



# PARDEE HOME MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Oakland City Landmark, 1975  
National Register of  
Historic Places, 1976  
California Historical Landmark,  
1998

Summer, 1998



Governor Pardee and two unidentified young ladies at the dedication of the Pardee Dam, 1929

## ***EBMUD Exhibit, Video Celebrate Seventy-Five Years of Service to Region***

On May 20th museum trustee Arnie Lerner and museum director David Nicolai attended a festive celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of EBMUD (East Bay Municipal Utility District). The reception was held in the atrium of its handsome headquarters building, located just a few blocks down from the Pardee House on 11th Street. Highlights of the evening included the first public viewings of both the photographic exhibit and

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## ***Governor Pardee and Yosemite National Park: A Book Inscription, Chandelier, and Presidential Tour***

Cathy Sponseller, new Assistant Registrar, is passionate on the subjects of Yosemite National Park and its advocate, John Muir. Cathy volunteers for both the John Muir House in Martinez and The Yosemite Fund, a non-profit foundation which supports restoration in Yosemite. Cathy was interested to learn that the Pardee family enjoyed many vacations in Yosemite. She was very intrigued by a book she discovered in the Pardee Home library. In a copy of John Muir's *Our National Parks* is the following inscription:

*To  
Governor Pardee  
with sincere regards  
John Muir*

*Martinez, California  
Yosemite Reunion Year  
(1905.)*

The story of Governor Pardee and Yosemite begins with Carleton Watkins, photographer of the mammoth plates on the unique chandelier in the Pardee Home's entry hall. Those pictures were taken by Watkins circa 1880, on one of his later trips to the Yosemite region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In 1864, twenty-four of Watkins' 1861 Yosemite photographs were submitted to the United States Congress with legislation to protect Yosemite Valley and the adjacent Mariposa grove of

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## Museum Staff Enjoys a Busy and Productive Summer at the House

Busy and productive, indeed! There were as many as six people working within the main house, the coach house, and in the yard during many days this summer, and the enlarged staff was able to accomplish a great deal. Museum registrar Vicki Wiese was joined by a colleague of hers, Cathy Sponseller, from the masters program in museum studies at JFK University in Orinda. Cathy originally came to the house this past winter to fill in for Vicki during a leave-of-absence, but we were fortunate to be able to retain Cathy's services after Vicki's return.

Both women have put in many hours working on the seemingly endless registration work at the Pardee Home. In museum terminology, registration involves all aspects of "collections management," particularly the proper storage and cataloging (both old-fashioned, manual card cataloging and computer cataloging) of our extraordinary collections. This is "behind the scenes" work that the average visitor to this house or any other museum may not fully appreciate, but proper care of its collections is *the* most important work at any museum.

Vicki and Cathy first tackled an upstairs storage space containing oil paintings, prints, framed photographs, etc. and dramatically improved the storage conditions for these objects, as well as thoroughly upgrading their cataloging. They are now at work on a second important storage area, this one dominated by books — hundreds of books, ranging from nineteenth-century scientific texts to 1950's cookbooks. As any registrar will attest, this work can be tedious at times, but there are always many wonderful discoveries along the way.

Vicki and Cathy have been joined in the upstairs office by Vanessa Taub, a senior at Mills College who is finishing her degree in history and dramatic design. Vanessa has been very busy at Mills with a proposal to create a Costume Museum there. As an intern at Pardee Home, she has worked extensively with our large collection of purses (see related article on the purse exhibit designed and curated by Vanessa), and is now working on the storage and cataloging of five drawers full of needlework supplies. Her efforts have been invaluable to our museum and should be great experience for her Mills project.



Joseph Hawkes (left) and Kao Sio Saechao (right).

Finally, we were most fortunate to have as workers Kao Sio Saechao and Joseph Hawkes, two young men referred to us (and paid for) by the Youth Employment Partnership program based in Fruitvale. Kai Sio is an East Oakland resident who is entering his junior year at Fremont High, and Joseph lives on the east side of Lake Merritt and is beginning high school at Oakland Tech. Both did outstanding work at some fairly dirty jobs, particularly a thorough cleaning of three important storage spaces in our barn; likewise, they repainted the interior of the backyard fence next to the barn with professional finesse. Their youthful enthusiasm for their work was infectious, and they represent the finest of our city's young adults.

### Print and painting storage before and after recent improvements.





