were primarily from moderately priced cuts; intensive kitchen butchering is reflected in the high number of ax/cleaver marks and by the number of elements that fit together. According to a contemporary cookbook (Whitehead 1893:148), the average American ate 0.9 lb. of meat per day. Assuming a household of five adults, the assemblage may represent a record of the household's meat consumption over approximately one year.


The backfilling of this well appears to straddle a difficult period in West Oakland that included the depression of 1893 and the American Railway Union strike against the Pullman Company in 1894. Nevertheless, the households in Mrs. Heaney's rental property who were employed by the Pullman Company and the Southern Pacific Railroad managed to maintain a high standard of living. In spite of the social upheaval around them and the difficult economic times, they ate a varied diet of fresh foods intensively prepared by the cook. Archaeological evidence shows that meals were served in a formal, fashionable setting that included expensive pieces for use when entertaining with tea and alcohol. Fresh flowers and bric-a-brac graced the parlor. The residents dressed well and possessed the necessities to maintain contemporary standards of personal hygiene.

It seems reasonable to suggest that these porters translated the elegance of the Pullman cars where they worked into the domestic surroundings where they lived; that the aesthetic of Pullman's cars influenced the taste of those who worked in this sumptuous environment, and even some of their social practices. Purchasing goods above their ascribed status may be thought of as a form of resistance among African Americans at this time, since being well dressed and furnishing one's home with genteel artifacts contradicted contemporary racist assumptions. It may be that the meaning of the decorative artifacts in the collection lies not in their conventional meanings but rather as symbols of civility and personal dignity, qualities for which the families who used them were striving against the odds.

WAR, PEACE, JAZZ, AND THE UNION

By the year 1900, the black population of Oakland had swelled to more than 1,000 from just under 600 residents in 1880. An African American business district had begun to take shape along Seventh Street, serving the "stratified, complex, and rich" community that blossomed there (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:15). The great earthquake of 1906 accelerated development in the East Bay as many businesses and families moved from the devastation that was San Francisco, and the port of Oakland developed rapidly. Businesses owned by African Americans benefited from this rapid growth and, as mobilization for World War I took men out of civilian life in 1917, jobs that had previously been closed to blacks began to open up.

Hold the Fort



We meet to-day in Free - dom's cause and raise our voi - ces high; We'll
 join our hands in U - nion strong to bat - tle or to die.

CHORUS:
 Hold the fort for we are com - ing U - nion men be strong.
 Side by side we bat - tle on - ward, vic - to - ry will come.

Look my comrades, see the union
 Banners waving high,
 Reinforcements now appearing,
 Victory is nigh. [chorus]

See our numbers still increasing
 Hear the bugles blow
 By our union we shall triumph
 Over every foe. [chorus]

Fierce and long the battle rages,
 But we will not fear
 Help will come whene'er it's need needed,
 Cheer, my comrades, cheer. [chorus]

"HOLD THE FORT"

The history of African Americans in West Oakland is permanently tied to railroading and the struggle to establish the union of black porters known as the International Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The Brotherhood's anthem was "Hold the Fort." Based upon a Civil War hymn, versions of this piece have been adopted by unionists, suffragettes, socialists, and prohibitionists the world over.

Music and lyrics from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters' anthem.

Sadly, civil liberties did not keep in step with these economic advances during the early 20th century. W.E.B. DuBois and other African American leaders had long encouraged homeownership as a means of acquiring economic independence from white landlords, and black Oaklanders' improved financial condition would surely have led to a surge of purchases. The City of Oakland's response to the threat of residential integration in traditionally white, middle-class neighborhoods, however, led to the passage of ordinances that prohibited blacks from buying property in certain neighborhoods. Although African American homeownership was allowed in West Oakland, it did not develop into a homogeneous ghetto, but continued to be inhabited by a multi-ethnic mix of middle- and working-class families and individuals. As was the practice in the 19th century, many homeowners and tenants took in boarders, thereby increasing the area's African American population (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:15-22).

Music and unionism were important and linked themes in the West Oakland of the 1920s. Black-owned businesses flourished as Seventh Street developed into a hub of African American culture in general and as a social center for jazz lovers. The connection between this part of town and jazz music was fostered by widely traveled black railroad workers, who brought with them and distributed what were then known as "race records" — commercial recordings aimed specifically at the African American market (Collins 1997b:285). Porters were also instrumental in politicizing this community, in which one-third of all workers were with the railroad. In 1925 Pullman porters formed the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters [BSCP] as a militant labor union, with an office on Seventh Street and C.L. Dellums as the local leader (for more information on the BSCP, see 'The Quest for "Dad" Moore' in Chapter 7).

(continued on page 294)

THE TRAIN STOPPED WHERE THE MUSIC BEGAN:
THE FERTILE BLACK AND TAN VENUES
OF WEST OAKLAND'S SEVENTH STREET AND BEYOND

Willie R. Collins

Oakland was the place where the transcontinental railroad ended and the music of a black world began. A small colony of Pullman porters began casting down their buckets and planting the roots for a thriving black community in West Oakland (Bagwell 1982:82).¹ The railroad's economic base fueled and sustained the growth of an urban black enclave—a kind of black world—that nurtured jazz and blues music and musicians. Hustling, vice, gambling, prostitution, violence, as well as legitimate businesses, also operated in West Oakland, with Seventh Street as its center. Seventh Street was known as "hell's half acre" to some and heaven to others, and its nightlife attracted black and white audiences along with local and traveling musicians, creating an environment that now would be characterized as multicultural. "Black and Tan" was a term used to describe a club that catered to a mixed audience. Black and Tan clubs, as well as some bands, capitalized on the phrase and used it as a marketing tool to draw a white clientele (Watkins 1995). For example, clarinetist/bandleader Wade Whaley advertised his group as Wade Whaley's Black and Tan Orchestra in the 1920s.

Across the Bay on San Francisco's Barbary Coast, two ex-porters founded "one of the most famous Negro dance halls in the country" (Stoddard 1982:10), known alternately as Purcell's and the So Different. Two other Barbary Coast establishments—the Ivy and the Dixie—were

"colored" clubs featuring black entertainment. Beginning in the 1920s, jazz performances were captured on "race records," that is commercial recordings aimed specifically at black consumers. Porters and other black railroad men purchased quantities of these records in Eastern cities and distributed them in Oakland and other black California communities. While the Great Migration of Blacks, from the South to the East, numbered almost a million in the 1920s and 1930s, thousands also migrated west to California. There were 5,439 blacks in Oakland in 1920 and 7,503 in 1930. In both of those years, Oakland's African American population was second only to Los Angeles among California cities (U.S. Census 1935). In the 1940s Oakland witnessed its largest wave of black migration.

Most jazz histories assert that, with the demise of San Francisco's Barbary Coast in 1921, the music moved south to Los Angeles (Bakan 1998; Eckland 1986; Gioia 1992; Tercinet 1986). While Los Angeles did become the largest center in California for jazz performances and recordings, a vibrant and significant jazz nightlife existed in West Oakland from 1918 through the 1940s. The jazz meccas of the East Coast and Midwest, such as Harlem and Chicago, concurrently had their counterparts in the West, albeit to a lesser extent. Following the end of the Barbary Coast, the jazz scene on West Oakland's Seventh Street began in earnest, as did that of Los Angeles' Central Avenue. Since the late teens and the 1920s through the 1940s, venues on Seventh Street and other parts of West Oakland presented a variety of jazz styles to black and mixed audiences. The Fillmore District in San Francisco emerged in the 1940s as a center for jazz.

West Oakland was a multi-ethnic neighborhood where African Americans lived and worked alongside other ethnic communities. Yet external forces, including segregation, racism, and police intimidation, fostered an insular black social life in West Oakland and along Seventh Street. African American musicians were not free to play in certain areas and clubs. San Francisco-based Local 6 of the American Federation of Musicians did not admit African American

1. This essay is a shorter version of an earlier article entitled "Jazzing Up Seventh Street: Musicians, Venues, and Their Social Implications" (Collins 1997b). Both pieces chronicle the sociocultural and physical venues where performance of jazz flourished in Oakland. The author consulted a variety of sources, including the indispensable *Jazz on the Barbary Coast* by Tom Stoddard (1982); *California Soul* (Djedje and Meadows 1998), and Gushee (1989). The writer also found valuable information in black newspapers in Oakland, including the *Oakland Sunshine*, *Oakland Independent*, *Oakland Times*, *Pacific Times*, *Western American*, *Western Outlook* (all dating from the first two decades of the 20th century), and the *California Voice* (1925-1941). The author also consulted Business listings in Oakland city directories.



Sidney LeProtti's "So Different Jazz Band," San Francisco, California, in 1915. (Photo courtesy of Gladys LeProtti)

musicians. In 1924 black musicians were granted a charter to do business as Local 648 and later Local 669, headquartered in Oakland. It was an unwritten law, not found in the bylaws of the union's constitution, that all of downtown Oakland was off-limits for African American musicians. However, exceptions to this rule sometimes occurred.

Non-black communities in West Oakland in the 1920s and 1930s—before the “white flight” of the 1940s—stayed to themselves and had little to do with African American social life. The exception was “slumming,” or visiting the Black and Tan clubs that catered to a mixed clientele who came for a taste of black entertainment. A number of dance halls, theaters, and cafes sprang up in West Oakland. The Oakland Police were sympathetic to the Local 6 practice of discrimination and, while looking the other way at some illegal activities, would “beat your butt if you were a black man within an inch of your life back in the late '30s and all through the '40s,” recalls Bay Area drummer Earl Watkins (1995). Seventh Street nightlife thus developed as a result of segregation and the union proscriptions on where African American musicians could play. In the face of racism, segregation, and police brutality, blacks who “knew their place” still could have a good time on Seventh Street. A roster of important jazz musicians played various jazz styles—New Orleans, swing, bebop, and the blues—on Seventh Street and other parts of West Oakland.

Musical diversity was the order of the day in West Oakland. Pre-jazz forms of black music were heard there prior to 1920. Oakland native Royal Towns (born in 1899) recalled that vocalist, pianist, drummer, and songwriter Shelton Brooks (1886-1975) performed in West Oakland in 1912 (Hildebrand 1979:2).

The majority of West Oakland jazz clubs (numbering more than 15 at any one time between the teens and the 1940s) were located on Seventh Street. Additional performance places were found in other parts of West Oakland, as well as downtown at the Oakland Auditorium, the four Sweets ballrooms, the Persian Gardens, and other nightclubs, cabarets, bars, speakeasies, theaters, and dance halls. Over time, venues opened or closed down, and the work available for musicians varied. In addition to venue owners who hired bands, voluntary associations and unions affiliated with the railroad also employed musicians for their events.

There were four categories of jazz musicians that played on Seventh Street and other parts of Oakland: Oakland natives who remained in the Bay Area; transplants from other areas who remained in Oakland; those who spent their formative years in Oakland before launching professional careers nationally; and touring musicians who played “one-nighters” or extended residencies.

Native pianist and bandleader Sidney LeProtti was Oakland's earliest jazz musician.

Born on 25 November 1886, LeProtti led several bands including the Crescent Orchestra, the So Different Jazz Band (probably named after the So Different or Purcell's club on the Barbary Coast), and the LeProtti's Paramount 10. In addition to playing on the Barbary Coast, LeProtti frequently performed at Oakland functions in the 1920s and 1930s. The Red Cap Porters' Benevolent Association's annual banquet, held at St. Augustine's Church, hired LeProtti's band in November 1926 (*Western American* 1926:4). Another Oakland-born musician was pianist/ bandleader Henry Starr, who appeared with his Café Richards Syncopators. Starr left Oakland in the 1920s to work in Los Angeles and other places. After returning home to Oakland in the 1940s, he was the first black musician to have a radio show on KAKA, KFRC, and KRE (Atkinson 1993:7). Starr also recorded for Curtis Mosby's Blue Blowers for the Columbia label.

There were several transplanted musicians who spent their formative years in Oakland and became successful. Singer and guitarist Saunders King first sang on the radio with the Southern Harmony Four and then made his solo debut in Oakland with the Les Hite Band. His 1945 recording "S.K. Blues" became the first Bay Area blues hit. King played at the North Pole and downtown at Sweets Ballroom on the corner of Fourteenth and Franklin among other places. Other successful musicians who spent formative years in Oakland were cornetist (and future record company owner) Vernon "Jake" Porter and alto saxophonist Jerome Richardson. Pianist/ arranger Wilbert Baranco played at a number of local clubs and recorded with Ernie Andrews, Charles Mingus, and Dinah Washington, among others.

The two most celebrated jazz orchestras in Oakland were led by clarinetists and bandleaders Wade Whaley and Clem Raymond. Whaley hailed from New Orleans and played with Jelly Roll Morton in Los Angeles and in 1920 at West Oakland's Creole Café, among many other places. His Black and Tan Jazz Hounds achieved much success in the late 1920s (Chilton 1978:349). Clem Raymond and His Jazz Hounds played at a number of local clubs, as well the local 1927 Mardi Gras; the Jazz Hounds could produce a stately sound.

Whaley, Raymond, and Sidney LeProtti were disciples of the New Orleans jazz in the style of King Oliver. This style was surely a part of the

local jazz scene in the 1920s and 1930s given the number of New Orleans people who migrated to Oakland, both before and after World War I, and because the style was popular at the time.

Jelly Roll Morton—the New Orleans-born composer, pianist, and self-proclaimed inventor of jazz—came to Los Angeles in 1917 and traveled to the Bay Area, playing at the Creole Café at 1740 Seventh Street in West Oakland. Owned by Sid Deering, the Creole Café was a Black and Tan club that existed from around 1918 to 1921. Musician Reb Spikes recalled that King Oliver played at the Creole Café, while Charlie "Duke" Turner remembered trombonist Kid Ory performing there (Stoddard 1982:78,91). The Creole Café also was associated with prostitution (Solari 1997:291, citing *Oakland Enquirer* 20 December 1920; *Oakland Tribune* 22 April 1920, 29 May 1920). Another Black and Tan club was the Bluebird Cabaret, located at 708 Pine. It opened in 1927 with a group called the Louisiana High Browns furnishing dance music for more than 300 guests. "There were as many white parties present as there was of our own race," a local black newspaper reported (*Western American* 1927:8).

The landmark establishment for jazz and blues was Jenkins' Corner, later known as Slim Jenkins', a Black and Tan club located at 1748 Seventh Street. Jenkins featured jazz and blues bands and Harlemaesque revues. After becoming established, Jenkins booked name entertainers such as the Ink Spots, Dinah Washington, Earl "Fatha" Hines, and Lou Rawls, among many others. William J. Denahy, whose Irish father ran the Snug Harbor Bar at Seventh and Adeline, described Jenkins' club as the "Harlem of Oakland" (Denahy 1981:24). John Singer was another jazz club owner who booked first-rate touring performers.

In the 1920s, Oakland, not unlike other cities in the United States, was addicted to social dancing. The largest venue was the Oakland Auditorium, which opened on 15 August 1915; with a Beaux Arts civic architectural style, the complex included an arena and theater that could accommodate up to 13,000 people. Beginning in the 1920s, a continuous stream of jazz bands played at the Oakland Auditorium. It was the scene of a number of events featuring top touring jazz bands.

One such event was a New Orleans Mardi Gras. Louisiana culture with New Orleans in the



An evening at Slim Jenkins's nightclub at 1748 Seventh Street in West Oakland, ca. 1952. (Photo courtesy of Gladys LeProtti)

forefront was influential in Oakland. In addition to Louisiana voluntary associations, cuisine, and music, Louisiana Creoles and African Americans continued the celebration of Mardi Gras. The Louisiana Commercial Association sponsored an annual carnival that included a Grand Ball at the Oakland Auditorium from 1920 to 1929. The 1922 celebration featured music by King Oliver's and Kid Ory's celebrated Creole bands (*Oakland Sunshine* 1922). Native Oakland jazz historian, critic, and producer Herb Wong remembers seeing jazz shows at the auditorium as a kid in the 1940s, including one featuring a zoot-suited Louis Jordan and His Typanny Five playing for jitterbug contests.

Los Angeles-based vocalist Ernie Andrews, accompanied by pianist Ernie Lewis, made his show-business debut in 1946 at the Villa, up Seventh Street from Slim Jenkins' and next to Rex's Bar. "It was a great street, gambling houses, bars, mixed audiences," Andrews recalled. "Across the street from the Villa was the Rhythm Club that featured big bands such as Billy Eckstine, Lucky Millinder, and Duke Ellington. The Clef Club on Seventh Street and the North Pole were good clubs. There was some of everything" (Andrews 1995).

In Oakland, brothers William and Eugene Sweets ran the Sweets' Ballrooms and were the principal promoters of ballroom dancing in Oakland. There were four Sweets Ballrooms over the course of 45 years, which featured "Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Count Basie, Duke

Ellington, Woody Herman, Gene Krupa, Harry James, Les Brown, Jimmy Dorsey, and a host of others" (Harmon 1995:9).

West Oakland in the late 1930s became the site of a thriving blues scene. Oakland was receptive to the gutsy piano of Count Otis Mathews, with whom future rhythm-and-blues bandleader Johnny Otis played drums, as well as to the jazz/blues synthesis of guitarist/vocalist Aaron "T-Bone" Walker, guitarist/vocalist/bandleader Saunders King, and pianist/vocalist Ivory Joe Hunter (who penned "Seventh Street Boogie" in the mid '40s), to mention only a few. Songwriter/producer Bob Geddins, called the "Father of Oakland Blues," began pressing records in the mid-1940s and forged an Oakland blues style with the help of session guitarist Lafayette "Thang" Thomas.

Oakland venues, particularly those on Seventh Street, afforded a place where various jazz styles were played. Clubs on Seventh Street and other parts of West Oakland were important places for jazz and later blues music performances. The period from the 1920s through the 1940s can be viewed as the heyday of a thriving black social life, with diverse musical styles. Oakland cannot be omitted when one discusses jazz and blues in California. While West Oakland and Seventh Street were known for much more than music, the residents and national jazz artists who appeared there, and the local and tourist audiences who attended their performances, give the area a significant place in California's musical heritage.

Other national African American organizations also found a place in West Oakland. In 1925 the international Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) purchased a commercial building on the corner of Eighth and Chester streets. Under the leadership of Marcus Garvey, the UNIA espoused self-help through the independent ownership of black businesses and the establishment of an African republic. Named "Liberty Hall" after the UNIA's large Harlem auditorium, the West Oakland building was used for political meetings and frequent social events, with a local membership of over 500. By the mid-1930s, followers of Harlem's renowned evangelical minister Father Devine operated a Peace Mission out of the building. The mission served cheap, filling meals to local people during the Depression (Allen 1994:6, 9; Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989: 32).

The BSCP leadership was instrumental in lobbying President Franklin Roosevelt to require fair employment practices in the defense industry during World War II. Labor recruiters for Oakland's Moore shipyard traveled throughout the post-Depression South offering various inducements for African Americans to come work in California. As a result, between 1940 and 1950 Oakland's African American community grew from around 8,400 to nearly 50,000 people (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:45-46; Spires 1994). Yet with prohibitive ordinances still in place, the housing market for these new arrivals was extremely tight. Already in poor repair, a West Oakland house built for families in the railroad boom of the previous century provided shelter for as many as 50 men, who would often sleep in shifts in so-called "hot beds" (Crouchett, Bunch, and Winnacker 1989:49). Predictably, at the end of World War II black workers were the first laid off at the shipyards. The well-paid, skilled and semi-skilled jobs that were the foundation on which the prosperity of the black community had rested for the last 70 years began to disappear.

"BLIGHT" AND REDEVELOPMENT

Although West Oakland was designated a "blighted" district in 1949, New Deal progressives had been busy in the neighborhood since the late 1930s, when several blocks of eclectic but decaying Victorian-era residences were declared a slum, condemned, and replaced with rows of austere, concrete, International-style apartment buildings. Peralta Villa, one of the first public-housing projects in California, was completed in 1942. The project replaced 150 19th-century wood-framed homes on traditional small-scale city blocks with 35 multifamily residential structures on "super blocks," designed to change the character of the entire neighborhood (Figures 10.4 and 10.5). In accord with the social ideas and planning concepts of the New Deal era, there were no private outer spaces. The uniformity and openness rows of concrete block houses provided a clear line for surveillance. Privacy was a thing of the past. Ironically, the first occupants of Peralta Villa were not from the neighborhood, but newly arrived armament workers (Olmsted and Olmsted 1994:169-171; Solari 2001).

In the 1950s the double-deck Cypress Freeway was built, bisecting West Oakland with a massive physical and visual barrier. Again, despite neighborhood opposition, homes were destroyed and families relocated (Solari 2001). In 1958 the Oakland Redevelopment Agency concluded that over half of West Oakland was blighted and should be cleared. As a result of this designation and because its poor residents lacked political influence, large-scale public projects that might have faced opposition elsewhere began to be sited in West Oakland. When the Federal government chose West Oakland as the site for a massive new postal facility, called Project



Figure 10.4. End of a neighborhood, 1941. These homes on the corner of Cypress and Eighth streets were removed in 1941 for Peralta Villa. C.L. Dellums recalled the neighborhood's sense of bafflement at what was happening: "The houses that were torn down weren't necessarily dilapidated. The people who were living in their homes... couldn't understand why they wanted to take over their homes for that price when there were places over on Pine and Wood and Cedar in much worse condition. The people had kept their homes up Their homes were always presentable. But that was the Housing Authority's decision on it, so there was nothing to be done about it" (Henderson 1973:72). (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)



Figure 10.5. Peralta Villa, 1942. As the largest USHA slum-clearance project in the East Bay, Peralta Villa appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as an "outstanding example of Depression Era housing . . . a clear physical expression of design and social planning theories of the New Deal" (Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey 1990 [3] A-228: 11). (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

Gateway, the Postmaster General opined, "We're doing this area a favor" (*San Francisco Chronicle* 1960). Although local residents disagreed, in 1960 300 families lost their homes on 12 city blocks. Giving a new poignancy to the term "war on poverty," an enterprising former racecar driver made quick work of the demolition with a World War II surplus Sherman Tank, which could level a residence in 10 minutes flat (*Oakland Tribune* 1959a, 1959b, 1960a, 1960b; *San Francisco Chronicle* 1960). There was no relocation plan for the displaced residents and few could afford to purchase a replacement home elsewhere in town with their settlement payment. Local realtor Robert Valva worked as a middleman between the State Division of Highways, as Caltrans was then known, and homeowners displaced by the Cypress freeway:

See the biggest problem we're having is these little people that were earning too much money, whether it was Post Office or Nimitz Freeway, when they got \$7,000 for their house that they paid \$1800 for, that was a lot of money. But, the cheapest house that they could go find, better up, was ten or fifteen [thousand dollars]. And four or five thousand dollar difference was a lot of money to them. How to make those [mortgage] payments? I mean, they were \$25, \$50 a month, [which] was a lot of money for them [Valva 1995:6-7].

Many of the displaced had been homeowners in the neighborhood for generations. One woman who lived on Myrtle Street in a "beautiful three-story Victorian" since 1917, simply gave up when they took her home for the freeway: "She quit walking. She said I can't walk anymore. And she had walked all those stairs every day, three and four times a day. She just gave up. They actually killed her when they took her home" (Blake 1995:31).

Despite the haste with which the old houses on these 12 blocks were razed, construction on the postal facility did not begin until 1966, with completion three years later. In the intervening years, the vacant lots became a "dumping ground" in the now "deserted and desolate West Oakland site" (Hope 1963; *Oakland Tribune* 1968).

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE "DUMPING GROUND"

Archaeological remains have a serendipitous quality: the artifacts and features that represent years of occupation will be swept away, while some unplanned and apparently trivial action may leave evidence that survives by pure chance. This was the case with a collection of artifacts at 1726 William Street on Cypress Project Block 3. Dumped unceremoniously on a vacant lot by some anonymous West Oaklanders in the early 1960s, these artifacts make for an interesting comparison with materials from the previous century (Figure 10.6 and 10.7).

The same classes of artifacts are present in the 20th-century collection, sometimes with different representations: electrical parts substitute for lamp chimneys, and among the toys is a model airplane. There are also unexpectedly few alcohol bottles in the community dump of the 1960s compared with the household assemblages of the previous century. Some of the latter contained dozens of beer and spirit containers in spite of the fact that these bottles could be sold for cash to junk dealers. Large-scale bottle collection and reuse was a thing of the past by the mid-20th century, while domestic recycling had yet to establish itself. Several milk bottles were found in the 1960s collection, despite the fact that the manufacturers intended these to be returned and reused. Conversely, the 1960s assemblage contains a proportionally larger quantity of cleaning products (including Clorox, Pinex, and car wax) in comparison to the earlier collections. The 19th-century assemblages also contain many items in the health and grooming

categories, such as pomade and perfume as well as artifacts used in the hope of preventing or treating disease. With a century's worth of advancements in medicine, decline might be predicted in the use of home medicines for treatment. Yet, both personal beautification products and proprietary medicines are as plentiful in the 20th-century assemblage as in those from the previous century, perhaps reflecting the poor access to health care in 1960s West Oakland.

The food preparation and serving items are very diverse in age, decorative types, and quality. The English blue Willow pattern, brown late-19th-century-transfer prints, and turn-of-the-century printed Japanese bowl sherds sit together with brightly colored sherds of Fiestaware from the 1930s and later. High-quality glassware and porcelain vessels co-occur with cheap mugs and molded tumblers. Since the 1960s dump does not mark the kind of household demographic transition that sometimes results in the rapid disposal of the contents of a family's entire kitchen stock, the lack of duplication of decorative patterns is not surprising. Nevertheless, the assemblage shows that materials

spanning a century of manufacture were in use, in startling contrast to the earlier Cypress collections, which rarely contained such heirloom items. It was not uncommon even for working-class households in the mid- and late 19th century to dispose of unfashionable sets at a stroke, presumably with the intention of replacing them with a more up-to-date pattern.

While the food preparation and serving items are diverse in age, decoration, and quality, they are relatively homogeneous in function. Typically, the 19th-century collections from West Oakland contain a dizzying range of table and serving vessels: plates, bowls, cups, covered tureens, and jugs of various sizes and shapes according to their function. This variety reflects the formal dining practices that were so important in mid- and late-19th-century family homes,



Figure 10.6. Artifacts from a vacant lot. This collection was recovered from the “dumping ground,” a vacant lot in West Oakland used as a repository for trash by residents in the mid-1960s. They provide a unique opportunity to make comparisons between consumer practices in this African American neighborhood at different times in its history (Context 158).



Figure 10.7. Artifacts from an 1890s African American household. These materials from 1774 Atlantic Street (Well 7511) show a similar array of products related to health, food, and children as the 20th century collection from the “dumping ground.”

boardinghouses, and hotels. Dining was far more than simply the process of ingesting nutrition. It was a highly ritualized activity that reaffirmed one's place in society and relation to genteel culture. In their uniformity, matched sets of dinnerware embodied that formality. A century later, dining had lost much of its symbolism. Although a community dump may not be the most controlled source of data, these materials suggest that achieving the aesthetic of the matched dining set was no longer important and that this aspect of formal dining was much reduced.

These participants in the "culture of poverty," as it was known to anthropologists of the era, appear to have been as concerned with personal appearance, cleanliness, and impression management as their 19th-century predecessors. Normative ritual had certainly changed, and there may have been less self-conscious emulation of some of the aesthetics of white America. And West Oaklanders were certainly poorer than they had been. The material record, however, does not support the image of a "blighted" neighborhood that could only be redeemed through its destruction.

POLITICS AND PARANOIA

Increasingly marginalized, the residents of West Oakland began to protest, sometimes violently, the continued devastation of their neighborhood by what they perceived as an unresponsive and distant authority. Housing and local control were the rallying issues. While Federal planners had conceived of public housing as set in an open public landscape, the people who actually lived in places like Peralta Villa preferred a traditional landscape (Figure 10.8). As in the old neighborhood, they built backyard fences to divide up the featureless expanses between residential buildings and convert them into family spaces. In 1965 as part of the Federal government's "Beautify America" program, the Oakland Housing Authority began to tear down these backyard fences. The response was immediate, and predictive of future events: outraged tenants formed a grass-roots organization, the Peralta Improvement League, and with help from the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), staged a protest that resulted in the abandonment of the Housing Authority's plan (Solari 2001).



Figure 10.8. Officials visit Peralta Villa while children play.
(Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

The following year, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was born in West Oakland. The Party fought for self-determination for the black community. Panthers preached the politics of revolution within the community and to radical whites on university campuses throughout the Bay Area and eventually the nation. They armed themselves and their followers and shadowed the Oakland police on their rounds of West Oakland (Figure 10.9). They also provided free breakfasts for school children, free shoes, clothing, and medical

care; they re-engendered a sense of pride in the community and an awakening that “Black is Beautiful!”

The Black Power movement may be said to have originated, in part, in the powerlessness of West Oaklanders to save their homes, businesses, and vibrant culture from what were seen as the arbitrary ravages of a distant bureaucracy. The Black Panther Party itself had deep roots in the area and its social issues. In 1970 Party headquarters was located on Peralta Street, not far from the Project Gateway postal facility. The infamous October 1967 shoot-out between the Oakland police and Black Panther co-

founder Huey Newton occurred across the street from Project Gateway at the construction site of the new post office. Huey Newton was murdered on Center Street in West Oakland in 1989.



Figure 10.9. Black Panthers at State capitol. The Black Panthers made a lasting impression when they visited the State capitol fully armed in May 1967. (Photo courtesy of *Sacramento Bee* collection, Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center)



BLACK PANTHER COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

To affirm the community’s independence, and out of frustration with neglectful and overly bureaucratic government social programs, the Panthers operated several free community services, including clinics, clothing giveaways, buses, and an award-winning elementary school. The well-known Children’s Breakfast program was supported by donations of food from West Oakland businesses and served at St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church.

Bobby Seale described it as a “survival program—survival pending revolution...” that emerged out of “our desire to show the community we do something more than shoot it out with cops” (1971:212).

Empty boxes and leftover items from Black Panther food program, circa 1967. (Photo courtesy of *Sacramento Bee* collection, Sacramento Archives and Museum Collection Center)

The boyhood home of Huey Newton (at 500 Brush) had been removed for the original Cypress Freeway in the 1950s:

The first house that I remember was on the corner of Fifth and Brush streets in a rundown section of Oakland. It was a two-bedroom basement apartment, and much too small to hold all of us comfortably. The floor was either dirt or cement, I cannot remember exactly; it did not seem to be the kind of floor that "regular" people had in their homes. My parents slept in one bedroom and my sisters, brothers, and I in the other [Newton 1972:16].

The fourth plank of the Black Panther Party program was: "We want decent housing, fit for shelter of human beings." By this they meant an end to all urban-renewal programs designed for corporate profit that forced poor and working people out of their communities. Furthermore, decent low-cost housing should be built under community control in such a way that existing communities would not be leveled or disrupted (Heath 1976:7).

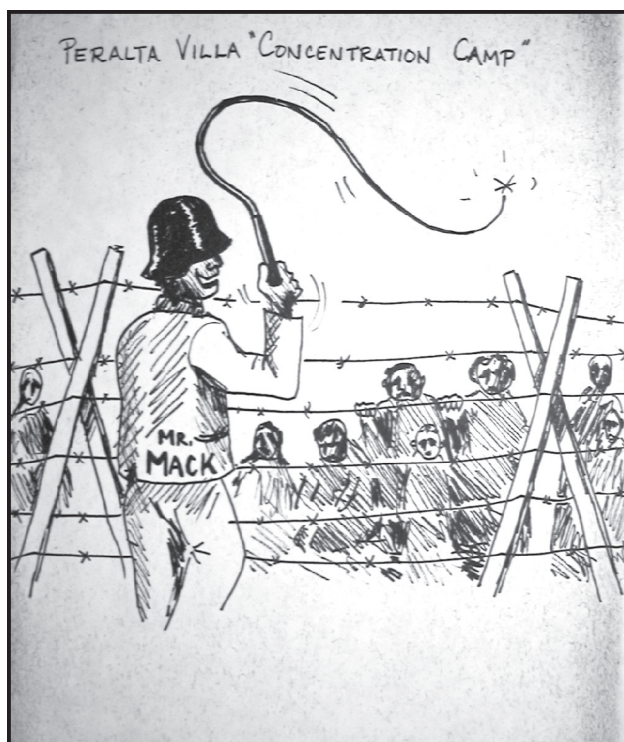


Figure 10.10. Local commentary. This undated line drawing of Peralta Villa "Concentration Camp" was found in the "Peralta Improvement League" file at the Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library.

The leveling of West Oakland contributed to rampant paranoia within the African American community in the late 1960s. "Urban renewal" was seen as a ploy to further disenfranchise the poor. Many black nationalists fervently believed that the U.S. government had genocidal, Nazi-like intentions, and there was widespread belief in a secret scheme known as the "King Alfred Plan." According to some, a cabal of powerful government and industry leaders had been formed with the purpose of renovating and expanding the Japanese American internment camps, wherein rebellious blacks would be confined and exterminated. That many formerly independent African American homeowners had been forced onto public assistance in the prisonlike confines of the housing projects was convincing evidence of such a plan for the Panther revolutionaries (Figure 10.10). Others found proof of this Machiavellian scheme in the use of their neighborhood for freeways, mass-transit projects, and urban renewal (Heath 1976:71).

LOMA PRIETA TEMBLOR SHAKES UP THE COMMUNITY

The collapsed freeway sandwiched vehicles and their passengers within the tangled ruins of the concrete Cypress structure. The black residents of the neighborhood were the first on the scene. They searched the debris and lowered survivors to safety, defying the very real possibility that they themselves might become victims. Already damaged by the earthquake, the neighborhood also suffered from the demolition of the freeway structure—noise and dust from wrecking crews and dump trucks working nonstop for several weeks. When Caltrans announced that it would rebuild the freeway, neighborhood activists saw an opportunity to influence the process in a way that they had been unable to do decades previously. The Black Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s had transformed Oakland politics, resulting in greater representation in City government and on powerful planning agencies by African Americans (Self 2000). Soon after the earthquake, community leaders formed the Citizens' Emergency Response Team (CERT) and demanded that the Cypress Freeway not be built along its original alignment. The Oakland City Council voted to oppose rebuilding the freeway, and a County supervisor proposed an alternative route along the edge of West Oakland (Hausler 1990). This time, the neighborhood won.

AFRICAN AMERICAN BARBERS IN OAKLAND: DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE, ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND SOCIAL STATUS

Willie R. Collins

In the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, African American barbers (or "tonorial artists" as they were called) who opened barbershops were financially well-rewarded and garnered significant social status within the black community. Nationally, perhaps the wealthiest African American barber was William Johnson, a free man who lived in Natchez, Mississippi, during the 19th century. Johnson accumulated 750 acres of farmland, a number of barbershops, rental properties, and two-dozen slaves (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992b). It is likely that most black-owned barbershops during this period served a white clientele—it was a matter of "bread-and-butter" income. "The more prosperous Negro-owned shops catered to "whites only." In Illinois, a black man could get his hair cut only after hours when the shops were closed (Merrifield 1997)—a practice that was probably standard in other parts of the country as well. In addition to shearing beards and hair, giving shaves, and shampooing, some barbershops also offered baths and bootblack services.

In Oakland, California, a number of black barbers created stable and successful enterprises. The Central Pacific railroad created a major hub in Oakland, and the policy of the Pullman

Company to exclusively hire blacks created a favorable environment for black-owned barbershops. In 1866 C. F. Sloan may have operated the East Bay's first black-owned barber shop and bathing house. The shop was located on the south side of Seventh Street between Broadway and Washington, opposite the Central Pacific Railroad. On 13 May 1871, a notice appeared in the *Pacific Appeal* announcing the sale of Sloan's shop, calling it "the oldest Barbershop and Bathing House in Oakland" (Collins 1997a). This barbershop probably served a white clientele.

In 1873 Oscar Jackson opened a shaving parlor and baths, and in the following year a barbershop, in East Oakland. Jackson then opened a hairdressing salon on Railroad Avenue (which later became Seventh Street) in West Oakland. Jackson acquired still another barbershop on Broadway. In 1876 he sold his two barbershops to William H. Stewart, who operated a shop until the turn of the century (Hausler 1998). Lucinda Tilghman, who lived at 662 Fifth Street in West Oakland, had been married to a barber who died at sea in 1875 and probably left her some real and personal property. Many barbers and hairdressers made their homes on Cypress Project blocks. Oscar Jackson and his wife, Mary Ellen



Mint Barbershop, circa 1898, at Ninth and Broadway. This shop passed from Oscar Jackson to William H. Stewart to Royal Towns. (Photo courtesy Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room)

Scott, lived in a small cottage at 860 Pine Street (now 714 Pine) in the 1870s. Besides being a barber, Oscar Jackson performed around the world as a tenor in a minstrel troupe. Although no archaeological deposits were found at this address on Block 25, the residence was thoroughly recorded by the Cypress architectural team (Groth and Gutman 1997:35-38) and eventually moved by Caltrans to a new location. Archaeologists found deposits associated with the William Stewart family on Block 2 (Privy 1452 and Pits 1404 and 1461); these are described in the BTR and throughout this volume.

The central role that black barbers played in the economic and social life of the West Oakland black community can be seen clearly in the success of the William H. Stewart family, who lived at 713 Sixth Street. The Stewart family was an example of an African American family that used barbering and hairdressing as a means to achieve a stable income, investments, and a level of financial security unobtainable in many other occupations. Barbering and hairdressing was, in a sense, economic freedom for the Stewart family.

Born in Maryland, William H. Stewart and his family moved to West Oakland in 1876 and

opened a barbershop and bathhouse at 470 Ninth Street. This was one of several barbershops owned and operated by Stewart and his son, William Jr., Stewart's wife, Emily, and daughter Georgiana worked as hairdressers.

The elder Stewart was not only a successful businessman, but he was also an active community leader. In 1879 he was president of the Immigration Bureau and operated an employment agency out of his home and shop. Stewart also was an agent for the *Pacific Appeal* newspaper, an officer of the African American-run Pacific Coast Stock Raising and Farming Company, vice president of the Literary and Aid Society, and an executive committee member of the Republican party-affiliated Colored Citizens of Oakland and Alameda County.

In 1888 William Stewart, Jr., operated the Ne Plus Ultra Tonsorial Parlor at 964 Broadway, specializing in ladies and children's hair. In the same year, William Jr. died, leaving his estate to his father. From 1889 to 1901, William H. Stewart operated the Broadway barbershop. In 1901 Stewart died at the age of 71. He had operated a successful business in Oakland for 25 years (Hausler 1998).

After William H. Stewart's death, his barbershop at 964 Broadway was operated and perhaps purchased by William A. Towns, who ran the business under the name of the Mint Barbershop. This became a well-known African American establishment at the center of commerce in Oakland, serving a white clientele.

The pattern of independent African American-owned barbershops serving an exclusively white clientele declined and for the most part ended in the early 20th century. In 1900, 18 black barbers worked in Oakland. By 1910, this number had grown to 44. But by 1930, only about 16 black-owned barbershops were in the East Bay (Thompson 1930).

Competition from other ethnic groups, the exclusionary policies of white labor unions, and the greater influence of capitalist enterprises all contributed to the decline. Eventually, however, African American independently owned shops began to reappear, as the stigma of race and the necessity of adhering to a colorline to operate a barbershop had been eradicated. Additionally, the increase in the African American population created a need for barbershops that served African Americans, so black barbershops could be successful serving a predominantly black clientele.



Young Oakland barber with "natural" hairstyle, circa 1960. (Photo courtesy of Carrie M. Rich)

CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT

More than a century has passed since West Oakland experienced the florescence of its skilled working class. For the first 60 years, this had been a multi-ethnic neighborhood. For black Oaklanders of that era, we believe that individuals' sense of dignity was reinforced by their use of genteel material culture appropriated from wider society but given new meanings based on community values and aesthetics. Later, a massive population increase, government-sanctioned policies of discrimination, the loss of the traditional employment base, and concepts of "blight" and unsightliness were used to rationalize re-engineering the neighborhood.

Archaeological remains show this process in their structure as well as their content: recent escapees from the horrors of slavery, the residents of Lucinda Tilghman's home were socially active, entrepreneurial, and sophisticated. Her parlor items suggest a proudly genteel household. Significantly, the objects themselves were discarded into an outdoor privy that had been made redundant by the installation of City services. One is left with an impression of the optimism of this era, whose material progress had been tremendous, and for whom social advancement could not be far behind. Eighty years later, the ad hoc mounds of refuse left by chronically unemployed people in the early 1960s are both physical evidence and a metaphor of the change that had swept the area. Optimism had retreated before the hard reality of continued racial injustice. Self-determination, as symbolized by homeownership, had been in reach of the skilled

workers of Lucinda Tilghman's day. By the 1970s, it was impossible for most, whose homes were likely replaced by concrete blockhouses. The material plenty of the post-World War II era was nowhere to be seen in the West Oakland of the 1970s.

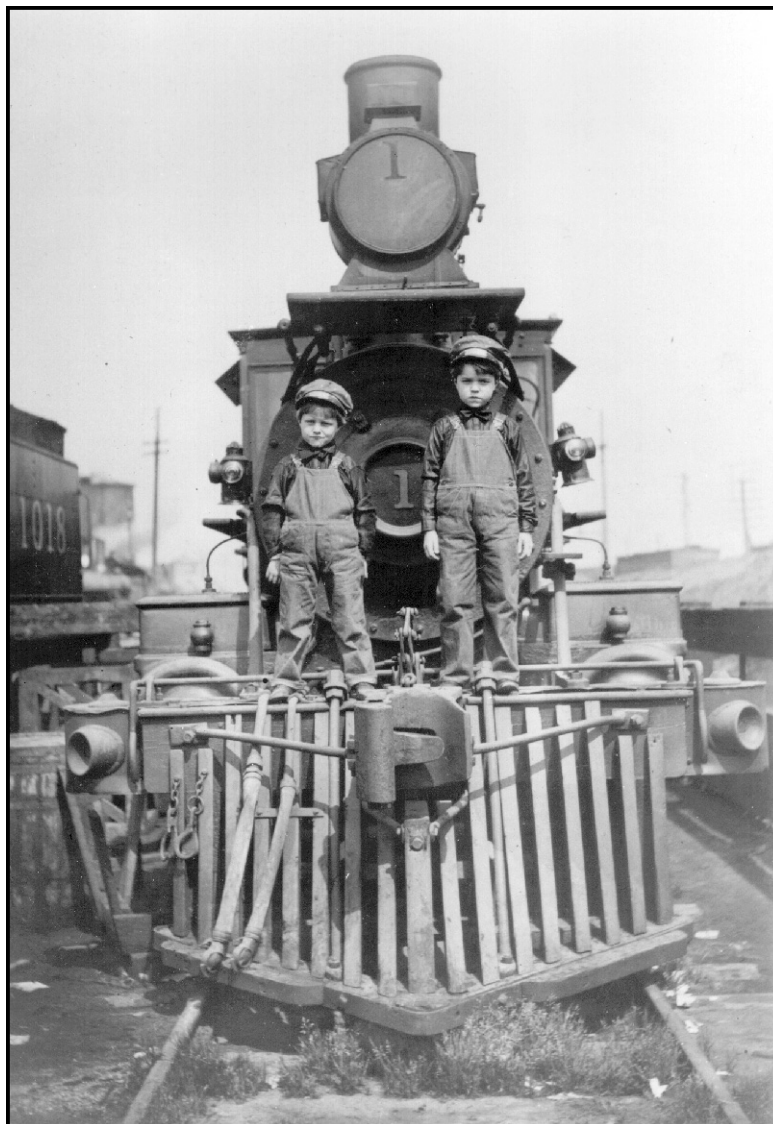
Nevertheless, community activists continued to work for change. Just 10 days after the 1989 earthquake, a restored Liberty Hall reopened as a community center for neighborhood activities, with a permanent photo exhibit on the history of West Oakland in the main hall. Jubilee West, a local non-profit organization, had stepped in to save the historic United Negro Improvement Association building from demolition. Today, the organization purchases and renovates dilapidated Victorian houses throughout West Oakland to provide affordable housing to the community (Allen 1994:6, 9).

West Oakland activists and politicians used the Cypress Freeway Replacement to focus attention on the area's problems. It was hoped that the earthquake would prove to be a turning point in the area's rebirth (Hausler 1990:3). Instead of construction with bricks and mortar, neighborhood activists are concerned with revitalizing the community for the people who live there. "Redevelopment usually means black removal," according to Charles Martin, director of Jubilee West, as he strove to reverse these changes (Donnelly 1993:26).

It is too soon to tell if West Oakland will "create a brighter future by harnessing the spirit that moved the Cypress freeway" (Nakao 1995). It is hoped, however, that the neighborhood has indeed received an "unexpected gift" that "pulls together the history and the present of Oakland's first neighborhood" and that "can inspire future generations looking for ways to get along" (Lavoie 1995; Payton 1995).

PART IV: MORE THAN "JUST A PLACE TO START FROM"

Part IV consists of a single chapter that reconsiders the history of West Oakland, challenging the notion of the urban slum. Through archaeological, oral, documentary, and architectural data, this chapter shows how outsiders' views of West Oaklanders have affected the trajectory of the neighborhood's 19th-century development and 20th-century redevelopment.





MORE THAN "JUST A PLACE TO START FROM": HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGIES OF WEST OAKLAND

ADRIAN PRAETZELLIS AND MARY PRAETZELLIS

This, the final chapter, begins by placing the Cypress Project and its approach in the context of research in historical archaeology, how this approach came to be and its goals. The next section shows the genesis of West Oakland's image as an undesirable place in ideological statements from the 19th and 20th centuries. This view is contrasted with the image of community that emerges from the material culture and oral history. The chapter ends with an assessment of the Cypress Project and suggestions to improve the conduct of urban historical archaeology.

ARCHAEOLOGY, THE MELTING POT, AND DOING RESEARCH

The civil-rights movement changed this nation's view of its past.

Before the 1960s, the notion that the United States was formed of many populations that had not simply melted into a homogeneous cultural soup was not a respectable topic for research. Coming not long before the bicentennial, the social upheaval and revolutionary ideas of the '60s had a profound influence on the way in which this patriotic event was celebrated. Images of diversity abounded in the popular media, and academic research into cultural difference was moved to the front burner. The fledgling discipline of historical archaeology contributed with evocative studies of the lives of Overseas Chinese in the Pacific West, African Americans enslaved on southern plantations, and other disenfranchised groups, carving out a role for itself in the historical study of ethnicity.

Attempts at defining the material correlates of class and ethnicity occurred at just the right time in historical archaeology's methodological development. As a self-identified social science, practitioners sought ways to extract patterned relationships from their data. Techniques such as ceramic scaling and faunal economics were developed to fill the need, while a focus on the remains of historically documented households provided sets of controlled data.

True to the times in which they were conceived, these early analyses focused on difference: archaeologists sought to define how the remains left by various ethnic groups were dissimilar from one another and how those variations demonstrated the ways in which cultural integrity had been maintained in the face of the apparently ineffable homogenizing forces of American popular culture. The point was made and became axiomatic. Yet as more work was done it became clear that, as valid and powerful as this basic insight remained, the process of cultural interaction in 19th-century America was highly nuanced and situationally variable. Emerging from this disciplinary history, we see the central contribution of the Cypress Historical Archaeology Project as both celebrating material and cultural difference while simultaneously



Figure 11.1. Overview of Block 37 from the Post Office roof. Archaeologists worked within the parking lot of the Post Office Complex. Note the excavators at the top of the photo.

teasing out the meaning of similarity whereby apparent material homogeneity both masked and advanced class-based differences.

An important archaeological goal of the Cypress Project was the recovery of discrete collections of artifacts that could be associated with documented households representing many of the cultural groups and social classes that made up urban America (Figure 11.1.). This has been achieved on a scale that surpassed our expectations: field archaeologists found over 100 such deposits—the largest archive of firmly linked and consistently documented archaeological collections in the West. All of these materials and their archaeological and historic contexts have been fully documented in the Block Technical Report (BTR) series, which are available on compact disc at the back of this report or may be ordered online from www.sonoma.edu/asc.

More than social-science data, these materials bring to life a neighborhood, a community and communities of people who lived next door to each other, passed on the street, worked and socialized together. When we compare the artifacts from these homes, we are looking at collections that would have been familiar to neighbors, groups of objects that functioned within the same social milieu. We can see the contents of widow Margaret O'Connell's parlor and compare it, as she might have done, to that of her new neighbor, 21-year-old Mrs. Adeline Long. We can analyze difference and similarity, and have some insight into what they may have meant to those who used these things.

Like its sister discipline of social history, contemporary historical archaeology is less concerned with propounding unambiguous answers to questions of fact than providing insights

into historically consequential themes through the analysis of specific contexts. Although in the practice of North American archaeology, "it is still common for research questions, expectations, and means of evaluation to be made clear . . . accounts of research tend to move fairly freely among research questions, relevant information, and new interpretations and questions" (Hegmon 2003:230).

Thus, not all the research questions we presented in the project research design have been addressed definitively in this volume. The research design was conceived as a beginning point in the development of a framework in which issues would

build upon each other as new data are gathered from the ground, the archives, from maps and photographs, and from oral history informants. The answers, when woven together, will provide a richer more human history of West Oakland and a deeper understanding of the working-class people who once lived there [Praetzellis 1994:238].

Thus, we have addressed the research design by focusing on how the influence of forces such as social class, ethnicity, and consumerism are expressed in the evidence from individual households and populations. The focus of our research is not, for example, consumerism per se, but rather its effect on matters of everyday life from health to ethnic identity. In examining the history of Oakland, historian Robert Self points out that we cannot separate change, and the people who carried it out, from this location that was the focus of their lives. Civil rights and black power "did not call for rights in abstract terms and ill-defined places. They called for very specific things in relation to very specific places" (Self 2003:17).

Our research has been intensively collaborative, involving professionals in archaeology, history, museology, oral history, and vernacular architecture, as well as many interdisciplinary specialists. Neighborhood residents contributed their perspectives through oral interviews. Our goal has been to link past with present by constructing and reconstructing how life was lived in this place.

WEST OAKLAND FROM ABOVE AND BELOW

The representation of the historic inner-city has been profoundly influenced by the writings of those through whose eyes it was seen: social reformers in the guise of novelists, temperance workers, popular writers, and the first generation of social scientists. What they perceived was the slum, a place of poverty, degradation, and environmental pollution. These observers recorded snippets of reality that were relevant to their goals and, in so doing, essentialized the place into the stereotypes of contemporary wisdom that have come down to us.

Urban historian Alan Mayne and archaeologist Tim Murray have proposed a two-pronged strategy for studying cities that uses archaeology as a nexus of historical knowledge to "deconstruct slum myths" and "explore the enveloping social and cultural milieus of vanished inner-city communities" (2001:2). Their ideas sum up quite neatly the approach of the Cypress Archaeology Project. In the following sections, we present historical and archaeological perspectives on West Oakland; how the place was characterized in the past and how historical archaeology may contribute to changing this image.

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

The public perception of West Oakland has gone through many changes since the city's establishment nearly 150 years ago (Figure 11.2).

Initially, it was the perfect spot for the terminus of the transcontinental railroad, with land that was flat, plentiful, and vacant. The surrounding property was subdivided and rapidly sprouted inexpensive homes. In a classic display of the American dream realized, working- and lower-middle-class families, who had swarmed to jobs on the railroad, seized the opportunity and became the first proud owners of these cottages. With well-paid jobs and inexpensive housing, a stable multi-ethnic, working and lower middle class flourished. Yet at the same time, city sewers and industrial wastes polluted the Bay and the very bayside location that had attracted development was now seen as the source of miasma, damp, and disease. With the economic decline following World War II, the forces of urban redevelopment moved in and declared it a "slum." In the following pages, we present visions of West Oakland from the perspectives of a real-estate developer, a public-health official, a social reformer, a widely read novelist, and 20th-century redevelopers.



Figure 11.2. The Cypress Freeway and downtown Oakland. From the Seventh Street Post Office complex, we look southeast down Fifth Street to downtown Oakland. The abrupt end of the freeway, just east of Peralta Villa, shows the site of the demolished Cypress structure.

Developers Advertise a Grand Credit Sale

In February 1875, real-estate developer E.C. Sessions & Co. advertised 300 lots in Oakland Point to be sold at public auction (Figure 11.3). The terms: one-third in cash, the remainder in the following two years, and annual interest at nine percent. A deposit was required at “the fall of the hammer,” with the balance due on delivery of the deed. The developers did not stint in extolling the virtues of the Gibbons Tract:

This property is situated near the lines of the overland and local railroads; also, to the projected line of the Bantas Road; is in the immediate vicinity of the workshops, ship-yards, wharves and other extensive and valuable property of the Central Pacific Railroad Company. It has also a large frontage on Peralta Street, a prominent thoroughfare, and the most direct route to the University; also an extensive frontage upon Railroad Avenue, upon which are already established at a distance of only one block, hotels, post office, public halls, and a number of business houses. It is near to schools, churches, also to station from which runs twenty four daily trains to San Francisco, at a monthly commutation fare of only three dollars, time thirty minutes. It has a large number of oak trees upon it, and is surrounded with numerous houses, many more being contemplated. The tract fronting upon the bayshore is desirable also for manufacturing purposes. Entire property lies upon a natural grade, a perfect system of sewerage has been adopted by a Board of Eminent Engineers and accepted by the City. Good water can be obtained by wells within eighteen feet. Mains of the Water and Gas Companies are within a short distance, and can be extended through the property when desired. The desirable climate of Oakland, the frequency and convenience of communication with San Francisco, the improvements by Government upon the harbor, now in progress, the extensive Railroad enterprises, considered in connection with the commanding position and many other advantages offered by this property will certainly cause it to advance rapidly in value [E.C. Sessions & Co. 1875].

From the subdivision map and accompanying text, these lots were a good investment, with jobs, transportation, schools, churches, shops, and services within easy reach. Today’s commuters would surely be tempted by the convenient 30-minute trip across the bay to San Francisco. In the event, the “perfect” sewerage system and good water did not materialize, and proximity to the railyard, harbor, and manufacturing sites proved to be a mixed blessing.

Dr. Woolsey Makes a Difference

By 1880 E.H. Woolsey, the passionate new Oakland City Health Officer and City Physician, was waging all-out war against preventable diseases. Woolsey made a direct link between the “quantity of filth” and deaths from diphtheria, typhoid fever, and similar illnesses. He raged against the evil of uncleanness still lurking in some neighborhoods: “we are not thinking of dirty faces, or soiled hands—albeit the divine use of water is an hygienic necessity, but rather of such unsanitary conditions as bad drainage, defective sewage, crowded habitations with dark inside sleeping rooms, the drinking of surface well-water, and so forth” (Woolsey 1881:6). With the drive of a true reformer, Dr. Woolsey likened those who overheated their temperate Oakland homes to South Pacific Islanders who lived in abundance but still devoured their neighbors, and made a pithy comparison to the temperance movement: “for every death from alcoholism, there are about fifteen deaths from impure-air-ism” (Woolsey 1881:44).

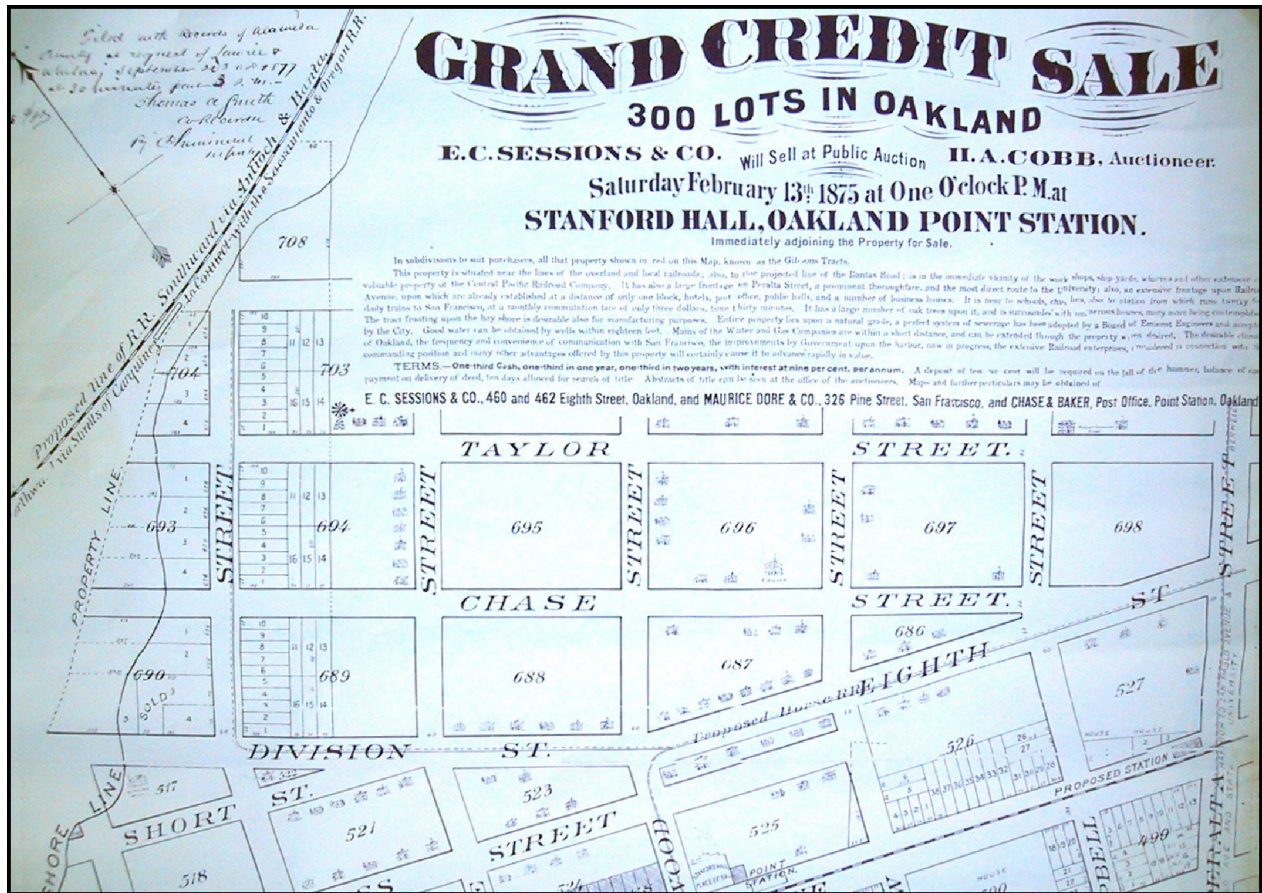


Figure 11.3. The Gibbons Tract—West Oakland is sub-divided.

"The tract fronting upon the bay shore is desirable for manufacturing purposes. Entire property lies upon a natural grade, a perfect system of sewerage has been adopted by a Board of Eminent Engineers and accepted by the City. Good water can be obtained by wells within eighteen feet." (E.C. Sessions and Co. 1875)

Under Woolsey's instruction, City inspectors conducted a sanitary survey. They responded to complaints and made house-to-house searches for nuisances in problem neighborhoods, noting deficiencies in sewerage facilities, water supply, and unsanitary conditions wherever they were to be found. It is not coincidental that death certificates now began to contain information on sanitation. From this information, Woolsey compiled a color-coded Official Sanitary Map of Oakland that showed the locations of deaths from preventable diseases by year as well as detailed tables by City ward indicating deaths and the results of the 1880 sanitary-inspection reports. Using this information, Woolsey made a case for the direct link between overall health, sanitation, and preventable deaths, as well as the relationship between foul privy vaults, the frequency of neighborhood complaints to the sanitary inspectors, and higher mortality (Table 11.1).

At this time, the City of Oakland was divided into seven wards. The Cypress Archaeological Project area falls within two of these: the First Ward covers our Oakland Point neighborhood or Cypress Blocks 9 through 34; while the Fourth Ward covers the East of Market (Blocks 1 to 3) and West of Market (Blocks 4 to 8) neighborhoods.

Dr. Woolsey took great pride in the success of his program: the death rate in 1880—including "dead bodies drifted upon our shores"—was less than 13 per 1,000 residents, notably lower than comparable cities in the United States or Europe. Even more telling, deaths from preventable

Table 11.1. Report of Sanitary Inspections, First and Fourth Wards 1880 (Woolsey 1881:84)

Action	City Total	First Ward	Fourth Ward
Premises inspected	3,497	929	949
Premises re-inspected	1,566	543	384
Private complaints attended to	474	93	125
Privy vaults connected to sewer	1,145	448	304
Premises found already connected	1,698	334	340
Premises supplied with city water	2,796	676	782
Premises supplied with well water	559	167	96
Premises inspected occupied by owner	1,565	527	320
Premises inspected occupied by tenants	1,908	398	625

diseases represented less than one-sixth of total mortality, less than half the one-third considered average under favorable conditions (Woolsey 1881:6). By these measures Oakland was a very healthy place to live. But even one preventable death was too many for Dr. Woolsey, who felt negligent enforcement of reasonable sanitary measures to be infinitely worse than the crimes committed by the “veriest criminal within the walls of San Quentin” (1881:66).

Of the seven Oakland wards, the First and Fourth were the sickliest, as measured by death rates—15.51 and 16.37 per 1,000, respectively, preventable deaths, and nuisance abatements. The situation of these wards upon the waterfront, exposed to winds from the marshland where the city deposited its sewage, doomed them to be the sickliest until the construction of an intercepting sewer system. Nevertheless, Woolsey moved on those fronts under his control and drilled into his sanitary inspectors the importance of making a concerted effort to improve the cleanliness of these blighted wards. The inspectors pursued their work by systematically enforcing the ordinance that mandated connection to the sewer (Woolsey 1881:84). Over 750 homes in the First and Fourth wards connected with the City sewer system during Woolsey’s one-year reporting period, doubling the number of homes already connected at the time of inspection. His first battle had been “very decisive—resulting in the immediate abandonment of the fortifications of filth—privy vaults” (Woolsey 1881:63).

Ordinary Oaklanders were themselves evidently making the connection between unsanitary privy vaults and preventable deaths. The large number of privies confirmed by Cypress Project excavations to have been abandoned around 1880 is further proof that Dr. Woolsey’s efforts were making a difference. The link between sanitation, health, and privy backfilling is particularly striking on Cypress Block 4, where the presence of livestock, wells, and privies coincided with numerous deaths from typhoid fever in around 1880. It was surely no coincidence that several Block 4 households abandoned their privies at this time (Figure 11.4).

In spite of Dr. Woolsey’s efforts, conditions were far from desirable—which is to say that they did fall below the expectations of social reformers such as Eva Carlin.

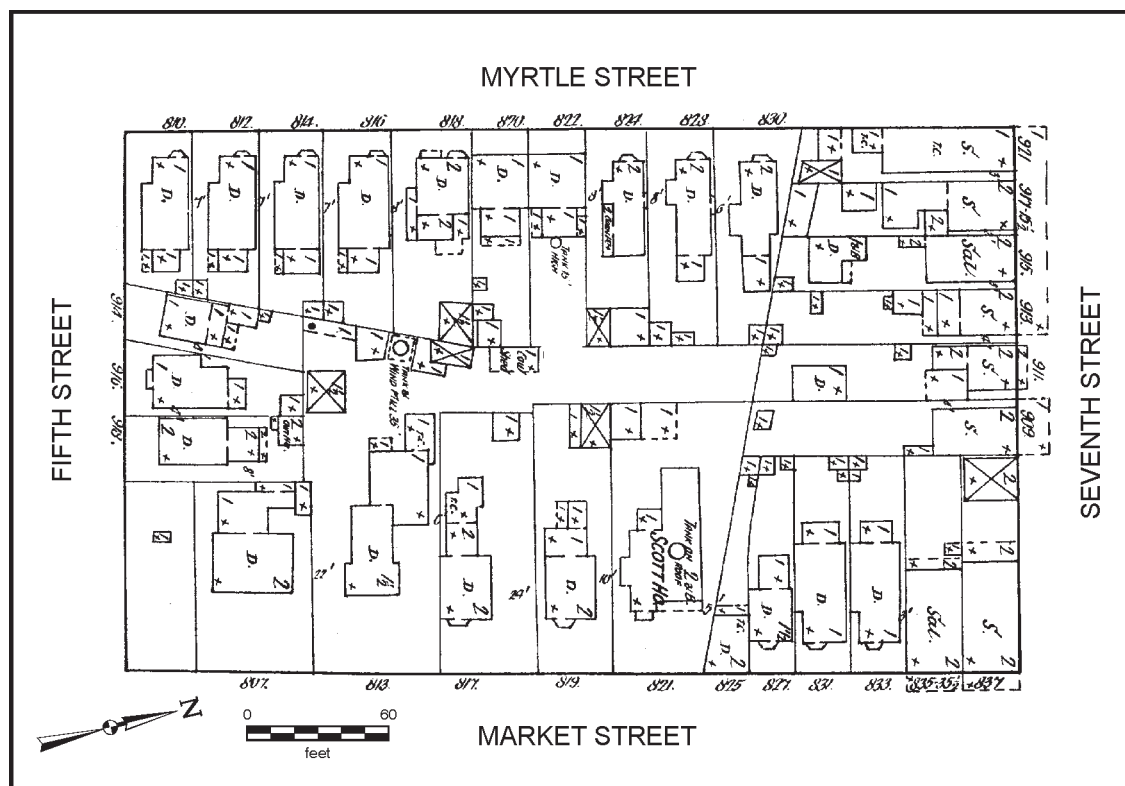


Figure 11.4. Sanborn Insurance Map showing Block 4 in 1889. Running along the rear lot lines are small structures that surmounted each parcel's privy pit. By this time, many had been abandoned and filled with household refuse.

Eva Carlin Is Not Impressed

Overland Monthly correspondent Eva Carlin visited West Oakland in 1900 and described it flatly as “an ugly locality, lined with small unattractive, crowded dwellings” (1900a:425) and a “law-abiding workingman’s district settled chiefly by hard working foreigners, with a sprinkling of Americans,” which reportedly housed 21 nationalities and 35 saloons, (1900b:247).

In contrast to the “problem areas” of larger cities, West Oakland was not considered a slum at this time. The homes harbored neither extreme poverty nor unskilled labor, for “industrial life” flourished in the district. It lacked the packed tenements, and many of its working-class residents achieved a modest and respectable livelihood from the railroad and local industries. In West Oakland, domestic reformers such as Eva Carlin sought as their subjects immigrant and working-class housewives, who they felt to be “ignorant of science and its immutable laws; all lack the knowledge which in any form ‘transmutes existence into life’” (Carlin 1900a:426).

Carlin noted that the occupants generally owned their small homes of two or three crowded rooms, worth about \$900 apiece. The correspondent was appalled by the fact that all of some families’ everyday activities—cooking, eating, sleeping, childbirth, illness, and death—took place in the same small domestic space. Carlin interpreted the custom of using front steps and sidewalks as social space as symptomatic of the “over worked and ill-tempered” women who were “turning their backs on the dreariness within.” The cooking and hygiene habits of immigrant women were alarming indeed, and their food was “selected without regard to its nourishing value. It is badly cooked, untidily served and often eaten irregularly” (Carlin 1900a:426-428).

Following Dr. Woolsey, hygiene and sanitation were also important issues for domestic reformers. With the acceptance of germ theory in the 1880s and 1890s, middle-class Americans feared that the contamination and disease that was rife in poor communities would spread unabated to their neighborhoods (Seller 1978:309). Reflecting this fear, Oakland’s New Century Club called for the application of sanitary science beyond the home:

We must have a clean house, a clean street: we must go farther and have a clean neighborhood, and perfection demands a clean city and community. To secure health for ourselves we must secure it for those who lack our training or our standard. In one part of town a cesspool sends out disease germs; some neighbor’s body is weak from poor food, and thus some plague finds a stronghold from which to hurl its foraging battalion upon the community [1901:n.p.].

Boys and young men were particularly at risk. West Oakland saloons and the corner grocery stores that sold liquor illegally were described as the “storm centers of child-crime.” According to reformers, the lack of wholesome amusements, combined with the adventurous spirit of youth, often led to street gangs and to the police station. The concern was not unfounded, for many contemporary accounts describe the sometimes brutal exploits of young West Oakland gang members. Not surprisingly then, reformers first set out to domesticate the boys before teaching the girls to cook (Figure 11.5). Carlin and domestic reformers likened the child criminal to diphtheria, both natural products of preventable conditions. They argued that if just one-tenth the money spent for reformation was spent on character formation—parks, playgrounds, education—youth gangs would disappear (Carlin 1900a:434).



Figure 11.5. The Boys’ Club, 1900. In her 1902 report on the Boys’ Club, Mrs. Wheaton (the Director) confessed, “We are trying to improve our taste in music but it is slow work, the boys being faithful to ‘Goo-goo Eyes.’” (Oakland New Century Club, 1902). George Gaskin’s catchy song “Because She Made Dem Goo-Goo Eyes” was one of the most popular recordings of 1901. (Photo source: *Domestic Science Monthly* August 1900:119)

Growing up on the Oakland streets and waterfront, Jack London's childhood exemplified everything the reformers were fighting against. Nevertheless, the experience of his youth provided the most widely read English language novelist of the era with a wealth of material.

Jack London Gets Even

In Jack London's 1913 novel *Valley of the Moon*, the author situated his tale of the battle between Capital and Labor in West Oakland. It was a logical choice for this figurative struggle. The streets and railyards of this city had seen many actual battles and from the front window of his family's home on Pine Street, young Jack had a good view of the comings and goings at the Southern Pacific Railyards, where his father sometimes worked.

It is from this cottage that Saxon, London's heroine, witnessed a brutal confrontation between strikers and Pinkerton agents. The violence of the event caused the young woman to reflect deeply about the modern, urban way of life and to conclude that "jobs are bones" (1913b:189) over which poor men fight; and that "the man-world was made by men, and a rotten job it was" (1913b:254). "Her eyes," wrote London, "showed her only the smudge of San Francisco, the smudge of Oakland, where men were breaking heads and killing one another, where babies were dying, born and unborn, and where women were weeping with bruised breasts" (1913b:256). Even the clams that working people gathered from the nearby marshes caused typhoid fever; this was "still another mark against Oakland . . . Oakland the man trap, that poisoned those it did not starve" (London 1913b:286).

Then, in deep despair, Saxon meets a boy—who surely represents Jack London himself—who casually speaks the words that would change her life: "Oakland," he says, "is just a place to start from" (London 1913b:267). Soon thereafter, Saxon and her husband began their journey to the rural Valley of the Moon, a natural world where men don't fight over bones.

To Jack London, Oakland represented all cities. In its sicknesses, both medical and metaphoric, he read symptoms of the excesses of 19th-century capitalism. The only course for London's fictional creations, as well as for the man himself, was escape to a new, clean environment. In his distaste for this heterogeneous landscape, London was not alone. By the mid-20th century, the forces of "urban renewal" were poised to clean up the area.

Postmaster General's "Favor" Transforms the Landscape

Returning to Oakland during a 1930s lecture tour and finding her old home demolished, Gertrude Stein famously observed that "there's no there, there." The boyhood homes of Jack London, on Pine Street and Huey Newton on the corner of Fifth and Brush were also later torn down for urban renewal—replaced by a post office and freeway, respectively (Figure 11.6).

What was West Oakland like on the eve of redevelopment? The answer depends on one's source. In 1958 the Oakland Redevelopment Agency declared that over half of West Oakland was blighted and should be cleared. To resident Tom Nash, however, it "was a beautiful place" (Nash, cited in Self 2003:157) and Landon Williams recalled, "how vibrant Seventh Street was on both sides. I can remember little cleaners, you know, meat markets, grocery stores. Liquor stores, furniture stores . . . and they wiped it out and the ground lay fallow for ten years" (Williams, cited in Self 2003:157).

The source of these changes was partly economic. The wartime boom was over and the once teeming docks and railroad yards were largely idle. Into this environment came several massive public-works projects that necessitated the purchase, through eminent domain, and



Figure 11.6. Before the Cypress Freeway, July 1954. Blocks 2 and 3 are situated to the left of Market Street, while Blocks 4, 5, and 6 have been mostly cleared of buildings in preparation for construction (Caltrans 1954).

inevitable demolition of hundreds of the 19th-century cottages built in Oakland’s initial boom. As in the 19th century, local people owned and occupied many of these residences, which provided very small, modest accommodations. Among the projects was the construction of the Nimitz freeway and its component—the Cypress structure.

Seventh Street in West Oakland was significantly affected by the construction of both the Bay Area Rapid Transit line and Project Gateway, an enormous new postal facility built in the 1960s (see also Chapter 10). In the *mélange* of down-at-heel buildings and their (by now) largely African American occupants, public officials saw an opportunity to modernize. “We’re doing this area a favor,” declared the Postmaster General (*San Francisco Chronicle* 19 July 1960). Project Gateway was built on 12 city blocks at the cost of scores of residences and the displacement of more than 300 local families. With no government relocation plan to fall back on and insufficient settlement money to replace their somewhat shabby homes, the neighborhood scattered.

Thus ended the promise of the Gibbons Tract, promoted with so much optimism nearly a century before.

THE VIEW FROM BELOW

As we have seen, almost as soon as it was established, West Oakland was perceived by those above and outside as a problem to be fixed. Yet these disapproving, explicitly ideological images afford only one perspective; a history written from the inside out shows other realities and perceptions. In the following section, we attempt to construct an emic view of life in this heterogeneous 19th-century neighborhood that is, in some ways, parallel to the oral accounts of its 20th-century residents (Figure 11.7).

Archaeology of a Neighborhood

West Oakland was a socially mixed area during the late 19th century. European immigrants—many from Ireland—lived next to the native born, both black and white. The homes of semi-skilled workers backed onto those of the middle class. Property owners and their renters of different ethnicities and social classes commonly lived in adjacent houses and apparently thought nothing of it: the Jockners from Germany and the Irish Donavans, the African American Brooks household and the Japanese Fujis. Binary pairs of social categories emerge readily from the primary sources: native born/immigrant, nationality/nationality, white/nonwhite, class/class. And yet the neighborhood was composed of people with their own histories and motivations. To reduce them to anonymous social categories or homogeneous “others” would be to depersonalize the past, to create something that never existed outside the analyst’s mind.

Thus, one of our goals was to see how people divided themselves up socially—to consider what groups people may have placed *themselves* in, rather than our categorizations of them. This has turned out to be even more complicated than we anticipated. Sociological groupings are good places to start when the goal is to reconstruct emic definitions, since they are all we have. Ours has turned out to be an investigation into the complexity of past contexts, uncovering some of the multi-leveled meanings of artifacts, and thereby revealing the perspectives of different classes, ethnicities, and neighborhoods. We ask complex and open-ended questions: how useful are the conventional standards of social prominence, wealth, education, and “culture” by which the “aristocrats of color” have been defined by Gatewood (1993)? Indeed, what did “high status” mean in West Oakland and how was it expressed? How did these expressions vary from either contemporary norms or modern interpretations, and how did they vary between classes and ethnic groups? These results emerge by combining data from historic and archaeological sources, shrinking, enlarging, and adjusting the context until we find which characteristics seem meaningful.

West Oaklanders expressed their identities—both ethnic and social—in language, food, and, most publicly, in social institutions. Marta Gutman and Mark Walker have examined social-reform associations and labor unions in Chapters 6 and 7, respectively, but the Cypress study focuses on both the large and small scale, on the neighborhood *and* the household. Household material culture tells us a great deal about the everyday negotiation of identity in West Oakland (see Chapter 4); objects have effects in addition to their utilitarian functions and were used to defend group identity by preventing commensality with nonmembers. Material symbols are potent and, as Chapter 3 has shown, industrial production had created an enormous range of goods by which to express membership and, by the same token, allow for exclusion. Yet, the power of the market was such that the range of material objects that were used within the home varied relatively little. The artifact “layout” photographs contained in Appendix D, representing nearly 70 households, show a great deal of duplication of artifact types and decorative motifs. We have teased out differences and similarities on a variety of scales by conducting statistical

analyses, looking at the meanings of particular classes of objects from teapots to table settings, as well as the role of particular items in the parlors of specific families (such as the McLaughlin household in Chapter 8).

Many of these artifacts and the behaviors associated with them were widely understood to have certain normative meanings, and thus possessed substantial symbolic weight. We have suggested that the material culture of display in the dining room and parlor was the result of conscious decisions related to popular aesthetics, impression management, and the maintenance of social boundaries. The daily consumption of food, however, was something else again. What was put on the table and the plate—as opposed to the plates themselves—gave frequent opportunity for the expression of social aspiration and identity.

In the roiling social stream, apparently patterned behavior and apparently meaningful symbols are constantly coming to the surface. However, determining which are significant and which are simply artifacts of the data can only be induced by statistical analysis that requires both the large sample size and controlled, consistent data collection of a Cypress-scale research project. In the following section, we describe several statistically derived patterns and their significance for the construction of emic social categories. Some of this material is taken directly from Bruce Owen’s analyses, which are reported in Appendixes F and G. (Dwelling type is an important variable in many of these studies; see Chapter 1 and Groth and Gutman [1997] for a discussion of house types.)

Who Bought Wine and Who Bought Hard Liquor?

Liquor bottles were completely absent from the refuse of residents of polite two-story Victorian houses, in significant and consistent contrast with most other dwelling types (see

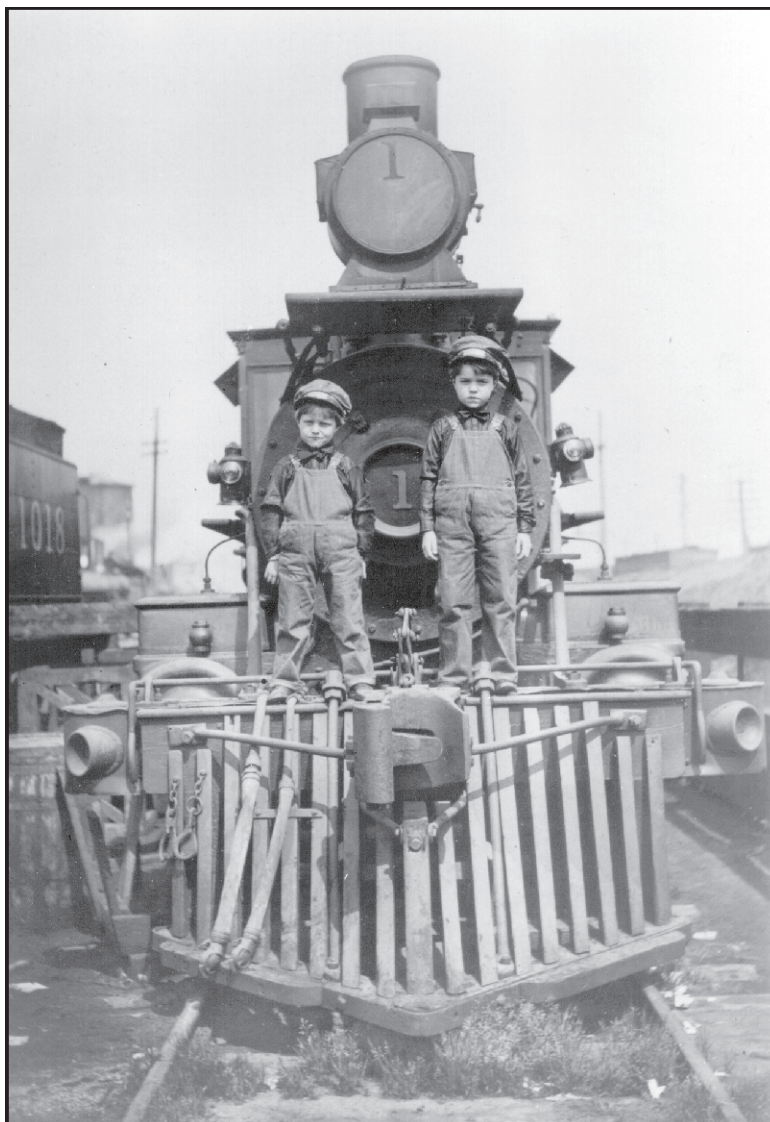


Figure 11.7. At the West Oakland Railyards. Vernon Sappers, from whose collection this photograph is taken, was born in West Oakland. His father, Josef, was a Russian immigrant who worked at the railyards. *“My father and I would take off on a Saturday or a Sunday morning When we would get back late my mother couldn’t understand how we could have spent so much time in West Oakland.”* (Photo reproduced with permission from Vernon J. Sappers)

Appendix G). The residents of these houses—the largest and most expensive in the West Oakland sample—seem to have avoided not alcohol in general, but specifically hard liquor, at least at home. Wine bottles were strongly correlated to better-paying professions, being most common in Wealthy Professionals' refuse, and becoming progressively scarcer as one progresses down the income scale to Professional, Skilled, and Unskilled households. Strongly associated as they are with higher-paid employment, finer housing, and home ownership, wine and champagne bottles appear to be an excellent index of what would generally be recognized as upper-middle-class status. Conversely, but less strongly indicated, beer and/or ale bottles were a greater fraction of the alcoholic beverage bottles at households of Skilled workers than at those of Wealthy Professionals, and liquor bottles comprised more of the alcoholic beverage bottles in lower-income (Skilled and Unskilled) households than in higher-income (Professional and Wealthy Professional) households.

While one's choice of alcohol is far from being an unambiguous class "marker" in the archaeological record, it is clear that social classes used beer, wine, and hard liquor differently and in patterned ways. Cost may have influenced these practices; each of these forms of alcoholic beverage, however, had symbolic meaning as symbols of class identity and sophistication.

Who Bought Expensive Meat?

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no evidence that wealthier households consistently purchased more expensive cuts of meat than poorer ones. On the contrary, this practice seems to correlate with African Americans and Unskilled households, as well as renters of Polite Victorian houses; by the same token, no single ethnicity/nativity group ate consistently more expensively or cheaply than any of the others in spite of the fact that some groups were poorer than others overall. The quality of one's housing, however, was a much better predictor of the cost of meat purchased than was profession or ethnicity: unlike profession and ethnicity, dwelling types exhibit clear, easily intelligible and intuitively expected patterning in meat-cut prices. There is a consistent trend towards more expensive meat cuts in the data from the least to the most prestigious homes. Two-story Victorian homes have significantly more high-cost meat than not only Informal workers' cottages but more than all others combined. The top two dwelling types lumped together have more high-cost cuts, and fewer medium- and low-cost cuts than the three lower-status dwelling types lumped together. Informal worker's cottages have significantly more low-cost cuts and fewer high-cost cuts than do all the other dwelling types lumped together. By a number of measures, then, quality of housing corresponds directly to cost of meat consumed.

In addition, there was a consistent, significant difference between the purchases of owners and renters of Almost-polite houses: the latter consumed more high-cost cuts and fewer medium and low-cost cuts than the former. This contradicts the intuitive assumption that owners were better off than renters and that they used their wealth to enjoy conventionally desirable commodities. The lack of a significant difference overall between owners and renters, and the inconsistent patterning within specific dwelling types comes as a surprise since the quality of housing was such a good predictor of meat-cut costs. Dietary choices, then, are more strongly related to a household's immediate standard of living, as expressed in the quality of their dwelling than they are to their capital or underlying economic status, as measured by profession, income, or homeownership. An interesting difference in purchasing patterns emerges when U.S.-born whites are compared to the other ethnicity/nativity categories: the former show less beef than African Americans, at the 5-percent level of significance.

Table 11. 2. Whole Bottles and Tableware Complexity by Occupation and Ethnicity

	Black Households	White Households		
	Unskilled/Skilled <i>n</i> =2	Unskilled <i>n</i> =6	Skilled <i>n</i> =12	Professional <i>n</i> =10
Mean whole bottles	15.5	5.8	10.7	14.6
Mean tableware complexity	17.0	7.3	11.08	10.10

1. All data except for "Professional" represent Southern Pacific employee households exclusively. These are the same households studied by Walker in Chapter 7.
2. Households representing "Professional" and "Wealthy Professional" categories are combined due to the small sample size.
3. Only assemblages containing a ceramic MNI of >70 are used in the analysis.

Who Recycled Bottles (and Who Just Threw Them Out)?

An empty bottle was a potential source of cash. As we mentioned in Chapter 5, used glass bottles were bought for a few cents by neighborhood junk dealers, who sold them wholesale for reuse. Thus, the question arises what kinds of households recycled (in the sense of disposing of their bottles to the junk dealer), what kinds didn't, and was there a relationship between this and other artifact patterns?

Bottles have an unfortunate tendency to break; furthermore, thin-walled bottles break at a higher rate than thick. Since a broken bottle would have been worthless to the junk dealer, it was necessary to devise a way of avoiding (as far as possible) the problems inherent in this characteristic. To this end, Bruce Owen devised three independent measures for each category of bottle and ran the same statistical tests on all (see Appendix G) in the belief that patterns that emerge in multiple categories will have behavioral significance and not be mere statistical artifacts.

As elsewhere, four employment categories were defined: Unskilled, Skilled, Professional, and Wealthy Professional. If patterns of disposal were in some way a reflection of relative wealth, one would expect a straight-line relationship between the social classes. This worked as expected for the lowest three employment groups: by every measure and in all cases the Unskilled households left a smaller proportion of whole bottles in their refuse than did their neighbors. When data representing the two middle groups (Skilled and Professional) were compared with the combined lowest and highest groups (Unskilled and Wealthy Professional), however, an interesting pattern emerged: by two statistical measures and at the 5-percent level of significance, the extremes were found to be more alike in comparison with the two middle groups. In other words, the poorest and the richest had similar habits when it came to disposing of whole bottles—they tended to recycle rather than throw them out.

Although statistical analysis did not show any significant patterns in recycling by ethnicity/nativity, differences between various social categories can sometimes be derived by combining, recombining, and reformulating the data sets, and can often lead to unexpected correlations. In Table 11.2, the characteristics of selected white and black households are compared using arithmetic means. The results lack the statistical authority of our other analyses; with only two households represented, it is possible that the African American data may be anomalous.

In 19th-century West Oakland, households of relatively low-paid, first-generation immigrants and many African Americans fill our “unskilled” category. This is the group whose taste ran to expensive cuts of meat, the complex table settings that Mark Walker has described in Chapter 7, and the fancy parlor bric-a-brac depicted by Paul Mullins in Chapter 4. These are also the people targeted by the institutions of social reform of which Marta Gutman has written in Chapter 6 and in her essay “Domesticating Institutions” (Gutman 1997) issued in an earlier Cypress publication. Supporters of the domestic-reform movement sought through education to improve the working-class standard of living by rationalizing housework into a “domestic science.” Purchases—particularly food—should be suitable to one’s financial ability, should be made with appropriate frugality, and where cooking, cleaning, and decorating were concerned, with the application of scientific principles (Figure 11.9).



Figure 11.9. “The Coming Housekeeper.”

*“I’m only a wee lassie but I can think and feel,
And though this world has sorrow we all may share its weal
By being true and honest and doing what we can
To make the best of everything and lend a helping hand.
My home is with the lowly, my parents dear are poor;
But I need not be unhappy nor scorn the rich I’m sure.
Every little maiden in our school may learn
To be a skillful housemaid and honest wages earn.
To be the best of housemaids and keep things bright you know
Is the reason I’m learning to sweep and cook and sew.
The Son of God, our Savior, a servant chose to be,
And to live like Christ the holy must be the aim for me.
I’m only a wee lassie but I will learn each rule
And heed the lessons taught me in our West Oakland School.”*

(Oakland New Century Club, 1901)

If successful, one of the effects of this movement would have been the reproduction of social-class boundaries, clearly demarked by means of symbols encapsulated in material culture. As society at large promoted behavior suitable to one’s class, variation from this pattern would be considered subversive. In Chapter 3 we suggested that meat in general and beef in particular had symbolic significance for many Americans. More than mere nutrition, it represented their aspirations and serving it was a matter of pride. Specifically, we propose that beef was a symbol of success in late-19th-century America; consequently, those who were excluded from conventionally assigned measures of social approval—such as African Americans and the unskilled working-class—particularly desired and purchased it.

We apply similar motivations to the behaviors and purchasing decisions by working-class households in relation to the other items enumerated above. We hypothesize that the practice of purchasing above one’s “station” was a strategy whereby working-class households seized those elements of middle-class material culture that fit their own goals. In this way, evidence of resistance is seen in variation from class-based expectations. In demonstrating that behaviors were being carried out where they were conventionally prohibited, the subaltern populations of West

Oakland daily undermined the Victorian structure of meanings by blurring what should be clear and by making ambiguous symbols that should be plainly understood.

By the same token, while among white households relative wealth seems to correlate with the propensity to recycle (and the necessity to deal with the neighborhood junk dealer), African American households are the exception. In this area, as well as in the complexity of their table settings, they resemble upper-middle-class white households. What might be the source of this similarity?

In Chapter 5 we described how the industrialization of America reduced the necessity for even the working class to buy secondhand goods. Concomitantly, one-price stores had largely replaced the system of variable retail prices that had been the norm in the early- and mid-19th century. The intense personal contact involved in barter—the primary mode of the junk dealer—was seen as outmoded and of dubious propriety. Thus, the bottle data may reflect a tension between the Victorian value of thrift and the declining respectability of barter in the new cash economy. This tendency may be reflected most strongly in the behavior of the white middle-class, as well as certain African American households that, despite their relatively low economic standing, enjoyed a level of social sophistication well above their conventionally assigned class.

In an article subtitled “CRM and the Archaeology of the African Diaspora,” J.W. Joseph is particularly critical of analyses developed in CRM contexts. Joseph asserts that analyses focusing “on African American socioeconomic status as measured by Euroamerican indices . . . are meaningless at best and at worst, demeaning” (2004:25). We support this contention, which is congruent with the methodological stance encouraged by Mullins (1999); both insist that cultural groups must be studied in the context of things, both material and political, that are important to them. We feel that this approach should not be limited to African American archaeology but is appropriately applied to the study of all other ethnicities and social classes, particularly subaltern groups; and this is what we have attempted to do.

Working-Class Oaklanders were Rational After All

While 19th-century nutritionist Wilbur Atwater was shaking his head in puzzlement over the extravagances of the poor, British economist William Stanley Jevons was coming up with a concept that grounded Victorian intellectuals like Atwater ever more solidly in their rationalist view of household economics: marginal utility (Hutchison 1966). Jevons explained how the value of an item to a consumer depends on its utility at the time of the decision to obtain it. A glass of water, for example, has high utility (value) to a thirsty person; but after two or three glasses the drinker is satiated, at which point the substance’s utility for the person has effectively disappeared. In short, the utility of each additional glass of water or unit of a commodity—the “marginal utility”—is said to decline, as the individual possesses more of it.

This principle of neoclassical economics predicts that the marginal utility for additional wealth is lower for the rich than for the poor. “We would scarcely compare the state of mind of a poor clerk,” wrote a contemporary of Jevons, “who received his month’s salary of £5 on the first day of the month and lost it on his way home, with that of the millionaire who dropped the same sum” (von Böhm-Bawerk 1959:174). Since £5 constitutes proportionally more of the clerk’s wealth than that of the millionaire, the former would be expected to place more value on it and structure his purchasing to reflect the fact. Or so 19th-century science believed.

The essence of Victorian culture was its rationality, whereby goals were to be achieved via judicious, predictable ends. Since this assumption underlay the concept of marginal utility,

contemporary social reformers perceived only irrationality in the consumer behavior of the working class. Randy McGuire, however, looks at the argument from the perspective of the clerk, pointing out that

[if] your income is above a certain threshold “extra” money may be saved, invested or put aside for future large purchases. Below a certain threshold the “extra” money is in small amounts—it would take too long to get significant savings and the instability of income means that when a crunch comes what money you have will not fill the breach. [Thus] it is rational to enjoy it while you have it [McGuire 2003, personal communication].

Although they purchased and displayed the same items as their social superiors, in our view West Oakland’s working class were not merely being extravagant in their attempt to acquire what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as “cultural capital” by aping the manners and artifacts of the Victorian middle class. We take the position that the working-class culture that can be reconstructed on the local and household level involved the creation of a system of symbols borrowed from a variety of available sources, including Victorian values and artifacts, as well as ethnic and class experience. The result was a bricolage of symbolic structures that served the purposes of their creators.

In the 20th century, as in the 19th, to successfully label a group as unable to make rational decisions was to marginalize it and—not coincidentally—to silence voices of dissent. Imposed from the outside and with little thought to its impact on community life, urban renewal was the mid-20th-century solution to the perceived inability of West Oaklanders to solve their own problems. Like the social reformers of an earlier era, government regulators and elected officials saw the district’s residents as responding inappropriately and irrationally to the condition of their neighborhood. The next step was easy: decisions about the future should be taken out of local hands and made by those who knew better: technocrats and experts.

Writing about social changes in Oakland, historian Robert Self notes that “there is a pressing need to move beyond the trope of the black ghetto . . . and to theorize how African American communities responded—in creative, productive, and at times even halting and unsuccessful ways—to the structural changes brought on by migration and metropolitan reorganization” (2003:334). Self looks for the origins of the Black Panther Party and other social movements in both public policy and local responses to it. The Cypress Archaeology Project deepens the historic contextualization of Self’s analysis by examining, at household and neighborhood scales, the network of relationships from which modern Oakland was forged.

THE CYPRESS PROJECT CONCLUDED

A construction project of huge proportions, the Cypress Freeway Replacement Project presented Caltrans with a mammoth challenge and an equally great opportunity: how to replace the demolished Cypress structure without inadvertently destroying an irreplaceable source of West Oakland's history.

With 48 city blocks that might contain important remains, there were many questions to be answered before a strategy could be developed: Was it possible that important deposits would have survived the initial freeway construction? Where might these remains be located and how would it be possible to tell important ones from the rest? Would toxic contamination complicate or even preclude the study altogether? The rebuild was on a particularly tight schedule for, until the new freeway was open, traffic was forced onto city streets. Caltrans' greatest challenge would be to develop a strategy by which all these questions would be answered and an archaeological mitigation program completed without holding up construction.

The first response was to develop a sensitivity study that reduced the initial 48 blocks down to a comparatively manageable 22. Recognizing that the standard procedures to discover, evaluate, and treat the potential wealth of archaeological remains would be far too time-consuming, Caltrans and FHWA created a Memorandum of Agreement that defined the alternative approach to compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and good archaeological practice that is described in Chapter 1. The process of fieldwork was assisted by Caltrans engineers, planners, archaeologists, architectural historians, surveyors, videographers, and environmental/health and safety specialists. Caltrans Headquarters in Sacramento provided the agency's senior Historical Archaeologist to help apply the evaluation criteria to archaeological remains in the field.

From the outset, Caltrans took every opportunity to inform both the neighborhood and Bay Area residents in general about the exciting discoveries. Interest in the archaeology project was encouraged by several "news media days" organized by the District 4 Office of Public Affairs, which brought television, radio, and print journalists onto the site. The inevitable local curiosity generated by these events led to the creation of a widely distributed book of essays, and a partnership with Oakland's African American Museum and Library that engendered locally displayed exhibits on the archaeology and local history brought to light by the Cypress Project (see Appendix B). Later, the National Park Service used Caltrans' outreach efforts as an exemplar of successful public programming in its National Register Bulletin *Telling the Stories: Effective Interpretive Programs for Places Listed in the National Register of Historic Places* (Thomson and Harper 2000).

The fieldwork generated a huge quantity of data to be analyzed, documented, and disseminated to the general public and professionals; and without careful planning, this abundance might have caused the Cypress Project to become a victim of its own success. Since a conventional archaeological report was impractical due to the sheer volume of information, Caltrans created an array of products. These range from technical data that other archaeologists will use for years to come in their comparative studies, to accessible interpretive and popular reports in formats that include conventional printed documents, compact discs, a Web site, and an educational videotape distributed by the University of California.

Caltrans' Cypress Archaeology Project has created a database whose size is unequalled in the region. No other investigation of the 19th-century West has discovered and documented such a large number of tightly associated urban assemblages using consistent methods of

excavation and analysis. With new immigrants and native-born citizens, railroad porters and wealthy investors all living side by side, West Oakland’s story has turned out to be richly textured and complex. Often disparaged and historically ignored, West Oakland is now one of the best-documented spots in California.

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

The Cypress Archaeology Project was of unprecedented size and complexity in the West. At this time it seems appropriate to reflect on the undertaking as process, in the hope that lessons learned may aid future cultural resources management efforts. What would we have done differently and where might we have changed our emphasis to improve outcomes? Which innovations might be productively emulated by other projects? In the pages that follow, we assess what worked and what didn’t in relation to a number of crucial themes.

1. The Consolidated Approach to Section 106 Review

The conventional phasing required under the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation’s rules involves discovery, evaluation, and treatment. Each has its own review period, comments pass between various officials, and the entire process (while ensuring appropriate oversight and opportunity to comment) is quite drawn-out. Early in the Cypress Project it was realized that this was not a practical approach for a construction project on the fast track. The Memorandum of Agreement addressed this problem by allowing officials to condense the 106 Process, whereby the three phases were to be carried out concomitantly, guided by the highly specific terms of the project research design. As described in Chapter 1, the research design specified the conditions under which an archaeological deposit would be considered to have sufficient research potential to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Most evaluations were made in the field, jointly by the consulting archaeologist and the agency archaeologist.

Analysis

The approach required a high level of investment in focused prefield historical research. While some of this work did not relate directly to discoveries, it was essential in order to make the field evaluations. Since identification, evaluation, and treatment could often be accomplished within a few days, fieldwork moved rapidly. That construction was delayed for not a single day was due to this fast decision-making.

It is axiomatic among archaeologists that research value is a moving target. Archaeological remains do not have intrinsic importance, but are assigned value depending on the investigator’s approach and goals, and the available database. Paradoxically, the Cypress model required us to predict which deposits would best serve the research goals before the universe of data was known. Considering funding limitations and the logistics of working in front of construction equipment, this conflict may be unavoidable. In retrospect, however, we believe that, in some cases, more reliable significance decisions could have been made in the lab, with materials from contexts that failed the test, together with their associated historical research data, donated to educational organizations.

2. Consistency of Data Collection and Analysis

The project research design emphasized the recovery of caches of artifacts from discrete, historically documented contexts. A great deal of emphasis was placed on rigorous excavation

and recording methods. A pull-down menu approach to lab cataloging resulted in a high level of standardization.

Analysis

The emphasis on a particular source of archaeological data, its collection, and analysis resulted in a database that can be used for both qualitative and quantitative comparison with a high degree of confidence. Conversely, the highly focused approach discounted types of data—such as landscape features and structural remains—that would have been useful for different types of analyses. Excluding these types of remains was a value call on the part of the research design's authors, who observed that effort spent on examining and describing the latter is not often rewarded with concomitant insights into past lifeways. Thus, the research design sought to achieve a high cost-benefit ratio by maximizing the return of demonstrably useful data.

The weakness in this approach is that it is inherently conservative. Contexts that do not meet the standard are discounted out of hand and not allowed to contribute to an evolving research design. It is essential that innovation not be stifled by the rote application of this approach with its appeal of apparent scientific rigor. To fully explore the potential of these resources, interpretive schemes that require qualitative or quantitative data should be given equal standing in analysis, as should the ability to work at a variety of scales from the household to the city. The eclectic "feel" of this volume is the result of our application of these principles. This quality may be seen as a lack of consistency and coherence in message whereas it is, in fact, part of the goal. To some degree, "the medium is the message."

3. Working with Interested Local Parties

The research design required us to involve local organizations in the development and conduct of the project, both in order to inform local people about what we were doing and to solicit their ideas about what issues we should be examining.

Analysis

Contacts with the news media were managed by Caltrans public relations professionals; media days and other efforts are listed in Appendix B. To get local input into the project, we met early with Robert Haynes, Director of the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO). Mr. Haynes, a historian, identified a series of interconnected themes that we incorporated into our research, a co-sponsored exhibit, and finally this volume: the railroad, unionism, black migration, and the evolution of modern Oakland through slum clearance. Caltrans, ASC, and AAMLO partnered on several interpretive projects, also listed in Appendix B.

While this aspect of the project was very successful, it did not achieve its full potential. Keeping fieldwork ahead of construction was the highest priority and, in retrospect, overshadowed other important aspects of the project. The California Office of Historic Preservation asked that visitors be accommodated on site; however, physical access by all but project personnel was restricted for safety and insurance reasons. Access problems might have been resolved by having input into the construction general contractor's health-and-safety plan, which governed the conditions under which guests could visit the site, before construction began.

The project research design, while having the merit of flexibility in this area, did not require us to pursue all potential avenues for local cooperation. The result was that our relationships

with official citywide and larger-scale organizations (such as AAMLO and the news media) were developed at the expense of contacts with truly local organizations such as neighborhood schools, neighborhood social organizations, and local elected officials. A project of this size would benefit from a designated outreach coordinator.

4. Presentation of Raw Data and of Interpretation

The Cypress Project developed truly massive quantities of archaeological and historical data. The conventional approach to making this available to professionals in a series of narrative, paper-based reports was determined to be inadequate, so a new format was created: the Block Technical Report (BTR) series and the Interpretive Report. The former presents the data in standardized format as backup for the latter (this volume), whose job is to offer interpretations.

Analysis

The BTRs present the data in a format that is readily usable for researchers concerned with particular datasets, such as specific ethnicities, periods, or social units. Separating the raw data from the interpretation also prevents the latter from becoming swamped and facilitates a readable interpretative product. This division is also a logical way of applying the hermeneutic approach established in the research design, which takes our interpretations as only some of the possible orientations to the data. Other researchers may agree with our interpretations, passively disagree, or even actively reanalyze the data contained in the BTRs to counter our claims.

5. Hermeneutics and a Broadly Defined Historical Archaeology

The project research design involves both hermeneutic and scientific (hypothetico-deductive) approaches. While links between datasets and research domains are explicit, the latter are conceived as issues to be addressed rather than questions to be answered. Furthermore, the research design conceives of historical archaeology broadly as an interpretive nexus of several traditional disciplines, including history, oral history, vernacular architecture, and urban studies among others.

Analysis

The research design took the position that historical archaeology is, by definition, interdisciplinary. Its goal was to link past to present through important themes such as the origin and reexamination of the “slum”—a theme emphasized by urban historians Alan Mayne (Mayne and Murray 2001) and Robert Self (2003). Taking this stance required using data and interpretation from nonarchaeological sources—indeed, some nonmaterial sources—to construct interpretations. One outcome of taking this approach was that some have questioned the centrality of hard, excavated archaeological material in our interpretations. “Would we have known this without the artifacts?” is the pivotal issue to those who do not accept historical archaeology as the nexus described above.

Whatever one’s stand on this critique, it is clear that future reports should make more explicit the links between the various sources of data employed in pursuit of interpretation. In the future, the types of ambitious interpretations that we have attempted will be improved by more synthesis of the disparate forms of material culture, archaeological and otherwise. This will require giving individual authors the opportunity to see others’ interpretations and develop cross-disciplinary themes. The lack of a single theme and method is seen as a positive outcome, in that it avoids an authorial voice that would tend to naturalize the archaeologist’s interpretations.

6. Keeping the Results Available

Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations has become largely a matter of creating technical reports of limited availability that fulfill the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines. The purpose of the law, however, is to encourage the use of heritage resources (such as archaeological sites) for long-term public benefit, an idea that has begun to assume more importance in the practice of cultural resources management (e.g., Jameson 1997; Little 2002).

Analysis

The Cypress Archaeology Project attempted to serve at least two 'publics': professional archaeologists and interested community members; both were addressed by the various products listed in Appendix B, as well as this volume.

Caltrans' strategy of sponsoring several products of varying formats (video, a book of essays, displays, printed reports, CDs, and a web page) rather than a single mega-report was well received by peer reviewers. However, limited numbers of hardcopy products—such as CDs and paper reports—were created; when those are distributed, the product is effectively no longer available. The same can be said of the well reviewed but ultimately short-lived exhibits created by AAMLO. These products were created at public expense and have continuing value. The question is how to keep them available after the end of the project.

Cypress Archaeology Project staff found the World Wide Web to be a huge boon to disseminating information and receiving public input; a review draft of this volume, for example, elicited over 600 visits in April and May 2004. The WWW is not a panacea—many people do not have access to a fast computer—and should not substitute for other forms of outreach. It has great potential, however, as a medium-term, virtual home for these creations during a project's afterlife.

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Appendixes on CD

APPENDIX A

CYPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT TIMELINE

APPENDIX B

OUTREACH AND ACADEMIC PRODUCTS
OF THE CYPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

APPENDIX C

FEATURE ASSOCIATIONS BY BLOCK

APPENDIX D

FEATURE SNAPSHOTS

APPENDIX E

DAY-TO-DAY ON THE CYPRESS PROJECT
EXCERPTS FROM THE SITE LOG

APPENDIX F

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SUMMARY FAUNAL DATA

APPENDIX G

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF BOTTLE DATA
BY GENERAL CATEGORIES