

**IN THIS BOOK**, sociologist John Lofland depicts the almost eighty year history of, and the demolition of, a historic hotel in Davis, California. Built in the 1920s, the building was central to Davis life before World War II, but declined thereafter. Amidst debate and campaigning, it was torn down in 2000.

In telling this story, Lofland makes innovative use of digital graphics and grips the reader with fascinating photographs, documents and newspaper accounts. These images open windows onto the past, transporting the viewer to dramatic scenes of struggle, conflict, and celebration over the decades of the building's birth, growth, decline, death, dissection, and burial.

# Demolishing a HISTORIC hotel

A Sociology of  
Preservation Failures in  
Davis, California

*This book is of special interest to people who have made any of these statements:*

**1 "What in the world is 'historic preservation' anyway?"**

The story of this hotel is also the story of the rise of "historic preservation" in America and its presence in Davis. As a philosophy, government policy, bureaucracy, and occupation, historic preservation is arcane, insular, and hard to understand. One of Lofland's achievements is to demystify it by showing how it worked in Davis.

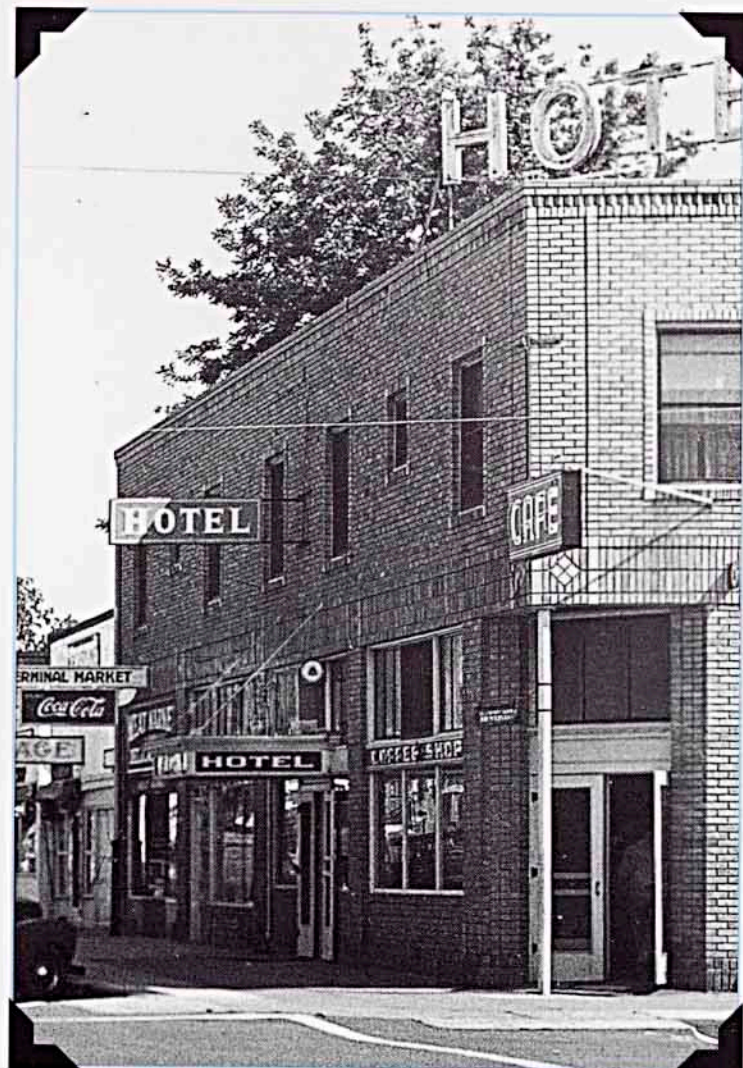
Any citizen seeking to penetrate the seemingly remote and foreign topic of historic preservation will find this an illuminating, engaging, and down-to-earth guidebook.

**2 "I am seriously involved in historic preservation."**

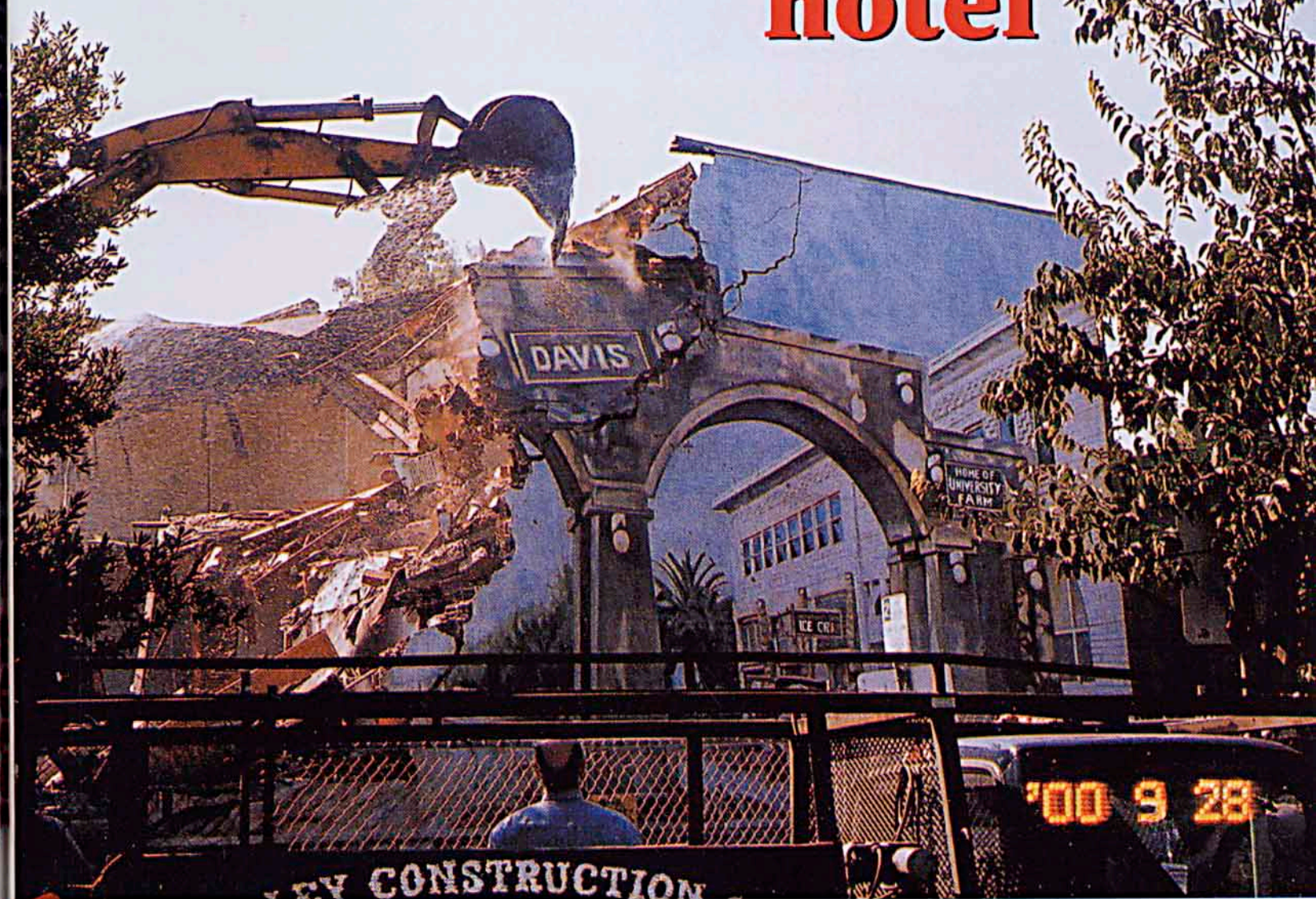
Oddly, historic preservation as a field has not been strong on generating nuanced case studies of how people actually do it. The tendency, instead, is to sound bite vignettes or abstract exhortations about proper practice. Clearly, though, descriptions of the "real thing," warts and all, are needed. This book is very much in this empirical vein. Any volunteer or paid practitioner of historic preservation will learn a great deal about how to do it (and how not to do it) from reading this account.

**3 "I want to be a preservation professional."**

Pulling no punches, Lofland conveys the realities of historic preservation "on the ground" in ways that will enlighten students considering preservation careers. No one should enter veterinarian school without first working in an animal hospital and accepting its realities. In kindred fashion, no one should become a preservationist-for-hire without first reading this book and coming to emotional grips with its unsettling facts.



# Demolishing a HISTORIC hotel



A Sociology of Preservation Failures in  
Davis, California

JOHN LOFLAND