

Docent Guide OF PROCEDURES AND EXHIBITS

a word from our Curator ...

Dear Docents,

The Alameda Historical Society was founded in 1948 by Fred J. Croll, longtime City Assessor and member of a prominent West End family, noted for their involvement with sports and the public beach and amusement park. Mr. Croll died the following year, in 1949.

Through an act of the City Council and Library Board, we were given permission to use a portion of the basement of the old Carnegie Library in 1951. Requested to move out, we found a new location in the former auto shop of the Alameda High School in 1981. After a span of ten years there, we moved to our present location in the Masonic Building in 1991.

The first Curator was Dr. Harry Smith, who also served as president. Following his death, Myrtle Richards became the Curator, until she passed away in office. After several years with no Curator, I started with the Museum in 1971.



This Guide has been developed so that you can more easily assist the visitors to our Museum. All of the exhibits are briefly described and special emphasis is given to certain exhibits which docents tell us elicit the most questions from the public - exhibits such as the Alameda Panoramic Photograph, the Phyllis Diller collection and the Native American artifacts

Aside from the survey of the historical exhibits, this guide also mentions the vital role that the gift shop plays in supporting our museum, as well as the important civic cultural function of our East Wing rotating gallery.

Enjoy this guide, read it at your leisure - and many, many thanks to you for your wonderful support.

George Gunn, Curator





Docents' Duties:

Opening

Tom Faulds is the gentleman who unlocks the doors, turns on the lights, and brings out the cash and donation boxes before the museum opens. Please be on time for your shift. He will wait for ten minutes after opening; if no docent arrives by then, he locks up again and leaves.

If the cash box and donation box are not out, please bring them out and put the donation box on the shelf.

Count the cash in the cash box (should be \$60) and fill out the Opening Shift or Shift Change Docent's Sales Report with:

- Today's date.
- Opening cash (if it is NOT \$60, record what the amount was).
- Sign your name below DOCENT(S) AUTOGRAPH.

Please inform the Docent Coordinator if the cash box is short more than small amount.

Check the voicemail and record any messages on the machine – there are mailboxes for the officers in docent area, and you can leave messages for George in his mailbox.

Put out the sandwich board(s) on the sidewalk in front of the museum.

If it's nice out and the heat is not on, prop open the front door.

Closing

Tom Faulds will come by at the end of the shift to lock the museum doors and turn off the lights. The Treasurer regularly collects sales profits, docent reports, and any donations from the secure box in the docent station.

Bring in the sandwich board & close the doors.

Count the cash in the cash box and fill out the SALES/PROFIT at SHIFT END with the profit (how much you have in the cash box minus \$60 that stays in the cash box for the next shift).

Leave \$60 in mostly small bills in the cash box (for the next shift).

Compile the envelope to place in the secure box.

In the envelope:

- Sales profits (+ or whatever needed to leave exactly \$60 in the box).
- All receipts from your shift.
- Docents' Sales Report sheet.

Saturday AM docents – please complete steps 2-4 at the end of your morning shift – count cash in cash box, compile envelope and place envelope into the secure box in the docent area.

During Your Shift

One docent must remain at the front desk at ALL times (keep cash box in your sight)

Please wear a name tag (let the Docent Coordinator know if you don't have one)

Greet all guests and ask them to sign the guest book.

Please keep an eye on them as they move around the museum.

Offer to answer questions.

Encourage guests to become members of the Museum and/or to volunteer.

Answer the phone and take messages if and when appropriate.

Keys for merchandise / jewelery cases are kept behind the desk.

Complete a receipt for purchases over \$5.

Write your initials in the SOLD BY box, fill in the date, and list each item sold with its price.

- White receipt is kept in the cash box to put in the sales envelope
- → Pink copy is given to the customer
- ✓ Yellow copy stays in the receipt book

Make sure guests leave food and beverage at the desk when they enter the Museum.

Keep Alameda history books stocked (extras located under display cabinet).

We can not hold items or do layaway without a deposit (50% or docent's discretion), pickup date, customer's phone number/email and name.

Consignment sales must be recorded in the separate consignment sales book.

There are information packets behind the docent desk that have museum information, including information on all the displays to help you answer guest questions. It is OK to say "I don't know" if you don't know the answer to any questions.

We are unable to allocate time to help guests conduct research. If guests come in looking for information on ancestors or on their house, refer them first to our collection of Alameda history books to research for themselves. If they need more that that, refer them to the Alameda Free Library (On Oak St. at Lincoln) for additional help. They have a California collection, an Alameda collection and many City directories. The library has extensive resources available to researchers. There is a printed sheet with suggestions behind the docent counter that lists resources for their reference.

Donations

- ✓ We take any and all donations for the Museum and gift shop.
- → Fill out the donations form and leave the value empty.
- If the donor wants a copy, make one on the copier in the docent area.
- ☐ The Curator has the final say on donations to the Collection.

The Gift Shop area

The first area that our visitors encounter comprises our gift shop displays, and it is important that they be told the following:

- ☐ The gift shop merchandise sold provides a major source of funding for the Alameda Museum's archival preservation supplies, utilities, as well as routine maintenance and office supplies. No separate sales tax is charged it is included in the purchase price to make the transaction much easier.
- ☐ The merchandise on sale is not and has not been part of the Alameda Museum's collections. Rather, it comprises, items donated by the public specifically for gift shop sales. These include occasional antiques and collectibles, which are on sale because they have no connection with the history of the City of Alameda.
- This is a good time to mention that donations of suitable items for gift shop sales would be most appreciated. A receipt is given, if desired by the donor, for tax purposes. The Museum can also arrange to pick up donations. As you will note from the type of merchandise on display, all good saleable donations are most welcome they do not have to be antiques!
- ☐ Gift shop items are found mainly adjacent to the front entrance and along the main aisle leading to the docents' counter, with jewelry and other small items of value in the showcase, as well as books and magazines on the back counter.
- ☐ The Gift Shop Annex is located on the North side of the Rotating gallery and contains furniture, other large items and knick-knacks.





The Reception area

(Located immediately inside the entrance)

This area is devoted primarily to transportation-related artifacts, and these are the focal points:

- The 6-seat bicycle. It was constructed in 1931 by Frank D. Amaral Jr., whose family operated a bicycle sales and repair shop located at Encinal Ave. and Park St. (the approximate current location of the Jack-in-the-Box restaurant). Note the photo on the nearby wall showing a team of men riding this bicycle in Lincoln Park.
- Neptune Beach art. Rescued panels from the art adorning a concession stand at Neptune Beach.
- Anderson Steam Engine & Tender. This is a working scale model steam locomotive made by Waldemar Anderson between 1937-39. He used to operate it in his back yard located at 1343 Grove St. Anderson was a member of an early Alameda family.
- → High wheel bicycle. Constructed in England about 1881; note the ivory hand-

- grips. It belonged to Oliver Haslett, who frequently rode it around our city. He was the uncle of the late Doris Haslett Goodman, prominent with the Altarena Theater.
- Oil painting of the Alameda Mole (behind Docent station). Painted by Leroy Nelson in 1967, it shows a scene in the 1920's in which the ferryboat "Oakland" is docked at the mole. This graphically illustrates an early mode of transportation for Alamedans in those days they took a steam (later electric) train to the terminal in order to sail by ferryboat to San Francisco. The construction of the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge ended this system of transportation by the late 1930's.
- □ Large safe. Circa 1900, from Croll's Bar, located at Central Ave and Webster St.





The Victorian Era section

(Located immediately along the left wall as you pass by the Rotating Gallery entranceway)

The Victorian Era section is the first exhibit within the History Gallery. It consists of period furniture and artifacts from several Alameda homes and highlights include:

- ☐ The majority of the furniture featured in this section is from the home of the early Bay Farm residents the P. A. McDonell family pioneer farmers who had settled there as early as 1861. Their furnishings include the hall tree, the marble-topped chest of drawers and table, two gentleman's chairs with red velvet upholstery, and the pair of reception chairs.
- A pair of gold-framed portraits of California Governor Henry H. Haight and his wife. An Alameda resident and large property owner, Henry Haight served as governor from 1867 to 1871. Haight Avenue and the Haight School, both in Alameda, are named after him, as also is San Francisco's celebrated Haight Street.
- ☐ The gas chandelier is from the dining room of The Garrett Mansion, erected in 1893 and located on Clinton Avenue at Union Street.
- The display case contains shoes worn by Alameda women from the late 1890s to the early 1900s.









Architectural Detail grouping

(Located across the aisle from The Victorian Era Section)

This grouping comprises millwork, finials and hardware from Victorian Era Alameda homes.

- Note the job site sign of prominent Alameda architect Henry H. Meyers, whose residence is maintained now by the Alameda Museum as the Meyers House and Garden at 2021 Alameda Ave.
- Also noteworthy is the hand-colored photo of Dr. A. A. Stafford's residence and office, now demolished, which was located at Chestnut St. and Santa Clara Ave.



Milk Bottle display

(Located around the corner from the Architectural Detail grouping)

Various milk bottles from Alameda dairies.

Note: Most of the bottles were found during excacations made at the old city dump on Bay Farm Island that was in use from the mid-19th century through the late 20th century.



Neptune Beach and 1920s Era display

(Located on left side of aisle immediately after the Victorian Era section)

Neptune Beach, a commercial operation, existed from 1917 to 1939. It was located at the foot of Webster St., at Central Ave. These are some of its interesting artifacts:

- ☐ Tickets, postcards and concession prizes are found in the display case at the left.
- A pair of floral hand-painted wooden panels on the left wall was part of a concession stand that operated at Neptune Beach.
- A copper boiler, which was used for heating a molasses mixture for candy corn.
- ✓ Sunny Cove was established in 1881 by the Dietz sisters and was later run by their nephew and his wife, George and Bertha Masters. It was located on Central Ave., where the Paden School is currently located.









Early Alameda Lighting Devices case

(Located across from the Neptune Beach display)

Kerosene lamps from the late 19th and early 20th century, used in Alameda.



1930s Barbershop

(Located on left side of aisle next to the Neptune Beach and 1920's Era Display)

These are the furnishings of Frank's Barbershop, which was located at 2055 Lincoln Ave. There are two items of special interest to which you may wish to call attention:

- The owner of this barbershop was the uncle of former Alameda mayor, Chuck Corica.
- The card on the back wall listing charges for services is original - note that the basic cost of a haircut had been hand changed on the card to the "outrageous" price of \$1.75!





Telephone Communication display

(Located across the aisle from the Kitchen Display)

The theme of this small exhibit is the presence of telephone service in Alameda. The furnishings and pictures are largely of the period of 1920 to 1940. Of particular interest are these facts:

☐ The switchboard used to be located in the reception area of the Alameda City Hall.

The blown-up photo shows the interior of the Pacific Telephone Co. switchboard exchange then located at 2152 Central Ave. At the right side of the image you will see operators using chairs similar to the one we have on display (which was donated to the





Kitchen display (circa 1897-1923)

(Located at the end of the main aisle, on the left, after the Barbershop Display)

All of the many objects on display here were actually used in Alameda during this period and came to the Museum from many homes. While most items are self-evident, you might point out these in particular:

☐ The small light fixture suspended from the ceiling could operate from either gas or electricity.

☐ The cast-iron stove and the flour bin table (at right) were both typical of Alameda kitch-

ens during this era.









Museum Archives

(Located behind the doors at the south end of the museum)

This area is not open to the public. The door should remain closed and locked unless the Curator or other museum staff have opened it. The door is secured with an alarm.

The Archives are where items are cataloged, conserved and stored for reference and future exhibits. They are also the offical home to a repository of records and documents relating to the City of Alameda. The Archives are home to a variety of other artifacts including furniture, clothing, art, photos, ephemera and other historically significant items.



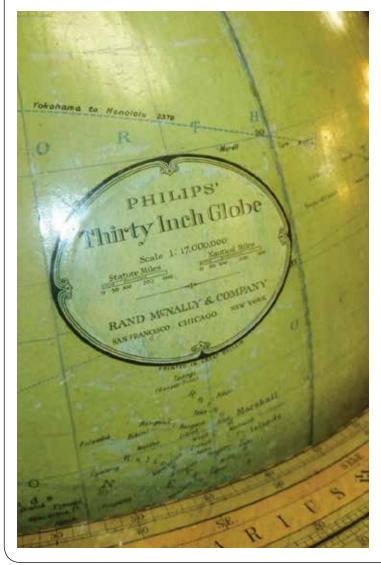




World Globe

(Located across aisle from Kitchen Display)

This globe and stand dates back to the Victorian Era; however, the globe itself was recovered in the 1930's to reflect then-current political boundaries. This globe is known to have been located in Alameda City Hall from 1897 to 1903, when the library was located in the west wing. In 1903 it moved to the new Carnegie Library where it remained for many years before becoming part of the Museum's collection.





Three-Masted Sailing Vessel model

(Located in a display case next to the World Globe)

This ship model was built in 1892 by a talented local cabinetmaker.

See annotation card for further details.



Alaska Packers Association display

(Located to the right of the Three-Masted Sailing Vessel Model)

Items of note include the steering wheel, the panoramic photograph of the fleet, the cannon, the walrus skull, and the canvas hatch cover (on the wall).

An early Alameda industry, located on the estuary, the Alaska Packers Association's fleet of tall-masted sailing ships went north every spring to Alaska where they fished for salmon and processed their catch at canneries along the Alaskan coast. The canned products were then brought to Alameda for sale and distribution. This company was eventually absorbed by the Del Monte Corporation, which ultimately discontinued this operation here.



Model of the Ferryboat "Sacramento"

(Located around the corner from the Alaska Packers Association display)

Vessels such as this model depicts were the chief mode of transportation from Alameda to San Francisco before the advent of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

This model was built for the Alameda Commuters Club, which consisted of men who regularly commuted to work in San Francisco on the 7:30 AM ferryboat. The club disbanded in 1939 when the ferryboats ceased to operate. This ship model, in a farewell gesture, was thrown overboard on the last ferryboat to cross the bay from Alameda. The model was expected to sink - but it remained afloat and was rescued by the Coast Guard (See annotation card on top of the case for further details)





Brass Locomotive bell

(Located across from the globe)

Mounted now in an iron frame, it was originally from a locomotive of the South Pacific Coast Railroad. This railroad was established in 1878 and ran from Alameda to Santa Cruz; the Southern Pacific later absorbed it.

The bell was later used to call field hands on Bay Farm Island.



nas Memorabilia case

(Located across from the Alaska Packers Association display)

Includes food service, Officer's Club plates, ash trays, retirement pin, stationery and other ephemera. Also on display, NAS Alameda Fire Department helmet.



Steam Train Replica

(Located behind the NAS memorabilia case)

This is a scale-model replica of a South Pacific Railroad engine and tender built in 1899 by local resident George Wulzen to commemorate the birth of his twin sons (shown in the adjacent photograph). The railroad ran from Alameda to Santa Cruz. (See annotation card for further details)





Old Alameda Newspapers case

(Located at first partition on the right, when facing the front of the Museum)

Alameda Newspapers through the ages, including the Argus, Encinal and Post. They were recovered from the cornerstone of the Artesian Water Works building when it was mostly demolished in 1955.









Artesian Water Works Building display

(Located next to the old Alameda Newspapers case)

The Artesian Water Works building was erected from 1880-81. The portrait is of the owner, R. R. Thompson, for whom Thompson St. is named. Also note the mounted meter cover and wooden water pipe segment mounted on the partition.

An early water company, privately owned, it provided water to the City of Alameda before the advent of the East Bay Municipal Utility District. The building was mostly demolished in 1955; one wall stands on Park St. between DeLauer's News Stand and the Toy Safari.





Native American Artifacts Display

(Located in the center of the exhibit area)

The platform display consists of mortars and pestles used for the grinding of meal products. The display case exhibits small artifacts such as arrowheads, ornamental shells, and tools made of bone.

Please note: the principal items in this collection were excavated in 1908 from a Native American mound that was removed for the opening of Santa Clara Ave. in the vicinity between High St. and Mound St.

The Native Americans who inhabited the then-peninsula of Alameda are thought to have been a branch of the Miwok tribe.







City Hall & City Government exhibits

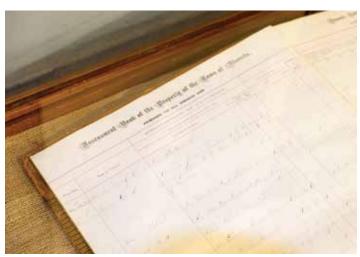
(Located along the west wall after the Ferryboat "Sacramento" Model)

Note: present-day Alameda is the result of the merger of three townships: the "Town of Alameda" (east of present-day Versailles Ave.); "Encinal" (on the Estuary at what is now the foot of Grand St.); and "Woodstock" (located in the West End). This merger took place in 1872 as the Town (later City) of Alameda.

The shallow display case shows the first assessment record book, for the years 1872-1873. Note that items of personal property were assessed - such as jewelry, furniture, livestock and poultry. On the wall above this case is a portrait of the first Assessor, E. Minor Smith, who served from 1872 to 1909.

The larger display cabinet consists of early-day office machines, clock, and glass shades from gaslight fixtures - all from the Alameda City Hall, erected in 1895-1896. The building is sthought to be one of the earliest buildings in California still in use for its original purpose. Above this cabinet is a wrought-iron panel from a teller's cage, once located in the City Hall. Next to this panel is an oil portrait of William H. Noy, an early Mayor of Alameda who owned a butcher shop in the Bay Station area.







Fire Department exhibit

(Located adjacent to the City Hall & City Government exhibits)

These exhibits represent the early volunteer fire companies of Alameda. The framed photographs and documents illustrate their history, as do the badges, helmets and silver-plated parade trumpets.

The Fire Department was founded in 1876 and consisted of volunteer personnel until 1905.



Dry Cleaning Businesses display

(Located adjoining the Fire Department exhibit)

Note the wooden hangers advertising the various dry cleaning establishments located in Alameda. This form of advertising disappeared in the 1950s with the advent of wire and plastic hangers. Note also the sad-irons in the showcase as well as the photograph of dry cleaners once located across the street from this museum.





Medical Cabinet

(Located next to the Dry Cleaning Businesses display)

This cabinet, from the office of a local physician, contains medicinal bottles from early-day Alameda pharmacies. (Note the annotation cards for further details)



Photography Studio kiosk

(Located next to the Medical Cabinet)

Camera and photos by local woman-owned portraiture studio, Misses Spencer and Stolte. They were active in Alameda from 1913 to c. 1943, members of several professional associations, and exhibited at the Hotel Alameda. Their studio was located variously on Santa Clara Ave. and Park St.



Industries - N. Clark & Sons Pottery

(Located at the partition across from the Native American Exhibits)

This firm was established in 1886 and, at the time it was built, was the largest building in Alameda. It made architectural pottery and facades, as well as terra-cotta brick, sewer and chimney pipes. The painting depicts the plant, which was demolished in 1963.

Interesting note: this firm made the roof tiles for Jack London's Wolf House home in Glen Ellen, which burned down before it was occupied. During Jack London's childhood his stepfather farmed land in the vicinity of this pottery works.



Alameda Panoramic Photograph

(Located at the partition beyond the N. Clark & Sons Pottery Exhibit)

This hand-colored panoramic photograph of Alameda is dated 1893. It was commissioned to represent the City of Alameda in the California Mid-Winter Exhibition, which was held in Golden Gate Park in 1894. This photo was taken from the tower of the Water Works building, which was on the east side of Park St., (between Santa Clara & Central Aves).

The camera is projected toward the west end. The north end of Park St. appears at the right, showing a trolley making a turn at Park St. and Santa Clara Ave. In the center, the street accentuated in white is Oak St. The group of three houses is the present site of CVS drug store and Parking lot. The vacant lot diagonally across now houses the City Hall. At the extreme left is Park St. looking toward the South Shore. The church shown at the corner of Park St. and Central Ave. was a Methodist Church. In the distance is the Masonic Building (still standing, next door to the Alameda Museum).



Cast Iron Toys case

(Located below the Alameda Panoramic Photograph)

The toys in this showcase belonged to the children of early Alameda families. (See annotation card for further details)



Ladies' Fashion Accessories & Lady's Study

(Located across from the Cast Iron Toys display)

This is a grouping of furniture used by early Alameda residents. The gown on display is from the Alameda Museum's costume collection.

The focal point of this room is an illuminated art glass window from the Herbert Mansion (now demolished), which was located in the 1400 block of Morton St.

Note the fans, purses, ornamental hair combs and hat pins - all of which were worn by women of prominent Alameda families.







Bottle case

(Located outside the Lady's Study)

Collection of bottles from Alameda vendors, including pharmaceuticals, cleaners, spirits and beverages from the 19th and early 20th centuries.



The Doll Room

(Located adjacent to the Lady's Study)

The dolls displayed are largely German bisque dolls that were played with by daughters of prominent Alameda families. The dollhouse within this alcove belonged to the Meyers sisters, and built by their father, whose home on Alameda Ave. is now known as the Meyers House and Garden Museum.







Industries-Boyco Manufacturing Co. case

(Located outside the Doll Room)

The company was originally based in Los Angeles, and expanded operations to Alameda in 1923, at a manufacturing plant located on the 1800 block of Oak St. The company was bought in 1939 by the United States Steel Products Company.



Alameda World Champion Softball Team

(Located next to the Boyco Industries case)

This exhibit has photographs, full uniforms and trophies of this 1937-1939 women's champion softball team. Especially interesting is the mammoth trophy on display, which incorporates one of the small radios, which were presented as gifts to the team members.



Alameda Manufactured Products case

(Located alongside the Docent station)

Includes packaging, glassware and plates. The plates advertising John Reardon's grocery store were given out as premiums to regular customers.











Frank Perkins Gallery

(Located in the former office, behind the Docent station)

This room is now filled with objects from the collection honoring past Alamedans that have not previously been exhibited. Items of note include:

- Alameda Police Dept. uniforms and photos from circa 1900-1930. Note the changes in the style of uniforms.
- ☐ Portrait and memorabilia of William Worthington Chipman, co-founder of the City of Alameda.
- ☐ Photos and objects from early schools, including the original Alameda High School.
- Anderson Wharf and Ratto Farm.
- ☐ Riverboat model 'Capella' crafted by Alameda dentist Dr. Winston T. Nielsen.

















Victorian Clock

(Located across from the new exhibit room)

Manufactured circa 1870, it was a wedding present to Mr. & Mrs. August Koerber. Mr. Koerber and relatives owned and operated the Koerber Wood and Coal Yard. He was also appointed a member of the Alameda Volunteer Fire Department. The couple is now buried in the Mountain View Cemetery under a large stone monument.



Minutiae display case

(Located on the front corner of the Docent station)

- Model of horse car, Alameda & Oakland Railroad Company, commonly known as the Meetz line. It ran from Park St. to 7th & Broadway in Oakland. Abandoned in 1894 and purchased by the Alameda, Oakland and Piedmont Electric Railroad. Model donated and constructed by W.E. Horrisberger.
- ☐ Silverware and serving dishes from the Alameda Hotel and Alameda Hospital.
- ☐ Headlight used on a "White Streamer" automobile









Phyllis Diller display

(Located just inside the Rotating gallery to the left)

After her high school education, Phyllis Diller got married and moved to Alameda, where her husband, Sherwood Diller, sought employment at the Naval Air Station.

They moved into the Encinal housing project near Webster Street. In the late 1940s, the Diller Family moved to a two-story Victorian home on San Jose Avenue, between Willow and Chestnut Streets, then In the early 1950's, the Diller Family moved to a modest home on the corner of Fernside and Fremont Street.

She often would entertain the PTA ladies at Edison School, where her children attended. She also played the organ at the First Presbyterian Church on Santa Clara. She performed at the Purple Onion, then at the Hungry i, in San Francisco.

Miss Diller sold off many of her possessions, but a few items she reserved for the three museums that have a Phyllis Diller exhibit. One is a small city museum in Lima, Ohio, where Phyllis was born, the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. is another. And the Alameda Museum is the third!









Rotating Gallery (East Wing)

(Entrance located across from the docents' desk)

This gallery has eleven rotating exhibits each year. Among the organizations that regularly participate are: the Alameda Photographic Society (founded in 1940), the Island Alliance of the Arts, Alameda Women Artists, and many individual artists.



Annex / Window Exhibits

(Located on the north side of the Rotating gallery)

- ☐ The Robert Lippert Sr. Motion Picture Memorabilia Collection. Mr. Lippert, a prolific motion picture producer, was raised in Alameda, coming here at the age of two years. His family resided at High and Madison Streets. After his Hollywood career ended he retired to Alameda, living in the South Shore area.
- ✓ Large Scenic Oil Painting. This painting
 of Mt. Shasta hung in the Alameda Free
 Library for many years. The artist was
 Frederick Schaeffer (1839-1927), a landscape painter.
- ☐ Two-wheeled Wooden Cart. This wooden cart is thought to have been used by City of Alameda maintenance workers during the early 1900's, primarily for use in the public parks.
- Stained Glass Windows. (These consist of three framed windows suspended over the show window) The two windows, at the right are from the former West End Methodist Church (located at Santa Clara Ave. and Eighth St.). The window at the far left is from the now-demolished Herbert Mansion on Morton St.
- ✓ Ornamental Iron Work Display. (Located along the sill of the show window) These pieces consist of the iron cresting from the front porch roof of a Victorian home located on Alameda Ave.

Note: the conference table area is where the Alameda Museum Board meets.









Notes

