

# Lake Chabot Historical Walk

## Welcome time travelers!

**I**n February 1874 a large Chinese work force entered this sylvan setting to begin construction of San Leandro Reservoir. Later renamed Lake Chabot after its French-Canadian originator Anthony Chabot, the dam was built using techniques Chabot learned and invented in the gold-fields of California.

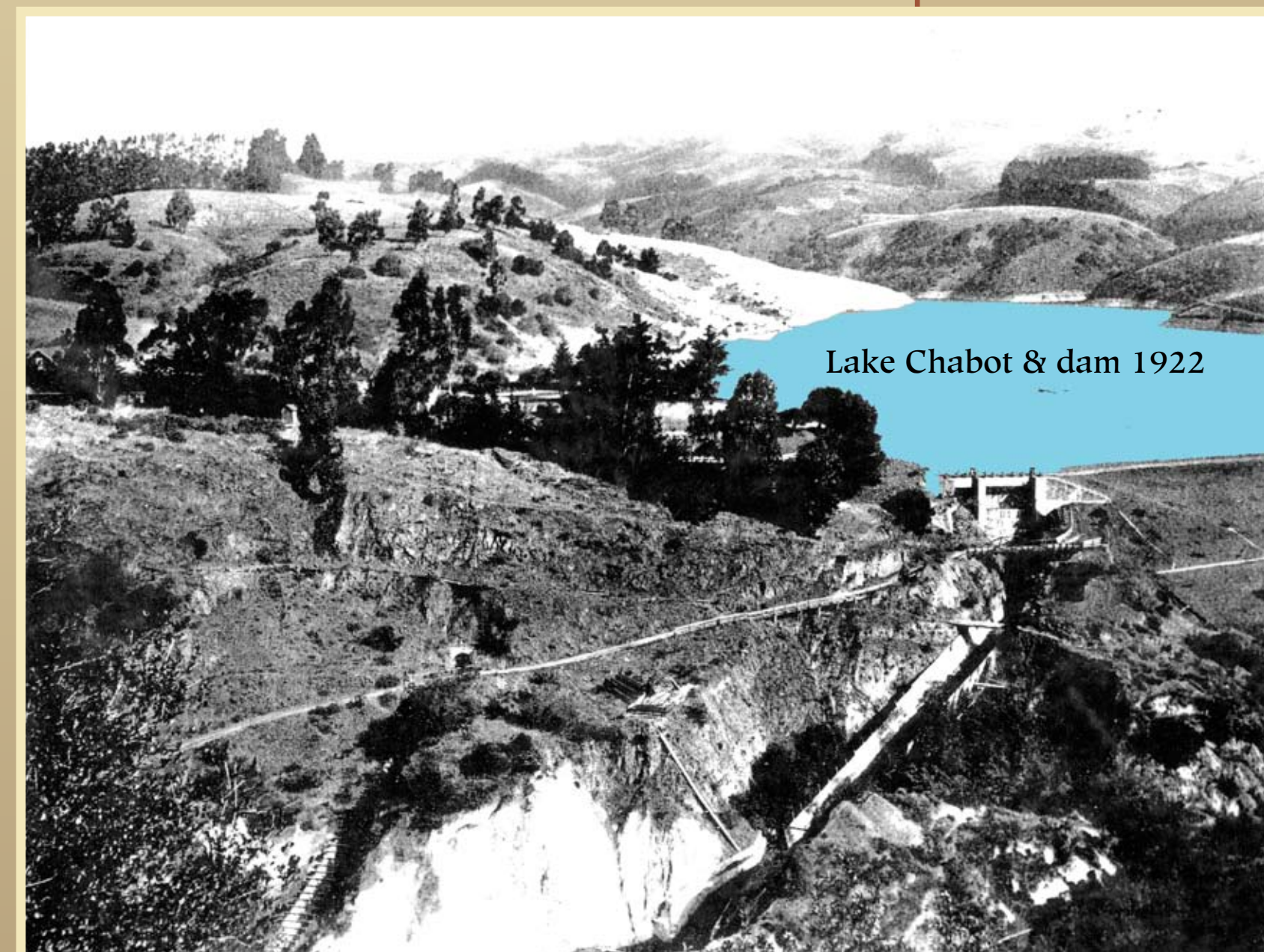
Irish blacksmiths, Portuguese teamsters, and Caucasian masons and miners would also join the construction ranks. However, it was the 800 Chinese “shovel men” that moved over 600,000 cubic yards of earth to create Chabot’s dream dam, once the primary drinking water supply for Oakland and San Leandro.

The dam’s colorful past is a storyteller’s playground of engineering feats, ghost mansions, and mud-caked stallions. Take this history walk to explore what newspaper articles once heralded as the “Great Reservoir” and one of the “Wonders of the California.”



Oakland Public Library, Oakland History Room

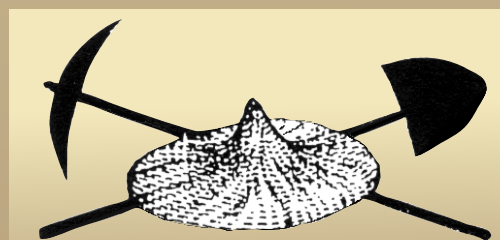
Dubbed “Water King” by the local paper, amateur engineer Anthony Chabot was praised as having “not his equal on the Pacific Coast” for his establishment of the Contra Costa Water Company and other water systems in the San Francisco area. A former gold miner or “49er,” Chabot’s use of the canvas water hose, a predecessor to the power nozzle hose, gave him the title “Father of Hydraulic Mining.” His name is also immortalized at Chabot Observatory and Science Center, one of his many charities.



Lake Chabot & dam 1922

courtesy of EBMUD

"The Chinamen do the greater part of the hard heavy work, such as blasting, carting, laying pipes, etc." San Leandro Record of 9/11/1875



The Chinese hat, shovel, and pickaxe symbolize the Chinese contribution to the dam’s construction.

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