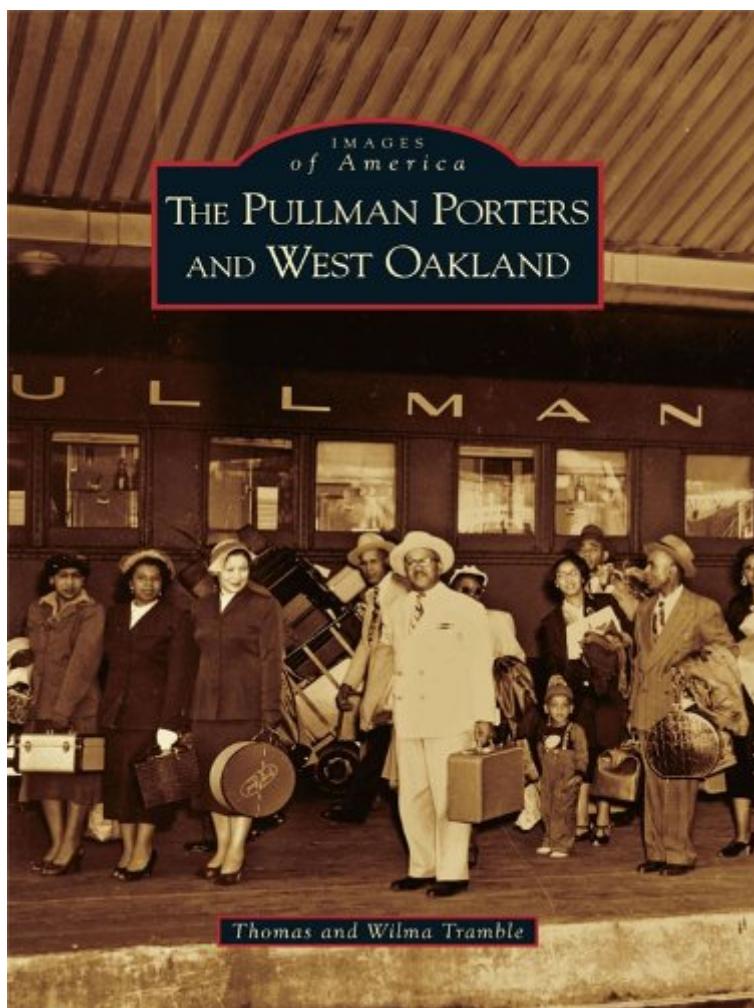


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# The Pullman Porters And West Oakland



## **Synopsis**

A hub of transportation and industry since the mid-19th century, West Oakland is today a vital commercial conduit and an inimitably distinct and diverse community within the Greater Oaklandmetropolitan area. The catalyst that transformed this neighborhood from a transcontinental rail terminal into a true settlement was the arrival of the railroad porters, employed by the Pullman Palace Car Company as early as 1867. After years of struggling in labor battles and negotiations, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Union became the first African AmericanÃ¢ÂÂ led union to sign a contract with a large American company. The unionÃ¢ÂÂ s West Coast headquarters were established at Fifth and Wood Streets in West Oakland. Soon families,benevolent societies, and churches followed, and a true community came into being.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In general, this series of pictorial histories tell the stories of places so well, and I've enjoyed many of them. But having grown up in Oakland, I was astounded to learn from this one not about only an

important chapter in my hometown's development, but of the Oakland-based Pullman porters' role in the formation and growth of the African-American middle class nationwide. This is one well done, important little book for understanding how black lives have, and do, matter in American history.

Interesting history. Just not what I expected. I thought it be story. It was primarily pictures with information. Like visiting a museum.

Good book!!!

New and was sent to me on time so I can give out a x-mas gifts. Thanks

There's some detail about the early stages of Pullman porters (started in 1868), and the insidious fact that Pullman hired blacks because their proximity to slavery made them reliably subordinate and cheap labor to boot. Another focal point is CL Dellums, one of the leaders of the union. Most of the photos are from a small group of private family photos, some of those who worked as Pullman porters. Many of the photos aren't very vivid at suggesting the lifestyle and status of these workers. Shots of people sitting near their cars are captioned with labels such as "two young ladies sit on a new Cadillac car, the ultimate announcement of the owner's wealth." (p44) There's not much in the way of sociology, but there are hints of history. I'd rate this as the weakest Arcadia publication of the 3 or 4 that I've read, although it's still worth a scan.

Great book with lots of images of West Oakland before urban renewal destroyed 7th ave with its thriving black businesses.

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