

Giant Water Filters

The giant drums in front of you were designed and built in 1888 as part of the filtration plant that processed water from Lake Chabot. Water was forced through these sand filters to remove impurities. Named after the engineer who designed them, the Hyatt Filters are preserved here as part of a Historic Engineering Landmark.

Lake Chabot Dam was built in 1874. The Contra Costa Water Company initially tried to filter the water through a series of screens. The screens were unable, however, to capture impurities, suspended particles, and small insects from the delivery system. Public complaints about the sulfuric flavor of the water eventually led to the design and installation of the Hyatt filters 14 years after the dam was built. Although no longer functional today, these filters stand as testimony to an era when water delivery processes were more rudimentary.



Water was forced through the sand contained in these drums in order to filter out impurities.



Photos by Nick Cavagnaro