



## Introducing the Victorians

Many of us have the good fortune to inhabit one of the beautiful homes that make up the Old Towne Historical District. A stroll down any street is truly a walk down Memory Lane and an E-Ticket ride into the past. We are surrounded by structures that represent not only the period's growth and development in the City of Orange, but in our country as well. These homes have not only sheltered their inhabitants for some 135 years, but have also witnessed the transition of our city from a rural / agricultural lifestyle to the fast paced, high-tech environment that we enjoy today.

Time and space permitting, we will visit the many diverse styles of architecture that create the wonderful and very special fabric of Old Towne: the Victorians (1883-1890s), the Craftsman (1905-1925), the California Bungalow (1910-1925), the Prairie School (1910-1925), and the Mediterranean Style (1915-1935).

### **The Victorians**

The Victorian era began in 1837, when the then 18-year-old Princess Victoria became Queen of England, and ended with her passing in 1901. In America, these 64 years produced a rich collection of styles in literature, fashion, social

issues and of course, architecture. Some of homes that were influenced by this period can still be found in Old Towne Orange to this day.

Victorian designs date from the second half of the nineteenth century, when America was exploring new approaches to building and home design. There was a variety of Victorian house styles, including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italian or Tuscan, Italianate, Chateausque, Second Empire, Stick (or Eastlake), Colonial Revival and Queen Ann. Advances in machine technology meant that Victorian era builders could easily incorporate mass produced ornamentation such as brackets, spindles, and patterned shingles. Architects of the time often combined three styles in one house, creating fanciful and totally original houses. Special attention was paid to the design and function of every room in the Victorian home.

### **The Front Porch (also called The Veranda)**

The Victorians considered living outdoors to be very healthy. Most homes had front porches that became outdoor living rooms on warm spring and summer evenings. Wicker furniture and rocking chairs were popular, as they allowed the movement of cool air around



One of Old Towne Orange's Victorian homes, this residence was built in 1900.

the occupant. For large parties, they would even move out some of the parlor furniture and rugs out onto the front porch.

Houseplants were placed outside on pedestal tables or ornate plant stands. Embellishments were so popular that delicately etched glass windows appeared in everyone's hallway doors.

The pace of life was much slower that it is now, and Victorians would spend many summer evenings on their porches counting shooting stars and exchanging stories and gossip. The evening hours slipped away as the men puffed on cigars and the

ladies and children sipped glasses of lemonade. Just like today in Old Towne, the front porch is where we not only enjoy the sights and sounds of our neighborhood, but connect with our neighbors and the occasional passerby.

### **The Front Hallway**

For many years the hallway was considered a mere passageway leading to more important rooms, but in later years, people started treating the hall as a room in itself. There were pieces of furniture in the hall where family and visitors could hang their hats and coats. Some furniture was so elaborate that it was

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**OTPA HOTLINE**  
**(714) 639-6840**



## Membership News

OTPA extends a warm welcome to its newest members: **Jorge Alvarez, David & Evelyne Capilouto, Tim & Esther Chapman, Alcides Colin, Mina Cruz, Georg Ehlert, Avar Gutierrez, Tammy Keyes, Andres Maldonado, Alicia Martinez, Dolores Mayorga, Elyse McCandless, Marseille Navarro, Chris & Kelly Reinberger, David & Lora Royster, Dennis Stout, Jeremy Wayland, Lance Willner, and Robert & Shirley Zweig.**

New life members include **Michael & Kathryn O'Hara.**

March membership dues renewals are in the mail. If you joined OTPA between December 2004 and May 2005, your membership dues are due by the end of March. Watch your mailbox for your renewal notice!

Did you know that you may now pay your dues online? We are using PayPal on our website to accept major credit cards for dues payment. Visit us at [www.otpa.org](http://www.otpa.org).

**President, continued from page 1:**

### ***Time to Celebrate 20 Years of Preservation***

a model of how historic districts are preserved in California and the nation. It is a key part of our mission and your board will be diligent in pursuing it.

Please feel free to contact me with questions, comments, ideas and

suggestions. But when you do don't be surprised if I ask for your help. Working together is how we will continue to make a difference for the next 20 years.

Happy Birthday, OTPA!

### **About to do work on your home?**

If you are in doubt or have any questions about a project on your historic property, please contact the Old Towne Preservation Association hotline: (714) 639-6840, or e-mail us at [info@otpa.org](mailto:info@otpa.org).

We will be more than happy to advise and help guide you through the process. We will also be glad to meet with you concerning your project.

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### ***A look at the Victorian view of the home***

designed to hold an umbrella or walking stick. Most had mirrors to help the ladies and gentlemen adjust their hats. We know these types of furniture today as hall trees, and fine examples of these can be found and purchased in your finer antique stores surrounding the Orange Plaza.

The walls were often covered with family photographs or expensive works of art. Any lamps in the hallway were typically adorned with lampshades that were crafted by the lady of the house. They were made of ruffled silk or decorated with beads or ribbons, making them look like fashionable hats of the era.

#### **The Parlor or Sitting Room**

This was considered the showplace of the Victorian home. There was usually a round table in the center of the room that had a plate where "calling cards" were placed when visitors came to call and found no one home. Floral carpets were all the rage, as were striped wallpaper and wild floral fabrics. Overstuffed chairs sporting handmade lace doilies joined walls covered with family portraits and fireplace mantles cluttered with all manner of bric-a-brac. Some Victorian homes had two parlors, one for the woman of the house and

one for the man. Many times the man's parlor doubled as the library, while the lady's doubled as a music or sewing/quilting room.

#### **The Library**

The most serious room in the house. The library or study was where the business of running the household was conducted. A large desk would hold the books and ledgers and it was there that the lady of the house would conduct her correspondence. One of the tables in the library would hold the family Bible in which the family history of births, marriages and deaths would be recorded on blank pages and flyleaves. A wood or coal burning fireplace would be bracketed by comfortable armchairs and the room would be lit by kerosene lamps or gas chandelier.

#### **The Dining Room**

The most outstanding feature of this room was the sideboard. Elaborately carved, it served a practical purpose of displaying the "Sunday best" china and crystal glasses, and its drawers held the family's silverware and linens. During a large meal, silver serving platters were arranged on the sideboard to keep the dining table uncluttered. Windows in the Victorian home were often

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***The Victorian home, room by room***

two or three layers of cloth. The undercurtains were lightweight fabric that allowed light to enter the room, followed by heavy or dense velvet which was drawn shut at night to eliminate drafts and provide privacy.

**The Kitchen**

Not all homes had kitchens. Some had out-buildings where the meals were prepared. Some had cast iron stoves in the basement so as not to heat up the house during the hot summer days. Indoor plumbing was somewhat novel, and water was carried in from a well or pump and dishes were

The floor in the kitchen was wood except for a tiled area around the stove to protect against fire. Most kitchen floors were kept bare so that it easy to clean them.

**The Master Bedroom**

The massive Renaissance-style bedroom suite could have been carved from walnut and walnut burl. Usually dressers and nightstands were topped with marble. The bed was high off the floor because of early morning drafts (after the fire in the fireplace had died down).

**The Bathroom**

The first bathrooms were found only in the upper-



This Old Towne Victorian was built in 1895.

***Indoor plumbing was somewhat novel ... No wonder people only took one bath a week!***

washed in a “dry sink.” By the latter part of the Victorian era, the majority of kitchens had hot and cold running water and sinks. Iceboxes were just that: wooden cabinets with a shelf for blocks of ice kept the food cold. While gas ovens were available, they were not as popular as the old wood and coal stoves that were hooked up to a hot water tank, so there was no waiting for hot water.

class homes because plumbing and fixtures were very expensive. Most Americans still used the old hip tub for their Sunday night baths, lugging buckets of hot and cold water to get the temperate just right. No wonder people only took one bath a week! The bathtub in most Victorian homes was attached to an ornate gas water heater, but these early contraptions has a nasty tendency to explode,

causing most people to shy away from using them. The toilet or water closet (also called the “W.C.”) was invented by an Englishman in 1596, but didn’t really catch on in America until metal pipe became available in the 1860s. The early toilets gave off an awful stench because the water trap had not yet been designed that would keep the sewer gas from entering the house. Many people thought it terribly unsanitary for the outhouse to be brought inside and even warned that sewer gas could actually cause death! As a result, many toilets were placed in its own room (the water closet), separate from the bathroom.

**The Carriage House**

Just as we have garages today for our cars, the Victorians had carriage houses for their horses and

buggies. The carriage house was often a good-sized building and usually included a tiny apartment on the second floor to house the stable boy. It was his job to feed and groom the horses, and keep the buggy shiny and the stalls clean. There were automobiles in the late Victorian era but they were so rare that in 1900 there were only 8000 cars in use, and the roads were so bad that it would be many years until cars became practical. And finally, there was a side benefit: the flower or vegetable garden was close to the carriage house so the stable boy could work the hay and manure from the stables into the garden soil.

The last true Victorians were built in the early 1900s, and a number can still be found in Old Towne today.



## Anniversary, continued from page 1: *OTPA Celebrates 20 Years of Preservation*

information will be compiled for a presentation during the awards portion of the evening.

The evening will include a sit-down dinner, a champagne (or sparkling cider) toast, and birthday cake. The annual awards will be presented and an array of door prizes will be given out.

Tickets are available now. Advanced reservations are \$30 per person. Tickets purchased at the door without advanced reservations are \$35 per person. It is recommended

that you make advanced reservations; seating is limited, and last year the event was a sell out!

Please see last month's insert for the award nomination submission form, and this month's insert for making your dinner reservation.

If you would like to make a reservation, contribute to the evening, or submit a nomination, please call the OTPA hotline: (714) 639-6840. You can also go to [www.otpa.org](http://www.otpa.org). A description of each award is also available online.

## Tour Victorian Pasadena

Pasadena Heritage's 2006 Spring Home Tour, Pasadena Victorian, will take place Sunday, March 26, 9 am - 4 pm.

There are many proud remnants of Pasadena's formative years scattered throughout the city, represented by a wide range of architectural styles and sizes—from the simple farmhouse to the ornate and fanciful. The tour will take you back to nineteenth-century Pasadena, before the proliferation of the Arts and Crafts bungalow for which the city has become so widely known.

We are proud to feature five privately-owned homes including:

The magnificent **Mansion Adena**, built in 1889 and attributed to early Pasadena architect Eugene Getschell. This flamboyant Victorian takes from both the Eastlake and Queen Anne styles, and retains many of its original details and all of its period charm.

**Hillmont**, built for Barney Williams, one of Pasadena's early pioneers and owner of the city's first general store (which also served as the post office), at the corner of Colorado and Fair Oaks. This beautifully preserved Queen Anne Mansion was completed in 1887. Its design is attributed to Harry Ridgway,

Pasadena's first professional architect. The house is a true jewel of the Victorian era, featuring hand carved woodwork, intricately designed stained glass windows, and original wall coverings.

We will also visit a **modern-day Victorian**, built by the design team of Kohout and Curbelo. After painstakingly restoring the Victorian next door, Greg Kohout and Bob Curbelo took on the much more ambitious project of building a new Victorian from scratch.

To set the stage for the tour, local historian Gregory McReynolds will present a lecture on Thursday, March 23 at 7 pm at the Ross Chapel at the Neighborhood Church (301 North Orange Grove Blvd., Pasadena). Mr. McReynolds will talk about the life and architecture of Victorian-era Pasadena.

Advance ticket prices are \$30 for members of Pasadena Heritage and \$35 for the general public; tickets on the day of the tour are \$40. Tickets for the lecture will be \$5 at the door. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. For tickets and information call Pasadena Heritage at (626) 441-6333 or go to [www.pasadenaheritage.org](http://www.pasadenaheritage.org).

# TOP 10

## Reasons to Get Involved in Old Towne

- #10 You like meeting other preservation-minded people.
- #9 You like to see the interiors of Old Towne homes.
- #8 You want to impact decisions affecting Old Towne.
- #7 One of your hidden skills is hawking Guinness Stout.
- #6 You like learning about the history of Orange.
- #5 You need a venue to show off your baking skills.
- #4 You prefer to be part of the solution.
- #3 You want to be in Bob Hitchcock's memoirs, soon to be made into a major motion picture.
- #2 You want to preserve the value of your home.
- #1 Reason to get involved in OTPA: You love Old Towne Orange!



# Orange Preserves

FIRST CLASS MAILING

## Upcoming Events

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| March 18-25 | Santiago Creek Week   |
| March 22    | OTPA General Meeting<br>Chapman Chapel (East Maple/ North Grand) at 7 PM<br>“Frequently Asked Questions of Living in the Old Towne Orange<br>Historical District”-- Dan Ryan, City of Orange Planning Dept.   |
| March 23    | Orange Community Historical Society general meeting:<br>“Orange’s Dairies,” Trinity Episcopal Church, 7 PM  |
| April ??    | Orange Community Historical Society Walking Tour Season Begins<br>Tours are offered the second Saturday of every month at 10 AM and the<br>fourth Sunday of every month at 4 PM. For more information or to make reservations, go to<br><a href="http://www.historicorange.org">www.historicorange.org</a> or call (714) 998-0330?????. |
| May 7       | Preservation Awards Banquet, Citrus City Grille (See page ?? for details)   |
| May 24      | OTPA General Meeting<br>Chapman Chapel (East Maple/ North Grand) at 7 PM  |

[www.OTPA.org](http://www.OTPA.org)

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