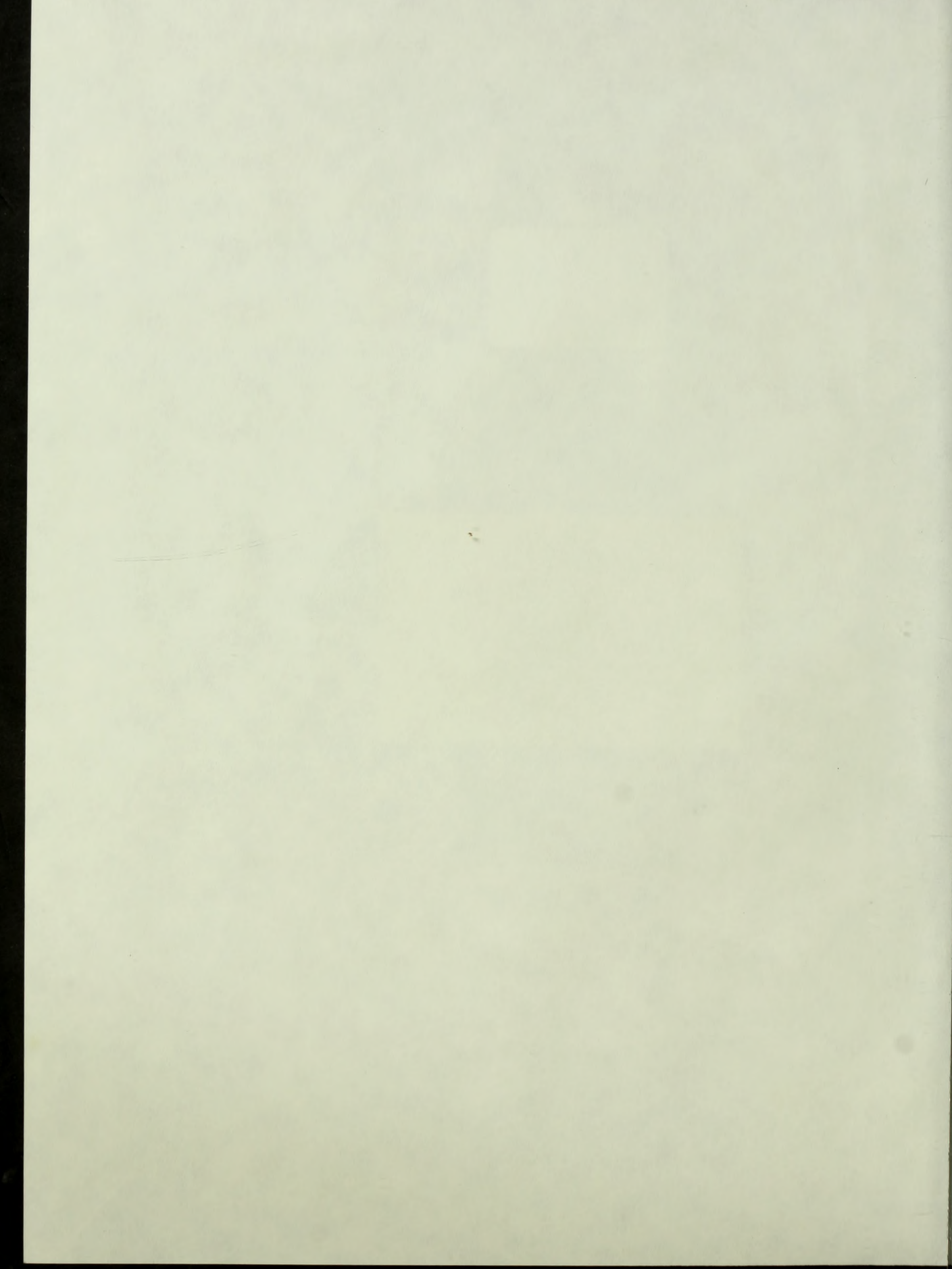


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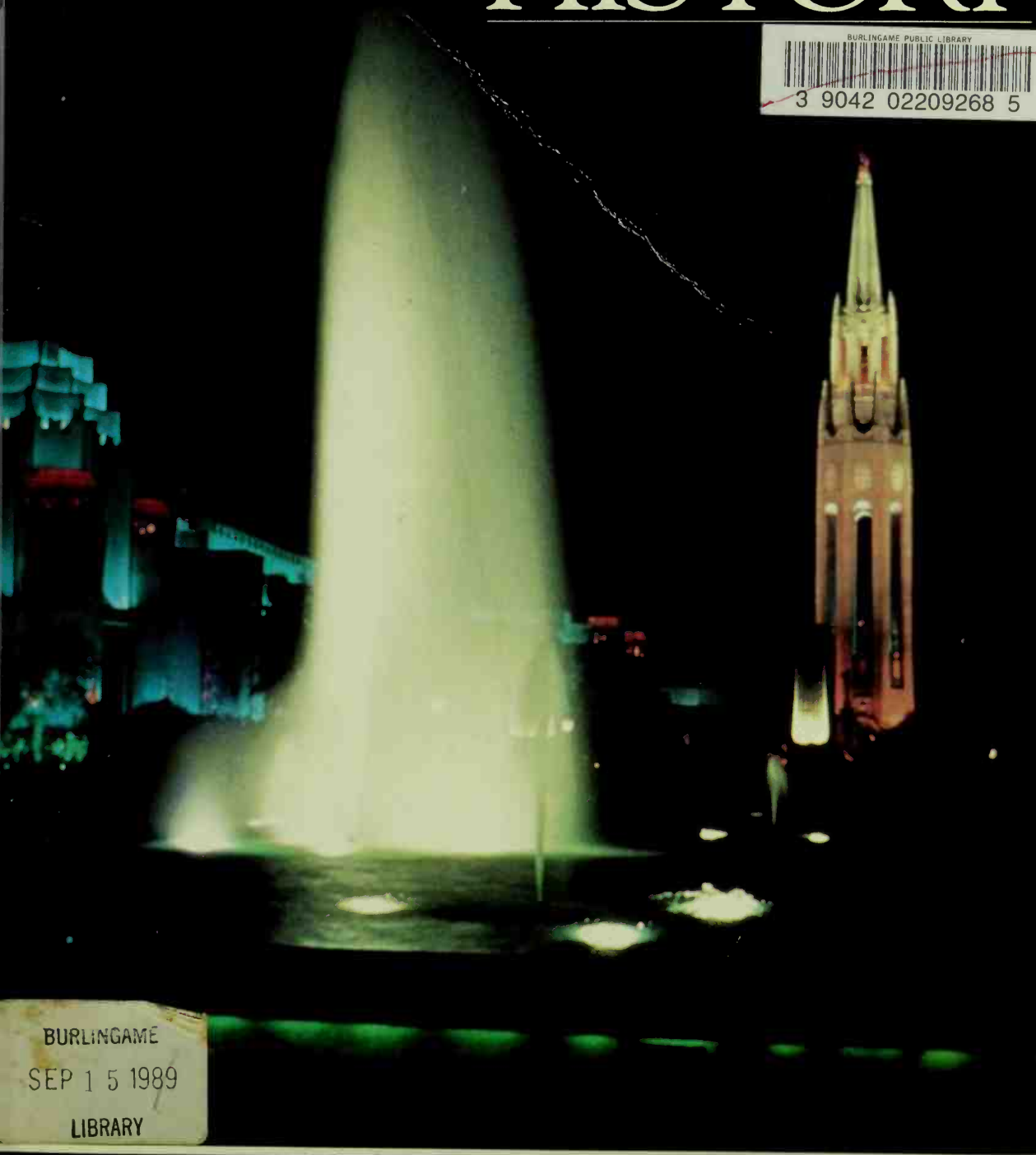
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Milestones in California History—The Golden Gate International Exposition



The fabulous Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939–1940, as seen from the tower of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge. Courtesy Gabriel Moulin Archives.

A half century ago, the Golden Gate International Exposition shimmered on an artificial island in the middle of San Francisco Bay, a fantasy of peace and beauty in a brutally real world. The illusion of the “Fair,” as it was called, was reflected in almost everything about it. The giant mythical buildings and statues were of chicken wire and plaster, destined to be easily pulled down to make room for a proposed airport. The 1939 theme of the fair, alternately termed a “Pageant of the Pacific” and a “Pageant of Peace,” clashed with the reality of Japan’s 1937 invasion of China and fascist expansion in Europe. Like Disneyland today, the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939–1940 offered pure escapism; one thin dime provided a ticket from the world of the Great Depression and looming war to an enchanted fairyland of hope, peace, and fun.

During 372 days in 1939 and 1940 millions of excited visitors arrived by ferry, Key Train, and automobile to see the fair. Upon entering, guests could indulge their wildest fantasies. They talked with a robot; savored the art works of the world in the Palace of Fine and Decorative Arts; smashed an atom at the University of California cyclotron; observed the parade of history in the Cavalcade of the Golden West; titillated their senses at Sally Rand’s Nude Ranch; ate, drank, and made merry at the Gayway; and watched Pan American Airways mechanics service and load the giant China Clipper flying boats in the Hall of Air Transportation.

As a celebration of the advancement of transportation technology, the man-made Treasure Island, upon which the Fair stood, bridged the gap between the old world and the new. The construction of the island—like the fair itself—was a

Depression-era attempt to stimulate employment and business in the Bay Area by putting architects, artists, construction companies, and laborers back to work. The ultimate purpose of this 400-acre tribute to human ingenuity, completed in 1937 by filling in San Francisco city property on shoals north of Yerba Buena Island, was a purely functional one—a future international airport. However, less than a decade after the island rose from the bay, advancements in aviation technology invalidated that idea, and Treasure Island became federal property in 1944. Over the past four decades, the island has metamorphosed into a naval base, drab utility replacing the fantasy of a once-shining fair city. Three concrete and steel fair buildings, sixteen large concrete statues, a terracotta fountain portraying the Pacific basin, and a palm-lined avenue stand as pale ghosts of a time when Americans ventured to believe that the world could and would become better.

For those who experienced the exposition 50 years ago, however, the memories of a moment of hope, a season of fun, will never die. In the words of journalist Richard Reinhardt, “. . . the Fair represented a turning point for the State and for the West, as well as for me. It was the last product of the ‘30s, in a sense. It was a bootstrap operation, like so much in that era—a time of economic depression, social unrest and unhappiness, culminating in something very positive, attractive, and optimistic. All of that was swept away by the war, like my own childhood.”

LAURIE W. BOETCHER,
Editorial Assistant, California History

On the Cover:

Viewed from an illuminated garden at the south end of Treasure Island is the striking 400-foot Tower of the Sun, capped by a golden phoenix. The Tower not only symbolized the Golden Gate International Exposition, but also the rise of San Francisco from the ashes of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Courtesy Treasure Island Museum. This photograph and others on inside front and back covers reprinted, with permission of Scottwall Associates, from *The San Francisco Fair: Treasure Island, 1939–1940*, edited by Patricia Carpenter and Paul Totah (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, Publishers, 1989), a collection of newly published photographs and oral history narratives of people involved in the fair.

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READER'S ALERT: With this issue, *California History* returns to an earlier practice of dating its numbers according to the seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Readers will note that this release of the quarterly is designated the Spring/Summer issue. This is being done to accommodate a special, expanded theme issue that will be published in Winter 1989. The theme issue, "Envisioning California," will include selected papers given at a conference by the same title held recently in Sacramento, at which scholars, artists, writers, business leaders, and public officials examined the state's history, culture, and contemporary issues. Like the conference, the Winter 1989 number of *California History* will be an important forum for reflections on the California Experience.

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EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE
AND
THE OLD SAN FRANCISCO MINT:
ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHS
AS HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

by William A. Bullough

Photographers employ the term “archival” to describe negatives and prints that have been processed in a manner that removes or modifies chemical residues that cause irreversible deterioration. Historians and other researchers use the word quite differently: to identify materials that are held in repositories and available for study. In the case of photographs as documents, however, the usages can coincide. For esthetic purposes, many nineteenth-century photographers toned their prints, without realizing that the process converted residual metals to inert salts and preserved their work against the devastation of time and pollution. As a result of this largely fortuitous circumstance, archives bulge with photographs awaiting the attention of researchers. But the coincidence involves a conspicuous anomaly.

Historians join photographers and other aficionados of California and the West in their appreciation for the magnificent legacy inherited from nineteenth-century image makers. Prints are recovered, restored, and displayed in galleries and museums throughout the region and the nation. Admiring audiences universally acclaim their esthetic qualities and marvel at their precise records of the landscapes, people, and artifacts of the past. Despite the attention and appreciation, however, the importance of photographs as records capable of adding unique dimensions to historical understanding remains to be recognized fully or exploited effectively. The work of one of California’s best-known photographers, Eadweard Muybridge, is a case in point. His prolific work is accessible in collections and published reproductions, and his-

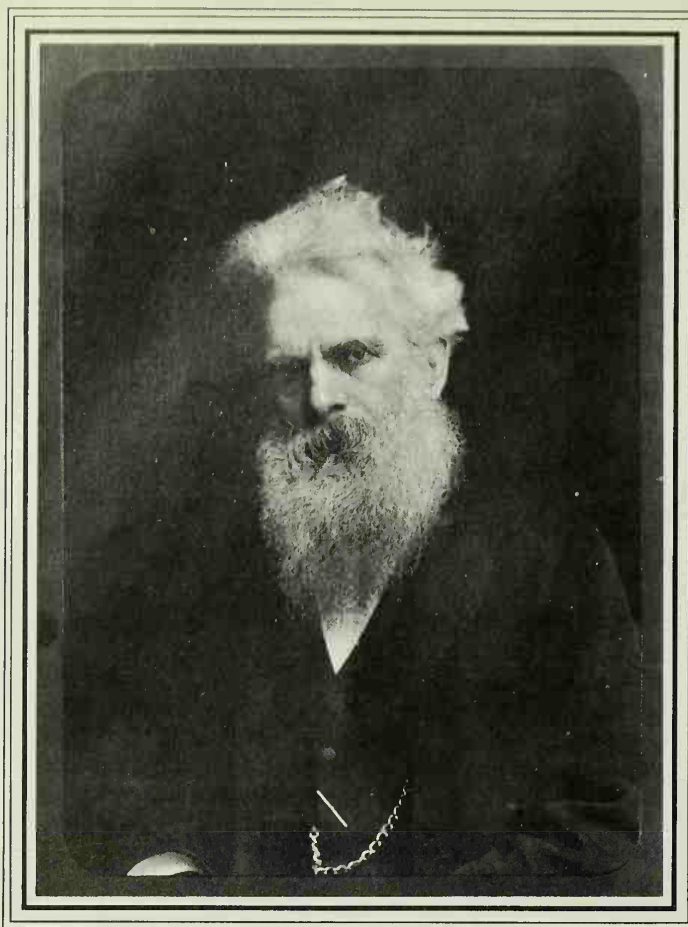
torians of the art and technology of photography have studied his numerous contributions extensively. Yet few researchers in fields such as social, cultural, economic, environmental, or architectural history have used his images as they would employ manuscripts and similar archival resources.

When English-born Edward (not yet Eadweard) James Muybridge followed his New York City acquaintance Silas T. Selleck to San Francisco in 1855, he certainly did not consider himself a documentary photographer—or a photographer of any sort. During his five years in the city, he earned his living as he had in England and the eastern United States: as a private bookseller and as a commission agent for the London Printing and Publishing Company. From Selleck, he had acquired a passing interest in photographic processes that Louis J. M. Daguerre introduced in 1839, but nothing at the time presaged eventual international recognition or ranking among the medium’s major innovators.¹

Nor were future achievements any more predictable when Muybridge returned to England in 1860. While Royal Physician Sir William Gull supervised his recuperation from injuries suffered in a stagecoach accident, however, circumstances conspired to alter his course. Gull prescribed periods of rest and outdoor activity to restore health, eccentric inventor and daguerrean Arthur Brown rekindled the convalescent’s photographic interests, and popular enthusiasm for the stereoscope suggested a potentially lucrative profession congenial to his tastes and athletic proclivities. Muybridge also believed that California’s magnificent scenery and burgeoning development would supply ideal



The Old San Francisco Mint, 1910. *Courtesy, Olga Widness,
Director, Old Mint Museum*



After Muybridge's return to England in 1892, William Vicks of Ipswich made his portrait. *Courtesy of the Bancroft Library*

subject matter and that the United States would provide an eager market. Thus, when he decided to return to San Francisco for a second time in 1867, he loaded his baggage with photographic equipment and supplies and prepared himself to embark on a new career. In California, Muybridge rapidly established the esteemed position that he currently occupies in the history of photography.²

By 1870, indeed, he had joined a contingent of preeminent western photographers that included Carleton E. Watkins, Alfred A. Hart, William Henry Jackson, and Timothy H. O'Sullivan. Operating from a converted wagon that he called his "Flying Studio," Muybridge preserved images of the people and artifacts of the city and the natural wonders of the state. For the War Department, he photographed the recently-acquired Alaska Territory, coastal lighthouses, army garrisons on Alcatraz, the Farallon Islands, and participants on the site of the Modoc War. For the Central Pacific Company, he recorded transcontinental railway construction scenes. Over his copyrighted pseudonym "Helios," Muybridge sold prints at his own outlets at Woodward's Gardens amusement park and other locations in the city and through agencies including Selleck's Cosmopolitan Gallery of Photographic Art, Thomas Houseworth and Company, and the Bradley and

Rulofson Gallery.³ During the same period, gold medals awarded in 1873 by the International Exhibition in Vienna for Yosemite views and in 1875 by the Eleventh Annual Industrial Exhibition in San Francisco for Central American photographs confirmed his credentials as a creative artist.⁴

Leland Stanford's patronage had by then added yet another dimension to Muybridge's activities. Stanford subscribed to a theory called "unsupported transit"—the notion that all hooves of a trotting horse left the ground simultaneously during its stride. To prove his point, and incidentally to win a bet, the former governor employed Muybridge, whose photographs of the trotter "Occident" at Sacramento during 1872 and 1873 confirmed Stanford's contention. The \$10,000 (some say \$50,000) wager that allegedly was involved has assumed prominence in the folklore surrounding the episode. In reality, the experiment had more serious purposes: to improve training methods at Stanford's Palo Alto Stock Farm and his horses' performance on California's race courses.⁵

More importantly, refinement of the techniques developed to solve Stanford's problem resulted in additional attainments and distinctions for

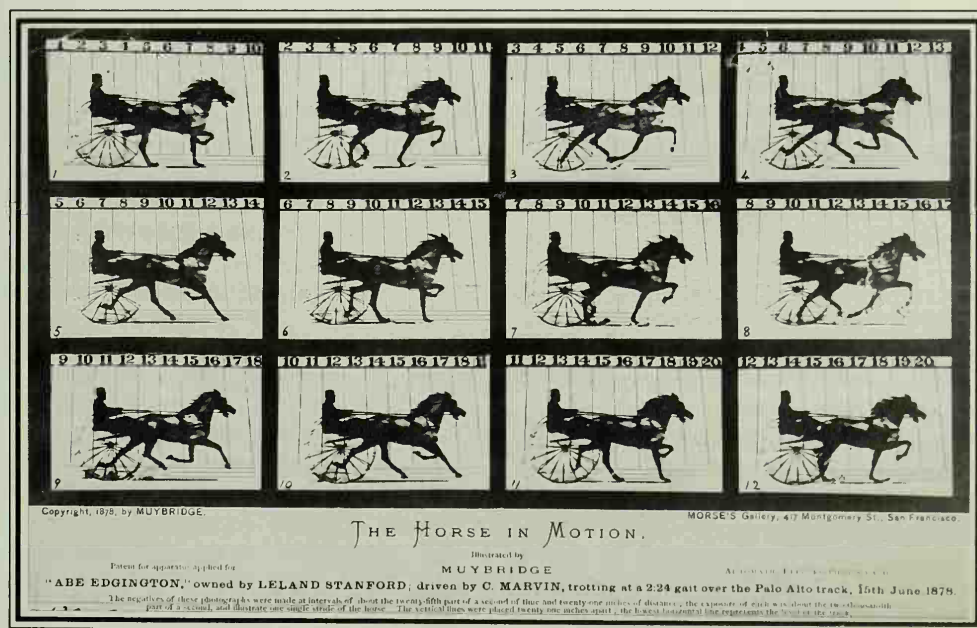
Muybridge. During the 1880s and 1890s, he patented camera shutters that arrested movement and the Zoöpraxiscopes, a device that projected images simulating motion and fascinated visitors to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Experiments at the University of Pennsylvania in 1884 and 1885 provided material for publications that included *Animal Locomotion* (11 volumes, Philadelphia, 1887), *Animals in Motion* (London, 1899), and *The Human Figure in Motion* (London, 1901).⁶ Between 1889 and 1892, Muybridge astounded members of the prestigious *Cercle de l'Union Artistique* in Paris and Royal Institution in London and other learned European and American audiences with demonstrations of his techniques and their results. Finally, seventy years after his death in England in 1904, he won the title "father of the motion picture."⁷

For all of these achievements and more, Muybridge has received well-earned scholarly recognition. With the exception of photographs made to study human and animal locomotion, however, the importance of his work as documentation received virtually no attention until 1986. Then historian E. Bradford Burns turned not to photographs of California and the West but to Guatemalan scenes produced during 1875.⁸

Muybridge began a year-long tour of Central America, sponsored by the Pacific Mail Steamship

Company, shortly after his acquittal on a murder charge. He had married Flora Stone in San Francisco, probably in 1872, and two years later learned that his bride had taken a lover, an adventurer who called himself "Major" Harry Larkyns. He also concluded that the man had fathered Floredo Helios Muybridge, born in April 1874. Six months after the boy's birth, on October 17, 1874, Muybridge tracked Larkyns to a cabin near St. Helena, confronted him with a pistol, and shot him dead. From then until February 1875, when a jury returned a verdict of justifiable homicide, the photographer remained in Napa County jail. Just two weeks after the decision, he sailed from San Francisco, bound for Panama.⁹

In his 1986 monograph, Burns examined the documentary quality of the Guatemalan photographs made during Muybridge's Central American sojourn. Comprehensive image content included Indian laborers in fields and villages, the haciendas and leisure activities of the wealthy classes, coffee plantations replacing rain forests, sophisticated urban scenes and primitive native settlements, market places, public buildings, and cathedrals. According to Burns, Muybridge produced a "time capsule" that records sharp contrasts in a society being transformed—not consistently for the better—by increasing economic dependence on a coffee-producing planter class and by the ideologies of



In 1878, Muybridge used his patented "Automatic Electro-Photographic" technique to capture Leland Stanford's trotter "Abe Edgington" running at full gait. Stanford University Museum of Art 13929, Muybridge Collection



Panels Three, Four, and Five of Muybridge's 1878 San Francisco Panorama preserve the view southward from Nob Hill across the South of Market District to China Basin and Mission Bay and record contrasts in the changing city. The Old Mint (Panel Five) is distinguished by its twin chimneys. *Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries*

a recently-installed political regime. His "photographic essay," Burns wrote, "eloquently announced the Guatemala that [Justo Rufino] Barrios, the Liberals, and the Positivists would create."¹⁰

Muybridge did not intend to produce a "photographic essay." Nor do his formal Guatemala studies approximate the social documentary approach of his contemporary, Thomas Annan, who examined the slums of Glasgow, or predict that of a later San Franciscan, Arnold Genthe, who preserved the character of the city's Chinatown as it existed before the earthquake and fire of 1906. Instead, they resemble Eugene Atget's records of the transformation of Parisian streets and architecture during the late nineteenth century.¹¹ Indeed, the Muybridge photographs that are most similar to those of Atget also provide the most apparent potential for use as historical documents. His celebrated panoramas of San Francisco made from the top of Nob Hill (then California Street Hill) between 1876 and 1878 are stunning examples. Although

the 18x22-inch plates of his mammoth camera preserved amazing architectural variety, sophistication, and permanence in a city barely a generation old in incredible detail, the images were more than static slices of time. They also contained graphic evidence of the dynamic processes that transformed traditional walking cities into modern metropolises during the late nineteenth century and vivid reminders of the environmental consequences of a century of human intervention.¹²

Random observations drawn from Muybridge's 1878 panorama confirm the wealth of information contained in his photographs. The mass of William C. Ralston's Palace Hotel, completed on Market Street in 1875, dominates Panel Three, but the Second Street Cut, which bisected Rincon Hill and its elite neighborhood in 1867 and began major changes in the city, are clearly visible in the background. The new City Hall under construction in Panel Six attests to the shift of urban activity, influenced by Ralston and other real estate specu-



lators, southward from Portsmouth Square toward Market Street during the decade. In Panel Two, plumes of factory smoke document industrial activity transforming the South of Market region into a slum district of factories and tenements called "Tar Flat." In contrast, palatial mansions rising on the heights in Panels Nine through Eleven testify to the "conspicuous consumption" characteristic of the period. The simultaneous demolition of working-class residences to make way for them—and for Leland Stanford's elegant stable in Panel One—displays not only a negative consequence of urban improvement but also a source of wage-earners' frustrations during the "Terrible 'Seventies." Beyond Temple Emanu-El, Trinity Episcopal and St. Patrick's churches, and Union Square in Panel Four are Mission Bay and China Basin when they were, in fact, navigable bodies of water.¹³ In short, examining and interpreting photographs can confirm what is known about the city and provide new insights into its history.

Muybridge images of the construction of the San Francisco Mint, recently acquired by the California Historical Society, furnish yet another opportunity for using photographs as historical documentation. The Old Mint located at Fifth and Mission streets is not, in fact, the oldest in the city. In 1850, Congress authorized and President Millard Fillmore approved a Branch Mint for the state. At first, it functioned in conjunction with a private mint, Moffat & Co., on Commercial Street between Montgomery and Kearny, but in 1854 the government bought the firm's facilities. When coinage requirements exceeded the operation's capacity in 1864, Congress approved construction of the structure now called the "Old Mint."¹⁴

The federal government purchased the 75,625 square-foot site in 1867, and construction began in April 1869, under the direction of the designer, Treasury Department Architect Alfred Bult Mullet, and the on-site supervision of local builder

William P. C. Stebbins. When the Classical Revival building was dedicated in November 1874, it represented not only Mullet's final government project and the last federal construction in the so-called American Monumental architectural style, but also the only example of that genre west of the Mississippi River. The Old Mint survived the disasters of 1906 and operated until it was replaced in 1937. It received approval for National Landmark status in 1967, and subsequent rehabilitation efforts mounted by the California Heritage Council, the California Historical Society, Director of the Mint Mary Brooks, and others culminated in its reopening to the public in 1973.¹⁵

Photographers, including Muybridge, recorded the construction of the massive three-storied building (two floors, an above-ground basement, and an attic) between 1869 and 1873. The California Historical Society collection in San Francisco currently includes seven photographs made during construction and two post-1900 images of the completed Mint. Two of the contemporary prints are signed "Helios." The style and quality of two more and their similarity to a dozen other photographs that Muybridge made during Mint construction indicate that they should be attributed to him.¹⁶ Three are almost certainly the work of someone else. The photographs' specific utility for historians depends on objectives of research and the ability to interpret them in conjunction with other sources of information.

Plate One, dated 1869, is the earliest print in the group, but it probably is not a Muybridge. The fact that it is unsigned is not definitive proof, but neither exposure nor reproduction approach his usual standard. Flaws resulting from poor wet-plate coating or inept printing are evident, and the cloudy sky is an obvious and clumsy addition. Peculiarities of nineteenth-century light-sensitive emulsions forced photographers to add sky details from separate negatives routinely made for the purpose. By 1869, however, Muybridge had invented and patented a device that made the practice less necessary in his work. When he did manipulate his prints, enhancements were usually undetectable.¹⁷

Nevertheless, Plate One contains useful information. Since newspapers record the beginning of grading in May, the photograph must have been made later, probably in June or July.¹⁸ Orienting image content with contemporary maps verifies the vantage point as Fifth (left) and Mission (foreground) streets, both outside the frame of the print. Some of the occupants of the working-class residences and shops fronting on Stevenson Street a half block south of Market in the background and lining Jessie Street on the left complained about the construction, but most did not.¹⁹ Although workmen are posed in deference to extended exposure times, their objectives are apparent. They must use laborious methods and basic tools—muscle-power, heavy tampers, wooden planks, and wheelbarrows—to fill forms and compress

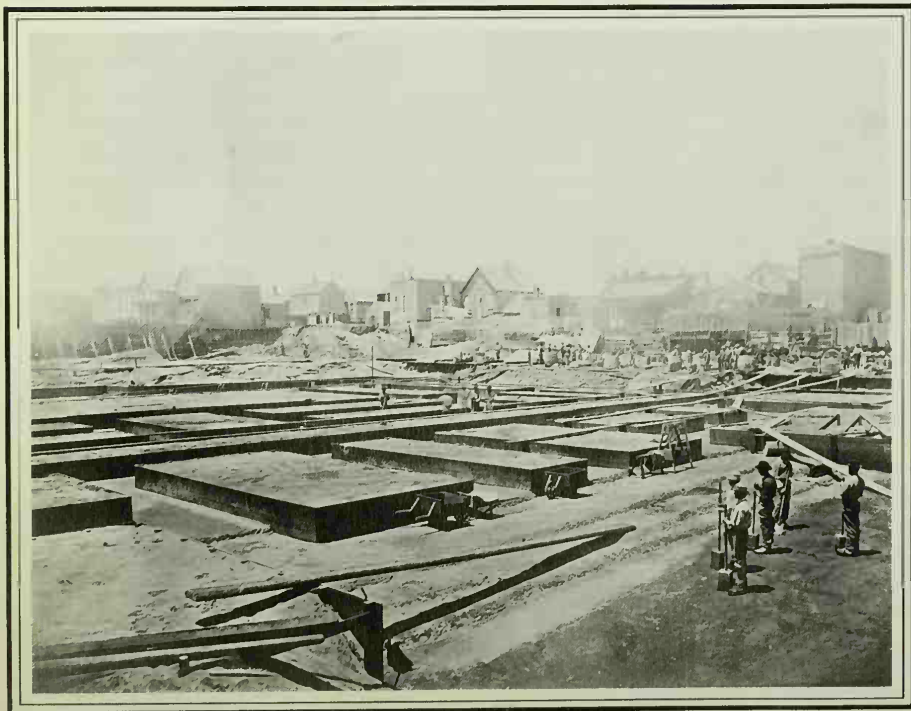


Plate 1: From Fifth and Mission streets, an unknown photographer recorded the beginning of construction in the spring of 1869. CHS Library, San Francisco

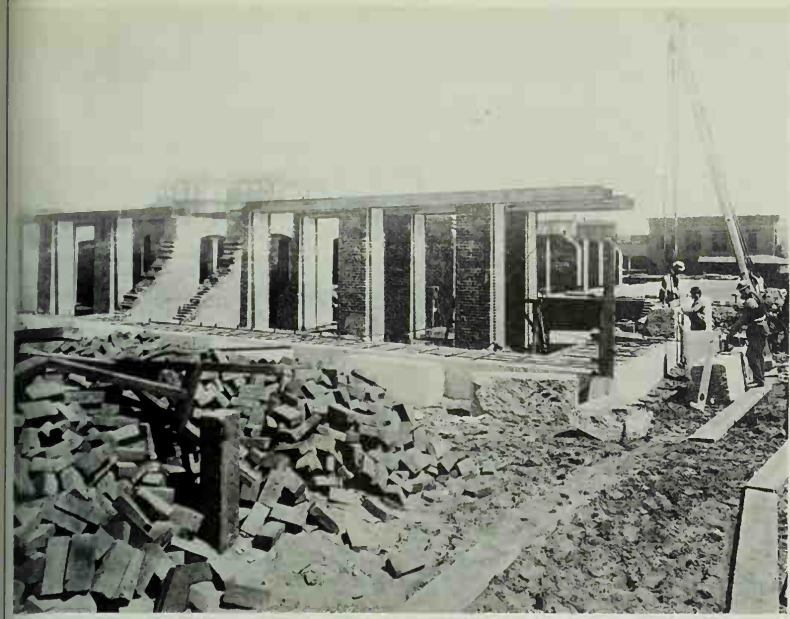


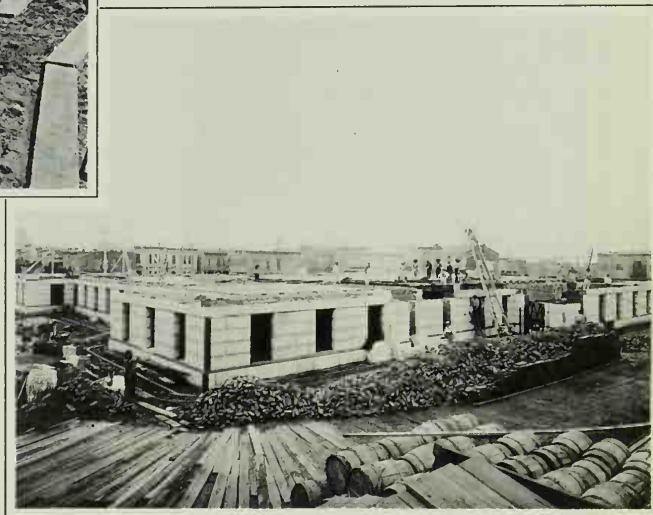
Plate 2: A tiny "Helios" on a plank at the lower right identifies Muybridge's 1870 photograph from Mission Street, with Lincoln School on Fifth Street in the background. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

material to provide a solid base for the structure's five-foot thick foundation and supporting pillars. Comparing outlines of the building site with the stature of the laborers suggests the truly imposing nature of the project.

Plate Two is dated 1870 and signed with a tiny "Helios," barely visible on a plank at the lower right. The cornerstone of the Old Mint was laid, "with Masonic ceremonies," at the northeast corner of the building in late May. Since the picture shows limited progress on the Fifth Street wall where dignitaries installed the stone, it probably was made somewhat earlier, perhaps in April.²⁰ Muybridge positioned his camera on Mission Street, looking northward across the construction site toward Lincoln School, shops, and dwellings on the east side of Fifth Street below Market. Four stonemasons use a hand-winch block-and-tackle apparatus to position pre-cut, numbered granite blocks from the Penryn Quarry in Placer County to form ground floor exterior walls.²¹ One of the builders ignored the camera while posing at his duties, but his co-workers could not resist adding their faces to the record. Already-completed portions of the brick-pillared and iron-girdered basement substructure confirm the solid construction that made the building impervious to both would-be burglars and the devastating shocks of 1906.

Plate Three, signed "Helios" on a keg at the lower right and dated 1870, initially presented something of a puzzle, and it illustrates a problem that

Plate 3: Muybridge's 1870 photograph looks eastward from the corner of Jessie and Mint streets and shows the rear of the Mint under construction. *CHS Library, San Francisco*



frequently confronts photographic researchers. An inscription (not Muybridge's) identifies the camera position as the intersection of Fifth and Mission streets, but elements of the city visible in the background and the shape of the building itself make that vantage point impossible. Comparison with maps, other photographs, and the structure of the Mint suggested the proper orientation. The camera apparently looks eastward from the corner of Jessie and what is now Mint Street. Defining the point of view aids interpretation of the photograph's content. It suggests, for example, that the trestle-like structure at the center right is either a framework enclosing the storage tanks of the San Francisco Gas Company (which appear in Panel Four of Muybridge's 1878 panorama) at First and Natoma streets or a temporary tramway used to transport debris from grading operations southeast of Rincon Hill to China Basin.²² Substantial activity and progress are evident in the photograph. Scores of workmen, instead of just four, pose at their tasks, and sandstone blocks imported from Newcastle Island in British Columbia nearly encase the ground floor.



PLATE 4

Plates 4, 5 & 6: Muybridge made three photographs of Mint construction from the same vantage point with the same equipment early in 1871. Plate Four (Courtesy The Bancroft Library) is signed "Helios" in the lower right and was probably made in February or March. Plates Five and Six were made in April and July. The prints, in the California Historical Society collection, are smaller in size than Plate Four, suggesting that trimming removed the signature.



PLATE 6

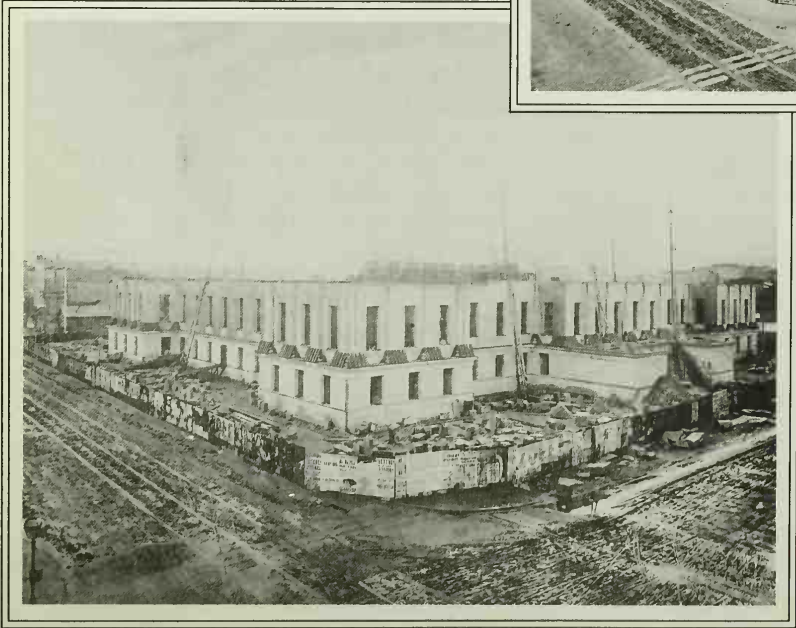


PLATE 5

Plates Five and Six, dated April 15 and July 15, 1871, respectively, were made from identical camera positions, looking in a northwesterly direction from the intersection of Fifth (right) and Mission streets. No "Helios" identifies either print, but their similarity to Plate Three, their composition and quality, the apparent use of a shorter-than-normal focal length lens to emphasize linear convergence, and especially their resemblance to an earlier signed photograph (Plate Four) from the same vantage point provide evidence that Muybridge made them both.²³

Whether he did or not, they confirm significant facts. Utilities were installed and functioning in the South of Market district by 1871. City Railroad Company horsecar tracks traversed Mission Street heading toward Woodward's Gardens, and a gas lamp appears in the lower left corner of the two images. Plate Five illustrates the sorry state of street paving and maintenance in 1871; April showers, horses' hooves, and wagon wheels reduced thoroughfares like Mission Street to quagmires. Because streets appear to be surfaced in Plate Six, made just three months later, the source of the problem may have involved cleaning rather than paving.²⁴ Broadsides on fences in the two photographs elaborate the range of social and cultural activities in the city: skating events, excursions, military drills, drama and musical performances at the Metropolitan Opera House and the California

Theater, and lectures at Platt's Hall.²⁵ The most striking feature of the two plates, however, is the relative progress in the construction. In April, only a few segments of the second story wall appeared on the Mint Street side of the building; by July, the floor was nearly enclosed. The figures in the foreground of Plate Six (perhaps including Mullet or Stebbins) may be congratulating themselves on the accomplishment.

Plate Seven, dated 1872 and showing the north side of the Mint with the intersection of Fifth and Jessie streets at the left center, is unique in several ways, but it probably is not a Muybridge photograph. Print quality is mediocre, and vertical lines diverge from the perpendicular axis of the building.²⁶ For the first time in the group of photographs, however, the configuration of the building has become readily apparent, and machine power makes its appearance in the scene. A single operator attends a steam engine with its belt enclosed in a rough wooden housing, but its purpose is not immediately evident. Numerous construction workers, under the watchful eyes of foremen in the center and at the right, seem to be actively engaged in their work rather than posed, as in previous photographs. The debris of construction—granite slabs, empty barrels and kegs, scrap lumber, and tools—lies everywhere, and ladders extending to second floor windows indicate that interior staircases were not yet installed.

Plate 7: By 1873, the building approached its final configuration. Much interior and exterior detail, however, remained to be added.
CHS Library, San Francisco



Plate Eight is marred by negative or printing defects in its central area, pronounced linear divergence, and obviously added sky detail (probably from the same negative used for Plate One). From atop Lincoln School on Fifth Street, the camera looked southwestward with Jessie Street in the right foreground and the spires of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church on Mission Street in the background.²⁷ Although the Mint's final outlines are well-defined, much remains to be accomplished. Granite columns await placement on their footings, work has not yet begun on the massive exterior staircase leading to the main entrance, planks and ladders still provide access to the interior, no

evidence can be seen of the 150-foot chimneys designed to exhaust fumes from smelting retorts, and progress on the roof and attic that will ultimately enclose the central skylights and atria is minimal. It is unlikely, then, that interior finishing or equipment installation had started when the photograph was made. Yet on the evening of May 22, 1873, Henry Baker, a clerk in the Assayer's Office, tumbled from the second floor stairway, fractured his skull, and died from his injuries.²⁸ The tragedy challenges the accuracy of the inscribed date, 1873. If that is indeed correct, the photograph must have been made very early in the year. Late 1872, however, seems more plausible.



Plate 8: The Mint's physical shape became apparent, ca. 1872. CHS Library, San Francisco



Muybridge made one of the earliest photographs of Mint construction, probably soon after the completion of site-grading in May 1869. The dapper figure in the foreground is architect Alfred Bult Mullet. The sign behind him warns, "Spectators must not talk to the workmen." Courtesy of the Bancroft Library

Two rather unremarkable photographs of the finished Mint (not shown) complete the group of new images in the California Historical Society collection. Treu Hecht made the earliest at about the turn of the century. The costumes and the carriage seen in the picture suggest the approximate date, but other information confirms it. Until 1899, Hecht worked as a retoucher for several firms in the city; then he established his own studio on 35th Avenue, the address on the photograph's mount.²⁹ An unknown photographer made the second of the post-construction pictures during the 1930s.

A preliminary examination of a small group of photographs, even without a specific topic of inquiry in mind, demonstrates the value that images from the past can have for a wide variety of researchers. Those concerned with architectural history, for example, will learn about both the design and construction of the Mint itself and the style and quality of surrounding residential and commercial buildings. Social and labor historians will likewise find information of interest, and the cultural historian will gain insight from details such as posters and costumes. For the urban historian, possibilities are both abundant and varied. The use of photographs as documentation, however, involves more than simply seeing and identifying. Cameras or photographers do periodically lie, dates and other data often are erroneous and misleading, and details can be added or deleted. Therefore, interpreting photographs demands the same sort of skepticism, preparation, and insight that is applied to other kinds of evidence. The effective analysis of photographs also demands knowledge of the historical context or setting, the ability to relate images to numerous other sources of infor-

mation, and familiarity with the history of the medium itself.

Photographic research can be both laborious and frustrating, but potential rewards and an occasional exciting discovery more than justify the expenditure of time and energy. The voluminous and varied output of Muybridge's effort alone offers vast opportunity, but possibilities are limited to neither renowned nineteenth-century photographers of his caliber nor major collections. Since 1839, when Daguerre introduced photography as a practical process, countless individuals have preserved a multitude of visual fragments of the past. Studies currently are locating and publicizing images made by commercial photographers, portraitists, journalists, serious amateurs, and family snapshooters, all of which can add rich texture to the fabric of historical understanding.³⁰ In addition, increasing interest in preservation is making the work of previously anonymous photographers available through state and local historical societies across the nation. In numerous collections—large and small, public and private—an extensive, varied, and neglected resource awaits the penetrating eyes and curious minds of ingenious and determined investigators. CHS

See notes beginning on page [59].

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ANNIE E. K. BIDWELL: Chico's Benefactress

by Valerie Sherer Mathes

During the spring of 1918 while most Americans scanned newspaper headlines to learn the fate of the American army in Europe, residents in the rural Northern California agricultural community of Chico worried about the health of seventy-eight year old Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell. She had suffered a slight paralytic stroke, and her condition was worsening. Then on March 10, the headlines of the *Chico Record* read: "Mrs. Bidwell is Dead. Patriarchal patroness of this city succumbs to final transition."¹ For the next several days, the front page of the local newspaper was filled with anecdotes, funeral arrangements, details of the will, and tributes to this remarkable woman, who, for half a century, truly had been Chico's Godmother. She had served her community not only as a dedicated civic leader and philanthropist but as a reformer active in temperance, educational, and Indian reform work.

The love and devotion accorded Annie Bidwell in death by the community that had been her home for fifty years was widespread. Businessmen and women, journalists, judges, school children, and especially the Mechoopda Indians from the *ranchería* on the Bidwell estate of Rancho del Arroyo Chico paid their final respects. In behalf of all Chico residents, the Chico Business Men's Association passed a resolution expressing their sadness at the passing of the woman who had been a "benefactress of the city of Chico and its residents."² In her memory the Superior Court in neighboring Oroville and the Justice Court in Chico adjourned until the day after her burial. All the stores, offices, and saloons were closed for two hours in the afternoon to enable grieving residents to pay their last respects.

In an editorial tribute, the editor of the *Chico Record* praised Annie Bidwell for giving away lands and material wealth, but, more importantly, he wrote ". . . she gave of love and charity, and compassion and high desires, and the example of that rarest of virtues . . . a Christian life."³

Normal college and grade school classes were cancelled to enable approximately 2400 college students and school children to form "an avenue of sorrow" through which her funeral cortege could pass. While the town's children planned to cover her pathway with flowers, eight Mechoopda Indians would carry her gray French casket from the Bidwell mansion, where the service was held, to the gravesite.⁴ She was to be laid to rest beside her husband, John Bidwell, in Chico cemetery.

A stately Annie Bidwell toward the end of her life—beloved benefactress, philanthropist, and humanitarian to Chico and her people.
Courtesy California State Library



The headlines of the *Chico Record* reported that 10,000 people paid their respects. About twenty Mechoopda Indians from the Rancho Chico *rancheria* sat in the rear of the main parlor of the mansion during the service. Noting their presence, Reverend Willis G. White admonished the Indians to remember the lessons Annie had taught them. Although "you have lost the shepherd of your flock," he told them, and "you . . . have been deprived of the inestimable service of one whose life was consecrated to you . . . you have had the benefit of a saintly Christian life in your midst" which would be the "most cherished treasure."⁵

March 12 dawned with a cloudy, mottled sky that dropped both rain and hail upon those gathered at the gravesite—the grayness of the day "reflected in the grayness of spirit and heaviness of heart."⁶ The lateness of the funeral cortege and a sudden storm prevented the college students and school children from forming their avenue of sorrow. As residents gathered at the graveside to hear the brief, simple prayer, "the sun broke through the mass of storm clouds into the glory of its western light over the earth and on the open grave. . . ."⁷

Several days later, braving wind and driving rain, six hundred Chico residents attended a Sunday afternoon memorial service at the Presbyterian church. Those gathered represented the various groups that Annie Bidwell had touched through her fifty years of humanitarian work. Indians, students, teachers, church members, ministers, business people, and temperance workers all paid tribute to the woman who had become their benefactor. Those assembled, although grieving their loss, pledged to work together to "bring to pass those things which she most desired."⁸

What manner of woman generated such love and devotion that thousands of mourners braved cold rain and hail to pay their last tribute? Who was this remarkable philanthropist and humanitarian who spent half a century in Chico? How had she come to the realm of philanthropy and what areas of philanthropic work was she most interested in? A close look at her last will and testament dated January 15, 1917, and the codicil of January 25, 1918, tells us a great deal about this amazing woman.⁹

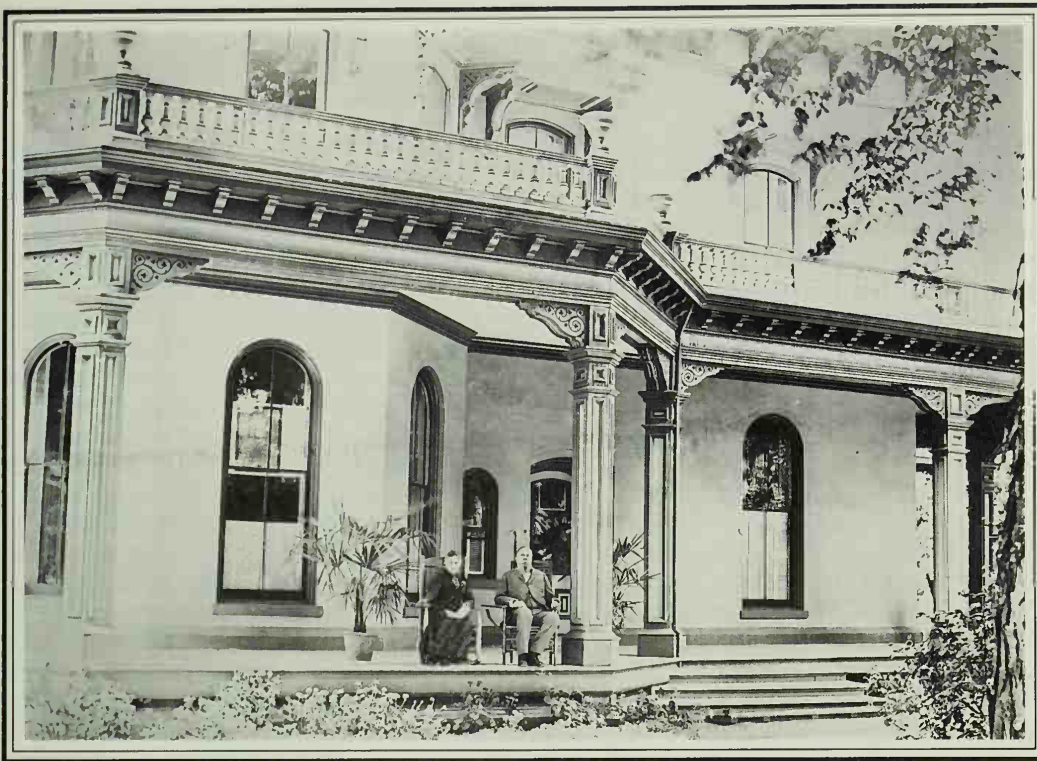
The will distributed an estimated \$260,000 to friends, relatives, and various organizations. All provisions were considered jointly from Annie and her late husband John. Her bequests and therefore her most important humanitarian and reform

efforts were concentrated in the areas of Indian reform, temperance work, suffrage, and general church activities. To Reverend White, her pastor for a dozen years, and her co-worker among the Rancho Chico Indians, she left \$2,000. To the California Indian Association, located in San Jose, and to the National Indian Association, of which she had been a long-time member, she left \$4,000 and \$3,000 respectively. She bequeathed land to the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church as an endowment fund for the Indians of Rancho Chico. This land could be sold and a fund established for the benefit of resident Indians. Finally, the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work received \$4,000 for the benefit of Indians living in the foothills of Butte County.

Her intense feeling for temperance was reflected in bequests totalling \$27,000, including \$9,000 to the Prohibition Trust Fund Association of New York; \$4,000 to the Prohibition Party of California, in Los Angeles; \$4,000 to the Chico Women's Christian Temperance Union; \$3,000 to the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, in Illinois; \$4,000 to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of California, in San Francisco; \$2,000 to the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to be used by its temperance committee; and finally \$1,000 to the Southern California Woman's Christian Temperance Union, in Los Angeles.

Strongly reflecting a belief in evangelical Christianity, so common to many of her nineteenth century contemporaries, Annie remained devoted to her Christian faith throughout her lifetime. In death she contributed \$12,000 to various Presbyterian organizations: \$5,000 to the First Presbyterian Church of Chico, \$2,000 to the San Francisco Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, \$1,000 to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, \$2,000 to the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, and \$2,000 to the Accidental Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

Having taught for years, Annie thought the promotion of education to be important, and her bequest of \$4,500 to her great niece, Annie Ellicott Kennedy, for educational purposes reflected this belief. The remainder of the Bidwell estate went to the College Board of the Presbyterian Church for a co-educational Christian school to be established on the grounds of the Bidwell mansion. The curriculum included agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and domestic classes, as well as a class in "the evil



Annie and John Bidwell on the south porch of the lovely Bidwell Mansion (ca. 1894), which Annie later bequeathed to the Presbyterian Church for a co-ed Christian school. *Courtesy California State University, Chico, Meriam Library, Special Collections*

effects of alcohol and narcotics on the human system, not only physically but in the impairment of all moral, religious and patriotic impulses."¹⁰

The remaining large bequests reflected other varied interests. They included \$3,000 to the Good Templars Home for Orphans in Vallejo and \$4,000 to the National American Woman Suffrage Association in New York to establish a fund in honor of her friend, Susan B. Anthony. Fully aware of the importance of historical preservation, Annie bequeathed \$5,000 to the Women's Auxiliary of the Society of California Pioneers for a memorial fund for her friend and founder of the Auxiliary, Mary M. Jewett. The money was to be used for the preservation of documents and historical objects relative to early California history. All of Annie's Indian baskets and various curios and books were willed to the College Board of the Presbyterian Church for safekeeping. Finally, she bequeathed the chair given to her father by Daniel Webster to the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to be placed in their Washington, D.C., Memorial Hall.¹¹

Annie Bidwell's bequests, however, do not explain why she became a philanthropist. That answer can be found in her extremely strong religious

conviction, her marriage to a wealthy philanthropic Californian and the expected societal demands of nineteenth century America—which had grown to allow women to engage in volunteerism and social reform.¹² Therefore to understand Annie more fully, it is necessary to look at her in the context of society's attitude toward women in the nineteenth century. Although she was a product of a culture which stereotyped women's societal role as a "separate sphere" comprised of "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity," she was different from many of her contemporaries because she became a strong public figure in various reform movements.

This new femininity, which dominated much of the nineteenth century, is called the "cult of true womanhood" by feminist scholars.¹³ Women were encouraged through mass communication to accept these new roles and to learn how to elevate their families as well as themselves. "To render *home* happy is a woman's peculiar province, home is *her world*,"¹⁴ noted a contributor to a leading ladies magazine in the 1830s. Home was a private refuge from which women "dispensed domestic comforts" to husbands and children.¹⁵

Annie, like many of her contemporaries, accepted

this belief. During their courtship she told John that she earnestly prayed and hoped to be the helpmate that God intended woman to be.¹⁶ Throughout their marriage she "dispensed domestic comforts" to her husband, but since the couple remained childless, the Mechoopda Indians, in a sense, became her children to feed, clothe, care for, and love. In a larger sense, her "home" and influence grew to include the entire community of Chico. Thus her role as moral guardian extended not only to her family and to the Mechoopdas, but to the townsfolk as well.

In addition to accepting the obligations of domesticity, Annie also assumed another role assigned to women by nineteenth century society. Henry Ward Beecher, prominent Protestant minister, believed that a woman was the better teacher, "and as the molder and trainer of children in the household . . . [was] by far man's superior."¹⁷ For over a decade Annie had taught the underprivileged in Washington, D.C. Once in Chico, she transferred her teaching skills to the Indians who remained her pupils until her death.

Although home was woman's "proper sphere," by the latter part of the century, private housekeeping had been expanded into social housekeeping as discontented women realized they could improve American society.¹⁸ Lacking the franchise, their main avenue for change became the church. Church work would not take them from their "proper sphere," nor make them less domestic or submissive. Contemporary clergymen believed that women's piety made them "naturally prone to be religious"¹⁹ and that they were "fitted by nature"²⁰ for Christian benevolence. "Religion is far more necessary to . . . a woman . . . than a self-sufficient man," wrote one cleric. "In . . . the woman it would be not only *criminal* but *impolitic* to neglect it."²¹

But religious leaders were not alone in this belief. Catharine Beecher, sister to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher, believed that Christianity gave "woman her true place in society" and that it alone could sustain her.²² It was religion that sustained Annie Bidwell and led her into philanthropic and humanitarian work. Both the editor of the *Chico Record* and the minister officiating at her funeral service described her as having lived "a Christian life." Thus she embraced the religious aspect of the new femininity more strongly than any of the other features.

Her Presbyterian beliefs were Puritan in origin. As historian Arthur M. Schlesinger notes, "the

core of Puritanism, once the theological husks are peeled away, was intense moral zeal both for one's own salvation and for that of the community."²³ Annie was definitely zealous both for her own salvation and later for that of her husband, the Indians, and the town of Chico. Prior to their marriage, she had written John of the necessity of feeling God's presence in all of her duties and of consecrating their lives to God's service.²⁴

Her strong convictions complicated their courtship. "I long to see you a Christian," she had written to him in March of 1867, "both for your own sake, & for your influence on others."²⁵ Her persistence resulted in John's Christian "declaration," and during the summer of 1867 he accepted probationary membership in the Chico Methodist Church. But Annie was not pleased. Until he became a Presbyterian, she believed that they could not mutually understand each other.²⁶ Furthermore, until he was baptized, she would be unable to pray for him as she "would wish."²⁷ During the following summer, he contributed land and money to construct a Presbyterian Church where he was baptized on August 30, 1868.²⁸ Writing his prospective father-in-law, John explained that he had resolved to lead a Christian life so he would be worthy of Annie, whom he described as "an angel of mercy thrown in . . . [his] way to turn . . . [him] from the wide road to ruin."²⁹

Annie soon became an angel of mercy to others. Armed with her Puritan moral zeal, and encouraged by both society and her husband, she entered the world of philanthropy. Philanthropy had been a part of American fabric since the beginning of the country, and by Annie Bidwell's generation, volunteer benevolent associations had become an established feature of American philanthropy. Various societies handed out funds for foreign and home missions, for the temperance movement, for the observance of the Sabbath, for the Sunday-school movement, and for numerous other needy causes.³⁰ But during the last thirty years of the century, an exponential growth in women's organizations occurred. Four main categories emerged: organizations that were church-related (descendants of prewar missionary and benevolent societies), the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, various women's clubs, and the two national suffrage associations.³¹ At various times in her life, Annie E. K. Bidwell participated in all four categories of volunteer organizations, serving in an official capacity and donating money.

Her exemplary life as a young woman fitted her

well for future activities in philanthropic and humanitarian work. Born Annie Ellicott Kennedy on June 30, 1839 into a distinguished family in Meadville, Pennsylvania, she was ten years old when her family moved to Washington, D.C. Her father Joseph C. G. Kennedy assumed the duties of Superintendent of the United States Census. Well educated at Mme. Breshaw Burr's school, Annie developed an early interest in both reform and humanitarian work, not uncommon for a Victorian woman of her upper middle class background. She learned her strong religious convictions from her mother. At sixteen she became "a professed Christian" and joined the Presbyterian Church. Soon after, she began teaching a YMCA Mission Sunday school class in a poor section of the city, work she continued for the next decade.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the twenty-two-year-old woman served as a volunteer nurse in government hospitals.³²

Her April 16, 1868, marriage to John Bidwell, former congressman and wealthy rancher, and her subsequent move to California partially changed the focus of her humanitarian work. Had she remained in an urban environment, like Washington, D.C., her work would probably have been much like that of any other urban humanitarian—working to uplift orphans, prostitutes, and immigrants. Instead she faced a new challenge—the acculturation of the Indians.³³

In 1850 Annie's husband had moved a small group of Mechoopdas from Chico Creek to live permanently on Rancho Chico, his 26,000 acre estate in Butte County, California. These Indians



A captivating
Annie Kennedy
Bidwell, probably
about the time of
her 1868 marriage,
when she was 28.
*Courtesy California
State Library*

served as laborers in his fields and flour mill. This was not his first experience with Indian workers. Earlier he had satisfactorily employed other Indians to work his mine in exchange for food and clothing.³⁴

Following their marriage and their return to California, John Bidwell took his wife to visit the Mechoopdas. He proudly showed off the frame houses he had built in an effort to acculturate them. One wonders what Annie's initial reaction was to the poor but proud Indian people on her husband's estate. She soon grew to love them, although she found some of their practices annoying. In turn, they loved and respected her, affectionately calling her "Little White Mother."

It is Annie's work among the Indians over the next fifty years that sets her apart, as a reformer and philanthropist, from many of her contemporaries. She fervently undertook the responsibility to acculturate and uplift the Mechoopda Indians—a job which eclipsed her other humanitarian endeavors, partially because it was often a daily task. Just as she had influenced John to become

a good Christian, she would bring Presbyterianism to the Mechoopdas.³⁵

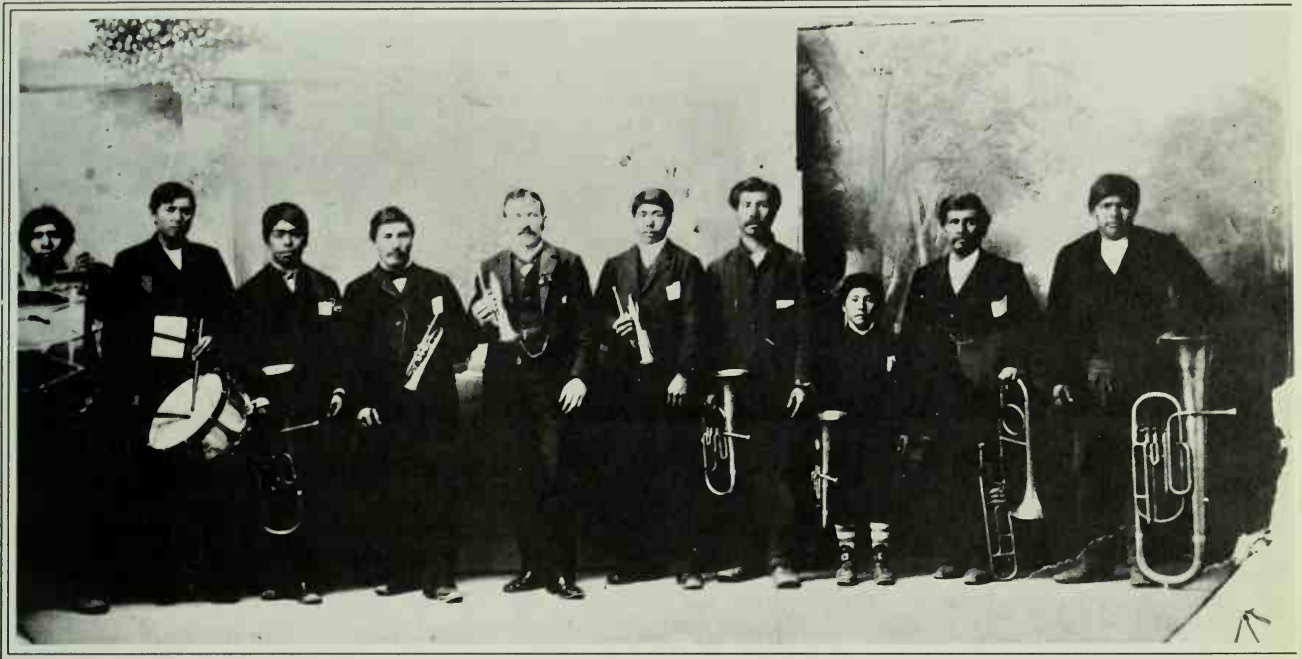
Success with the Indians did not come easily. For over six years she tried to interest them in both religious and educational training, only to have the women hide behind friendly smiles and the children flee like deer when she approached. Finally in the summer of 1875—after adopting a method used at Bethany Mission in Washington, D.C., of giving cloth to the Indian women and allowing them to keep their final product—Annie was able to capture the interest of the Indians. Aided by members of the Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society of the local Chico Presbyterian Church, she organized the Industrial Mission School as a branch of the Presbyterian church group. Class formally opened on June 11 in John Bidwell's cottage office, with nine students meeting twice weekly.³⁶

When members of the Missionary Society lost interest, Annie ran the school herself, enlisting assistants when possible. She taught reading, geography, arithmetic, writing, spelling, and sewing



Chico Rancheria Chapel, ca. 1925. Annie spent the majority of her life working for Indian reform, of which Christianizing the Mechoopdas was only one part. *Courtesy California State University, Chico, Meriam Library, Special Collections*

The Rancho Chico Indian band, ca. 1890s. Annie's Indian protégé, Burney O. Wilson, was a member of this band in the early 1900s. *Courtesy California State University, Chico, Meriam Library, Special Collections*



to the Indian women and children. During the 1880s her health declined. Suffering from meningitis and consumption, she was no longer able to carry on her activities at the school. These health problems were only harbingers of future medical conditions that included neuritis and various neuralgic symptoms that near the end of her life left her so severely disabled that she was unable to write or even comb her hair without help.³⁷

In about 1879, realizing that the spiritual well-being of the Indians required more than an Industrial Mission School, Annie secured an appointment as pastor to the Mechoopda Indians. She not only conducted church services off and on until her death but also performed marriages, burials, and baptisms. Her position as pastor was unique. No other woman engaged in Indian reform received a similar appointment. In general, Annie Bidwell's work among the Indians was unusual. She essentially adopted an entire Indian village and cared for them personally until her death.

To enhance his wife's Christian work among the Mechoopdas, in the winter of 1882 John Bidwell constructed a small chapel.³⁸ A close reading of Annie's diary reflects almost weekly attendance at this chapel on Sundays when she was not out of town. The growth of Indian attendance prompted the Bidwells in 1886 to construct a larger structure

in a walnut grove on their mansion grounds. A decade later the structure was moved to the Indian village and enlarged; in 1908 it was incorporated as the Mechoopda Presbyterian Church by the Presbytery of Sacramento.³⁹

Although Annie had undertaken her Indian humanitarian work largely on her own, she realized that society was not yet ready to accept the Indians as equal participants. During frequent visits to her parents in Washington, D.C., in the 1880s, she became acquainted with a national organization devoted to attaining citizenship privileges for the Indians. She joined the Philadelphia-based Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), founded in 1879 by Mary L. Bonney, principal of the Chestnut Street Female Seminary.⁴⁰ Annie was elected western vice president of the association in 1892, when northern California branches were organized in San Francisco, San Jose, and Chico.⁴¹ She served for decades and graciously remembered the WNIA in her will.

The love and care that Annie expended on the Mechoopda Indians was expensive. She personally contributed toward the education of certain Indian children. One in particular was Burney O. Wilson. A member of the Rancho Chico Indian band and a 1912 graduate of Chemawa Indian School, Wilson attended Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas,

where he was elected treasurer of the school's Y.M.C.A.—undoubtedly strongly influenced by Annie's Christian teaching. Three years later she paid Wilson's tuition, room and board, and traveling expenses to Park College in Parkville, Missouri, where he studied for the ministry.⁴²

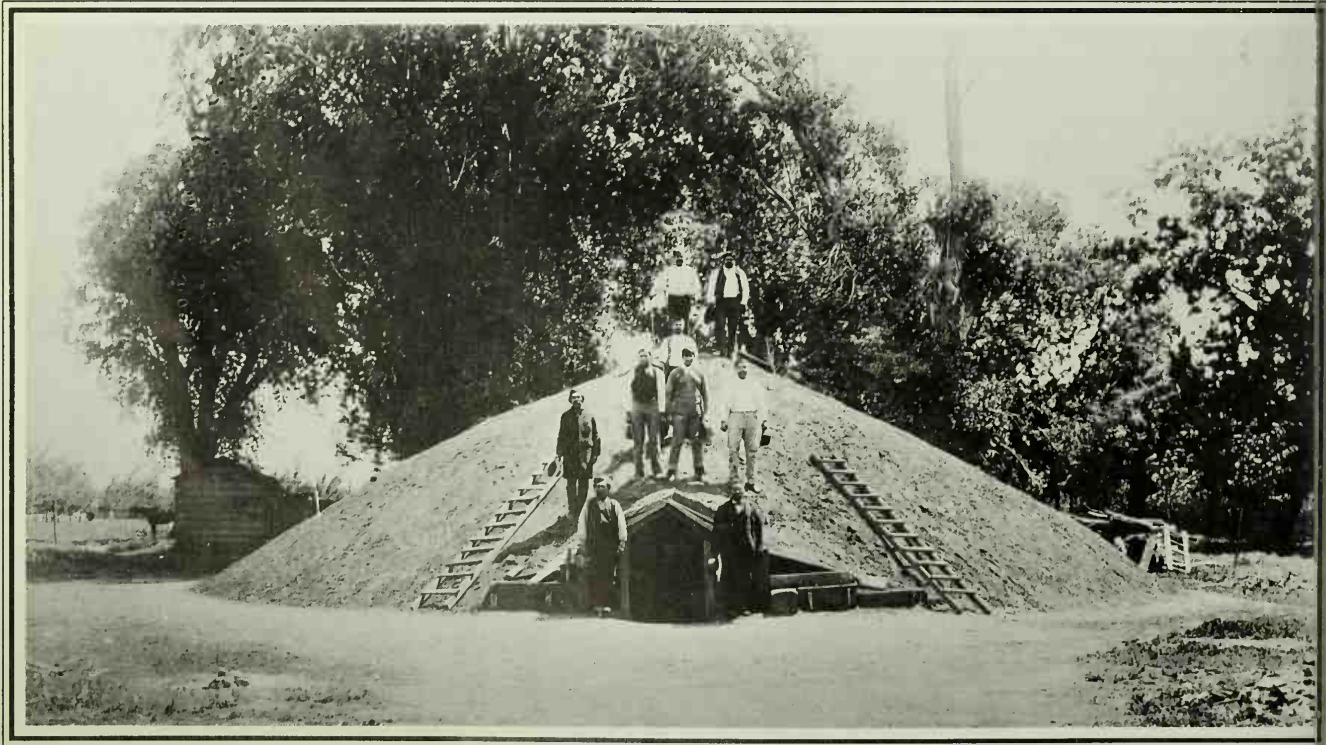
Believing that God and her husband had entrusted the Indians to her, she felt obligated to feed and clothe the elderly and to provide employment for all who wished to work, even if the work was not profitable to her. She paid the old and the sickly full wages for work they accomplished. In a National Indian Association (formerly the WNIA) *Annual Report* she remarked that her heart ached as she watched "full caste Indians bent over with rheumatism, . . . go to and from their work so faithfully day by day." But, she proudly noted, "they prefer to work for their living . . . they do not wish to be idle."⁴³

In addition to feeding, clothing, and employing the Indians, Annie also settled their medical bills—

some as high as \$500 in one year. From November 30, 1913 to December 1, 1914, she spent \$1,105 on the Indian village for groceries, clothing, wood, medical attention, dentistry, traveling expenses for students, and caskets for the deceased. The following year her expenditures reached almost \$1,000 on similar items. These costs increased in 1916 to \$1,244 and in 1917 to \$1,300.⁴⁴

The Indians, in turn, were extremely fond of their benefactress. During late January 1909, she suffered from a hearing impairment, and the Indians continually prayed for her renewed health. Once up and about, she ran into one of her Indian charges, William Conway, who with a smiling face and eyes moist with tears, whispered that their prayers had been answered—she was well again. Upon returning to her room Annie wrote in her diary: "To my knees I went on entering my room, & thanked God for my dear people—*My Indians!*"⁴⁵

Annie did not forget them in her will. She bequeathed \$6,200 to various Indians, including



The Mechoopda Indian sweathouse on Chico Ranchería, ca. 1910. Annie abolished traditional Indian practices, such as use of the sweathouse, after John's death in 1900. Courtesy California State University, Chico, Meriam Library, Special Collections

\$1,000 to Burney O. Wilson.⁴⁶ Almost a decade earlier, at the request of her late husband, she had executed a deed to the land upon which the village stood to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions and requested that it be recorded at her death. In her will, she added a fourteen-acre tract and instructed the Mission Board to hold it as an endowment in trust.⁴⁷

Annie's work among the Indians differed from that of other Indian reformers, who often merely paid a hasty visit to a reservation or took a tour with government officials and then returned to write their reflections. She did not distance herself from her subjects; she lived with the Mechoopda Indians daily—spending hours in their homes, visiting and administering to the sick, and serving as their pastor. While other reformers encouraged and sponsored priests and ministers to work among the Indians, Annie E. K. Bidwell undertook the role personally. Thus among contemporary Indian reformers, her work was unique.

Unlike many Indian reformers, who found no value in Indian culture, Annie at least recognized the historical significance of Mechoopda traditions and preserved them through her speeches and writings.⁴⁸ But like most reformers, she found some Indian practices most annoying, especially the wailing and singing during times of mourning, and the destruction of baskets and other personal property during burials. The Indian village was moved further from the mansion so she would not be bothered by the noise, and following her husband's death, she was able to have some of the "heathenistic" practices stopped, including the Indians' use of their earthen sweathouse.⁴⁹

Annie's concern for the welfare of the Mechoopda Indians and her brother's life-long struggle with alcohol⁵⁰ led to her involvement in the temperance movement. Her husband shared this interest. Even before their marriage, John had the vineyards at Rancho Chico replaced with raisin grapes. In 1892 he ran as the Prohibition Party's presidential candidate, receiving over 270,000 votes, and in 1912 she served as an elector to the Party's national convention. During the 1914 election, Mechoopda Indian men and women voted the Prohibition Party ticket, and "they were grieved when we lost," wrote Annie, "as they realize the curse drunkenness brings to their people."⁵¹ The following year she wrote that the Indians were "one of the inspirations to banish alcohol from our state."⁵²

Members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union established a chapter in Chico on Decem-

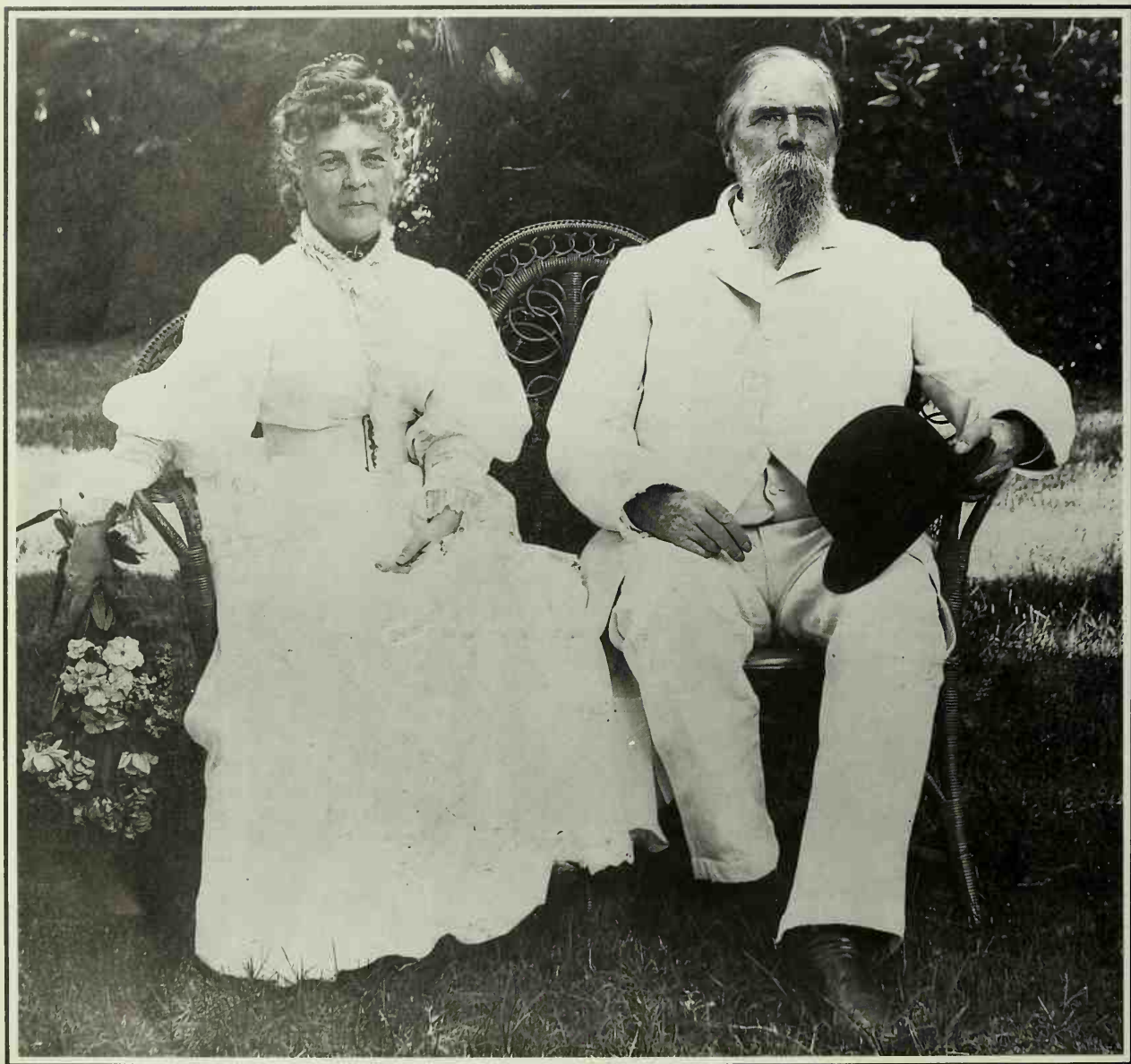
ber 9, 1883, and elected Annie president.⁵³ At other times she served as vice president and member of the board of the local WCTU chapter. She also organized a Young Women's Christian Temperance Union which, for years, held Saturday afternoon meetings at her home.⁵⁴ In 1904 she gave land to the WCTU for the creation of three public parks.

During her lifetime she continually donated money to temperance organizations. In March 1911 she sent \$230 for WCTU legislative work, and a June, 1912 entry in her checkbook showed a \$300 contribution on a formal pledge of \$1,000.⁵⁵ In February of 1914 she pledged a donation of \$5,000 payable in six years to the Northern California Prohibition Committee.⁵⁶ At her death, bequests of \$27,000 to various temperance organizations reflected her strong interest in the temperance movement.

Issues related to the Indians and temperance work did not totally dominate her philanthropic work, however. In order to obtain the franchise for women, beginning in 1891 Annie devoted time and money to the suffrage movement. She was a charter member of the California Equal Suffrage Association and helped organize the Chico chapter of the Equal Suffrage Association. During her attendance at national conventions she met and corresponded with prominent suffrage leaders, including Susan B. Anthony, who was a guest at the Bidwell mansion.⁵⁷

One of Annie Bidwell's most important and most enduring philanthropic gifts to the city of Chico was Bidwell Park. In July 1905 for \$1 she deeded 1,902 acres of land to the city as a joint gift from her and her late husband as a "token of their love and affection." Four years later she added an additional parcel of more than 400 acres. Five restrictions were applied to the initial donation. Two of them reflected her temperance and church work. The park was not to be used for public picnics on the Sabbath, and the sale of liquor on park premises was prohibited.⁵⁸ In 1913 she donated a children's playground along the south side of Chico Creek.

These are but a few of the philanthropic activities of Annie Bidwell. Her diaries reflected numerous ways in which she helped people. Many of her days were spent ministering to the Indians in the *rancheria* village, attending meetings of various benevolent associations, or writing small checks to various needy organizations. For fifty years, Annie E. K. Bidwell played a strong and influential role in promoting Indian reform, women's suffrage,



Annie and John Bidwell seated in their garden. The independence which John accorded Annie from the beginning of their marriage contributed to her life-long philanthropic endeavors. *Courtesy California State Library*

and prohibition—both on a local and a national scale. In addition, she gave liberally of her time and of her lands and money to the less fortunate. Her Christian humanitarianism was of such a scale that by some she was called Saint Annie and Lady Bountiful.⁵⁹ She was at home in the maternalistic mold, as a comforter of the less fortunate in the dominant paternalistic society, despite her active work for women's suffrage.

The rural community of Chico was the major beneficiary of Bidwell philanthropy. Her husband had founded Chico, and Annie carried on his work as generously as funds allowed. The Bidwells were only moderately well-to-do and had to be careful with finances. John believed that the ranch had been mismanaged during his years as a Congressman, but he did not hesitate to build a \$60,000 mansion for his bride. Ranch finances were particularly hampered by the 1873 slump of the world wheat market.

At one time the Bidwells feared they might lose Rancho Chico.⁶⁰ John further impoverished himself by liberally granting land and donating money to various causes. As early as 1889 their debts exceeded \$393,000.⁶¹ In the spring of 1904 F. C. Lusk wrote Annie that the ranch was continually running in the red and had been even while her husband was alive. He suggested she sell all real estate except the park she intended to donate to the city and her home and its grounds.⁶²

Annie disregarded this suggestion and further depleted the family fortune by her generosity. Following her death, the Bidwell estate remained in probate until 1936 because cash gifts were so liberal that to comply with them much land had to be sold.⁶³ Every deserving person who came to the Bidwell kitchen door was fed until one day the cook stopped this practice when numbers reached twenty-five during a two-hour period.⁶⁴ Annie's philanthropic endeavors would have, no doubt, been on a much grander scale had the resources been larger.

The mutual respect accorded each other in the Bidwell marriage created an atmosphere which enabled Annie to engage in humanitarian work. Shortly before their seventh anniversary, while visiting her parents, she wrote John: "Well I have been a happy wife thanks to a kind Providence, and loving husband. . . ." ⁶⁵ This happiness continued throughout the marriage, which ended on April 4, 1900, when John Bidwell died of a heart attack. Annie made the following notation in his diary: "My Beloved left us for his home with God,

and so suddenly and peacefully that we know not that he was leaving us, nor the moment when he went."⁶⁶

One of the more important elements of this loving relationship was that John believed that his wife should not only acquaint herself with all aspects of his business but also should be allowed to follow her own interests. Therefore when Annie began her campaign to acculturate the Mechoopdas, John encouraged and funded her ideas. Other people, he once wrote her, "do not see you in the light that I do. . . they see you as a sprightly interesting accomplished lady—but they do not know your firmness to principle—how unswerving [you can be] in your aims and purposes."⁶⁷

In her gentle persuasive way, Annie was definitely unswerving when she set out on a reform or a humanitarian undertaking—whether it be turning John into a dedicated Christian or banishing alcohol from the Rancho Chico *ranchería*. Her endeavors were varied—church work, suffrage, temperance, and Indian reform. In the latter area she was able to combine much of her humanitarian interests. Christianization would benefit the Indians by uplifting them, and temperance would end the degradation of alcoholism.

In accepting John's proposal of marriage, Annie noted that she "anticipated a life of usefulness."⁶⁸ In turn her husband-to-be must have suspected that she would leave a lasting impression upon others. During their courtship, he inquired: where could she find "finer fields than California for the exercise of Christian Charity?" As the wife of a wealthy and prominent rancher and politician, she would be "in the front rank of society,"⁶⁹ he informed her. Her answer to that question remains unknown, but her actions and good deeds speak for themselves. Not only did she achieve the front rank of society, but she lived a life of usefulness, beloved by the thousands of grateful residents of Chico, both Indian and white, who called her their "Godmother," and who braved a cold, stormy March day to pay her a final loving tribute. CHS

See notes beginning on page [60].

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Ambivalence at the Top: California Congressman Charles Gubser and Federal Aid for Classroom Construction During the Eisenhower Presidency

by James C. Duram

Debate about the effectiveness of Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential leadership is an important theme in current American historical scholarship. The earlier more critical views of Richard Rovere and Arthur Larson have given way to the more complimentary assessments of Fred Greenstein and Gary Reichard.¹ The following examination of California Congressman Charles Gubser's experience with the issue of federal aid for school construction suggests, however, that the more recent complimentary views of Eisenhower's leadership deserve careful scrutiny. Moreover, it demonstrates that his ambiguity toward federal policy and funding and the split between moderate Warren Republicans and their conservative Taft-Nixon counterparts sharply limited Eisenhower's potential for effective leadership.

It seems ironic that the Eisenhower administration spent most of the Republican-controlled 83rd Congress (1953-54) moving very tentatively, or, as its critics said, very halfheartedly, while shaping its approach to the issue of federal aid to classroom construction. Beyond a rather belated acceptance of the need for aid to federally impacted school districts, the administration seemed to waver in the face of growing evidence that the exploding American birth rate was creating a critical shortage of classrooms in the public schools.² It is undeniable that the problems surrounding the form and allotment of the aid were knotty ones. They were complicated by the determination of many Americans to maintain their traditional local control of the public schools. Yet the question of apportioning the aid seemed to overwhelm the administration's own admission that the need for classroom construction assistance was critical.

Administration decisions to assign the question of federal aid to its conservative-dominated Committee on Intergovernmental Relations for further study, and its insistence that it wait for the recommendations of the White House Conference on Education scheduled for November 1955, underscore its desire to avoid rapid action on the topic.³ Moreover, whether by accident or design, the Eisenhower approach had encouraged the same deadlock on the federal-aid issue that had characterized the Truman years. Such politically divisive issues as McCarthyism, bitter fights over the defense budget, trade legislation, and growing tension between the conservative and moderate wings of the Republican Party worked to seal the doom of the Republican majority in the 83rd Congress. Thus, when the administration finally did get around to introducing its limited stopgap school construction proposal in February, 1955, it was faced with a number of more ambitious proposals sponsored by members of the Democratic majority, whose leadership saw no reason for the Republicans to take credit for the resolution of the classroom crisis.

Charles Samuel Gubser, whose correspondence forms the basis of this study, was born in Gilroy, Santa Clara County, California on 1 February 1916. The grandson of a Swiss cheesemaker, he spent his childhood on his family's dairy farm. He attended the public schools, graduating from San Jose Junior College in 1934 and the University of California in 1937. After completing two years of graduate work, he taught in the Gilroy Union High School from 1939 to 1943. After 1940, he farmed in the Gilroy area, a region noted then for its fruits and diverse agriculture and in more recent years for its



Aerial photograph of a Los Angeles housing tract south of Manchester, Van Ness and 108th, 1950. The post-World-War-II building boom in the Los Angeles area strained the capacity of existing school facilities. At this school (lower left), temporary classroom buildings have already been erected. *CHS Library, Los Angeles*

A smiling Congressman Charles S. Gubser (R., Ca.) and his daughter with President Eisenhower, April 13, 1954. Courtesy Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



garlic production. The Gilroy area had earlier in the century provided the landscape background for Frank Norris' muckraking novel *The Octopus*.⁴

Gubser served as a Republican member of the State Assembly in 1951-52. In 1952 he ran for Congress as an Eisenhower Republican in the 10th Congressional District that consisted of Santa Clara, San Jose, and San Benito counties. He was swept into office on the electoral tidal wave that was to give Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 83rd Congress the only congressional majority he was to enjoy during his two presidential terms.⁵

Gubser's position as an Eisenhower regular, the fact that he remained in office through and beyond the Eisenhower presidency, and the extensive, though sporadic, discussion of the federal aid issue in his correspondence from the middle to the late fifties, provide an interesting window through which we can view the debate over federal aid to education as it influenced the legislative process. That correspondence clearly portrays his own position on the issue and the varied reaction of constituents that combined to shape his public stance on what proved to be one of the most controversial issues of the Eisenhower presidency.

Though several federal-aid-for-classroom-construction bills were introduced in the 83rd Congress, their supporters did not manage to get a bill to the floor of either house until one reached the Senate in 1954, after being separated from a more

comprehensive bill that had precipitated a debate about aid to parochial schools. The 1954 bill died, in part because of administration opposition on the grounds that it was premature. No federal-aid bill reached the floor of the House of Representatives in either session of the 83rd Congress.⁶

Not surprisingly, there are few references to federal aid to education in Congressman Gubser's 1953-54 correspondence. Several factors explain this absence. An Eisenhower loyalist, Gubser agreed with the administration's position on the issue; there was no bill on the floor to stimulate discussion and publicity; and California already had a tax equalization system that distributed state aid on a prorated basis to needy school districts.

References to education in letters to his constituents were sparse. In one, Gubser reiterated his belief that education was the key to progress in American society. He cited with approval congressional responsibility for assistance to federally-impacted school districts, and the Western State Higher Education Compact, though he added the rather oblique comment that some educational matters were in "the interim stage of the legislative process."⁷ Nothing in the Congressman's comments revealed his own opinions about the federal-aid-for-classroom-construction issue.

The freshman legislator busied himself learning the procedural ropes and answering his constituents' letters regarding postal salaries, trade poli-

cies, Senator Joseph McCarthy's tactics, whether or not the administration was exercising prudent fiscal restraint, and if he was working hard enough to stop creeping socialism.⁸

On 21 June 1954, an obviously concerned Congressman Gubser wrote a frank letter to GOP National Chairman Leonard Hall discussing his impressions of the 83rd Congress from the perspective of an Eisenhower Republican.

The success or failure of the first Republican administration since 1932 rests on its legislative program. After a year of preparation, a most conservative program, broad in scope and forward looking in conception, has been submitted to Congress. It is up to the Republican majority in both houses to determine what happens to it.

This is what is closely watched by the people and something that being a matter of record, no campaign oratory can belittle or embellish. As a party we should demand of our membership that future division of the type allowed Senator McCarthy and others be stopped, and that first and foremost, emphasis be placed on the most expeditious enactment of the Eisenhower legislative program. Anyone who does not adhere to this principle should be denied the sponsorship and support of the Republican Party.⁹

The results of the Fall midterm elections suggest that the American people measured the Republican efforts and found them wanting. Congressman Gubser and his fellow Republicans would spend the last six years of the Eisenhower presidency on the minority side of the aisle.

The Democratic takeover of the 84th Congress seemed to increase Gubser's resentment of that party's partisanship. On 20 January 1955, he told a constituent: "The Democrats play rough. Despite contrary statements, they are out for one purpose—that of cutting the President's throat."¹⁰ Such an approach, he insisted, contrasted sharply with his previous political experience in California.

Our California approach to politics is very much nonpartisan. I was schooled in the California State legislature under the leadership of the Governor now Chief Justice Earl Warren. His progressive moderation has been hailed by Democrats as well as Republicans in the best interest of humanity in general. I like to think I am that kind of Republican.¹¹

Despite his criticism of the Democrats, Gubser's correspondence suggests that much of the partisanship that he abhorred proved to be between the moderate and conservative wings of the Republican Party. He spent a good deal of time rebuffing

charges by many of his constituents that he had become a New Deal Liberal.¹²

References to federal aid to education in Gubser's correspondence during the first term of the 84th Congress are sparse. On 15 February 1955 Gubser informed a constituent that the Senate had taken up a school-construction bill, but that there had been no action on it in the House.¹³ On 27 July he reiterated his previous support for impact aid, arguing that the federal government should "... either assume the role of taxpayer in federally impacted districts or continue the present law of providing them with grants."¹⁴

The third and final reference to education aid appeared in an August 1955 discussion of the ineffectiveness of the 84th Congress.

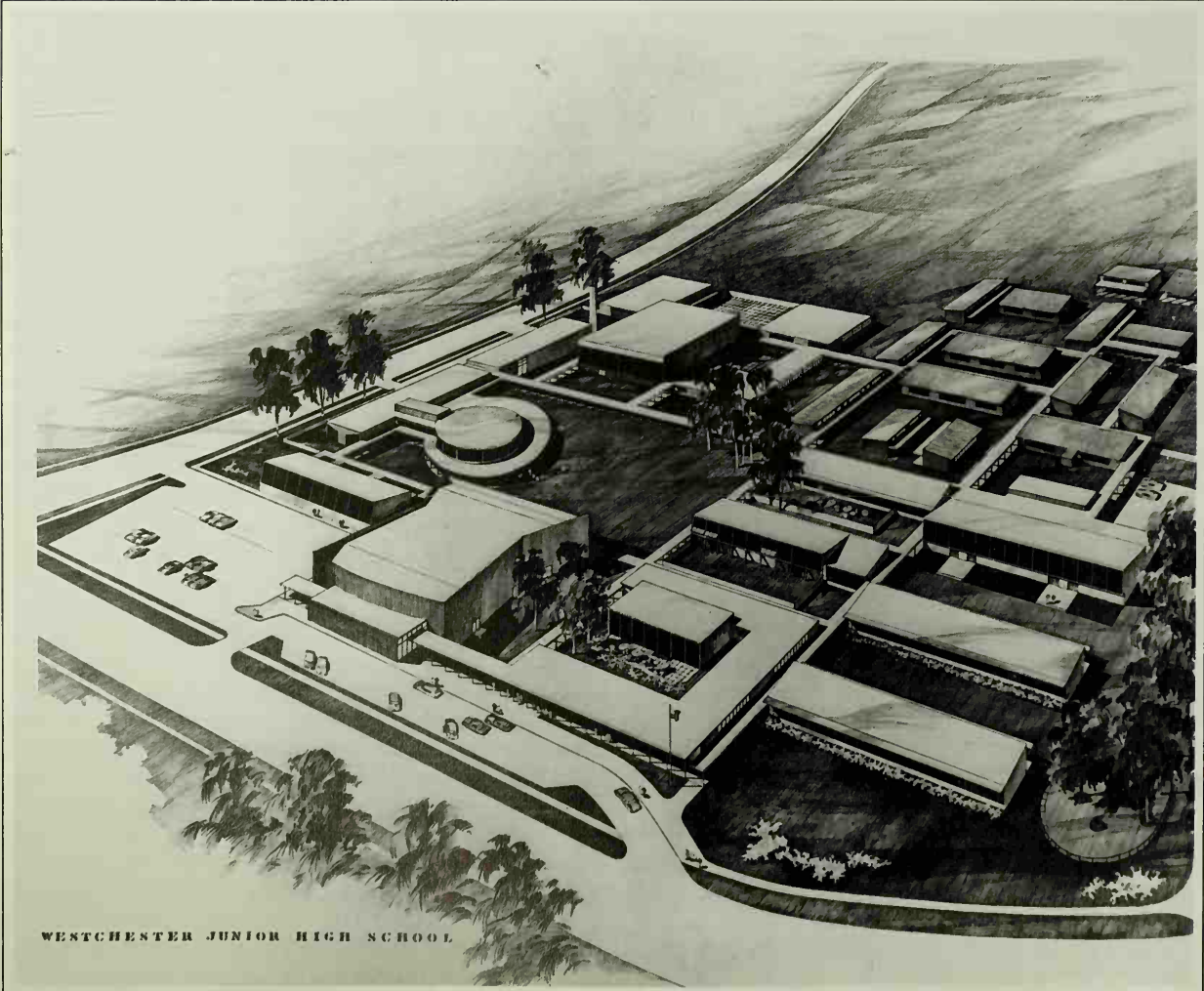
I still do not apologize, however, for my firm belief that major domestic matters were shelved purely for political purposes. Had you been on the scene and witnessed the political maneuvering by the two parties on the highway bill, school construction and other major items, I am sure you would be forced to agree with me.¹⁵

Gubser was convinced that partisanship played a destructive role in the legislative process, one that both parties practiced to the detriment of the country. The school construction bill, then, was the victim of misplaced priorities.

The federal-aid-for-school-construction issue did not become a major theme in the Gubser correspondence until after a bill on that subject made it through the House Labor and Education Committee in late 1955 and finally got to the floor of the House in the 1956 session of the 84th Congress. That bill, known as the Kelly Bill after its sponsor, Augustine Kelly of Pennsylvania, was a compromise proposal containing some of the Eisenhower administration's previous stopgap bill with some of the ideas in the earlier bills advocated by the National Education Association.¹⁶ At the time the bill came to the floor, Gubser made it clear that he favored some form of federal aid to classroom construction. He emphasized that the need was obvious, though he disliked the formula in the Kelly Bill that distributed money to the states on the basis of student population rather than need and the proven efforts of local districts to overcome their problems.¹⁷

The belated reintroduction of the Eisenhower administration's original school construction bill with its more modest funding and more stringent eligibility requirements brought an enthusiastic re-

Architect's rendering of a newer, more spacious junior high school, meant to replace schools such as the one depicted opposite this article's first page in order to better serve vastly expanding 1950s communities. *CHS Library, Los Angeles*



WESTCHESTER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

sponse from Gubser. He compared it favorably to the Kelly Bill in a letter to a constituent who had written urging the Congressman to stand firm for local control of education.

The basic difference between the two school bills is the allocation formula. Under the Kelly bill flat allotment per number of school children would be made. Under the Administration measure, the states' relative financial needs also are considered. I quite agree with you that education is a local problem and that federal control should be avoided at all cost. It should be realized that the current Bill's aim is aid in school housing. This help provides the physical facilities without influencing what goes on inside.¹⁸

Though initially stated in somewhat cautious terms, Gubser's insistence that federal aid for classroom construction go to school districts with need after they had done everything possible by themselves became his standard response to both the critics and supporters of federal aid during the 1956-57 sessions of Congress.

Unfortunately, Gubser and many of his fellow Republicans' expressions of support for the revived administration bill contributed to the split of the congressional coalition that had gotten the Kelly Bill to the floor in the first place.¹⁹ That, unfortunately for the advocates of federal aid, was not the only factor contributing to divisiveness about the issue.

Shortly after the arrival of the Kelly Bill on the floor of the House, its supporters became embroiled in another controversy that contributed to its demise. Adam Clayton Powell, the controversial Harlem Democrat, attempted to attach an amendment to the Kelly Bill. That amendment sought to deny funds to any school district found in non-compliance with the United States Supreme Court's decisions in the school desegregation cases of 1954-55.²⁰

The Powell Amendment put Gubser and many other congressmen on the spot. They received numerous letters from supporters of federal-aid legislation urging them to oppose the Powell Amendment. Because of their strong antisegregation views they found themselves placed in a position where they had to make a very difficult decision—one that forced a choice between pragmatism and principle. As Gubser explained:

I shall be happy to support this bill with or without the Powell Amendment, but I am sorry to inform you that my conscience would not allow me to vote against the Powell Amendment. I am firmly con-

vinced that without such an amendment, federal funds could be used by segregated schools, and I also feel that the amendment is fair in that funds are impounded for individual school districts until such time as they can through orderly processes comply with the Supreme Court's decision. Thus, the Powell Amendment would in no way hold up administration of the Kelly Bill.²¹

Again on 12 April 1956 he stated his reasons for opposing aid for segregated schools. "My reasons are primarily moral, however there is now the additional fact that segregation is in violation of our law."²² In still another letter, Gubser stated frankly ". . . that if the Powell Amendment carries in the House, it will most certainly be defeated in the Senate, in which case the responsibility for an act of wrongdoing will not rest on my shoulders."²³ In contrast, Congressman Clifford Hope (R., Kansas) voted to oppose the addition of the Powell Amendment because he was certain that it would lead to a Senate filibuster against federal-aid legislation.²⁴

The factors working against the Kelly Bill were indeed quite complex and diverse. It is obvious that many who were unenthusiastic or opposed to federal aid could hide behind the skirts of the Powell Amendment. Gubser does not seem to fit into that group. In addition, there is no evidence of any administration leadership in the midst of this confused situation.

It is also clear that Gubser's support of classroom construction was based on a national perspective, and that his position sometimes clashed with the expectations of his California constituents. Writing in June 1956 in response to a strongly worded letter from a California Chamber of Commerce official, the Congressman said:

This is an extremely controversial bill. On the one hand, I recognize that from a dollar and cents point of view California would not receive as much as it would pay in. On the other hand, the social problems created by sub standard education in some states may result in a drain on California taxpayers. I also feel it is in the national interest to provide decent schools. If I can find some practical approach to require a certain standard of local effort to be required as a prerequisite, I shall do so. Failing this, I shall probably be inclined to support the bill.²⁵

Gubser remained true to his conscience when the Kelly Bill with the Powell Amendment attached came up for a vote. As he explained, "I did support the roll call on the Powell Amendment. When the roll was taken the amendment was adopted.

Though the bill was unsuccessful I thought you would like to know I voted for it."²⁶ The evaporation of Southern support caused by the Powell Amendment and the division among Republicans caused the Kelly Bill to go down to defeat by a thirty-vote margin.

The spring 1957 session of the 84th Congress witnessed a repeat of the 1956 debacle. After the Powell Amendment was again attached to their bill, the Democrats accepted a substitute measure that incorporated virtually every measure of the administration's previous bill. Before a vote could be taken on the substitute, a preferential motion by Representative Howard Smith (D., Virginia), to strike the enabling clauses of the bill (in effect killing it) passed by a 208-203 vote with many of Gubser's Republican colleagues refusing the opportunity to join in support of the administration bill.²⁷

How did Gubser explain the events of the 1957 session to his constituents? In a correspondence characterized by increasing numbers of letters opposing federal aid for classroom construction, he tended to take a somewhat more narrow, rigid position regarding the kind of federal aid bill he would support. Typical were his remarks on 2 April 1957:

. . . I will only support aid for school construction when it has been conclusively proven that the state or local school district is not able to provide adequate facilities for itself. This . . . in keeping with my general philosophy that the federal government should only do those things which people cannot do for themselves.²⁸

He thus fell back strongly on the proven-need position advanced by the administration in its original school aid bill. In line with his comments, he announced his intention to amend the revised Kelly Bill when it was reported to the House floor. Among his suggestions was the return of 1% of a state's federal income tax contributions for use by each state for school construction.²⁹

His explanation of the revised Kelly Bill that the Democrats had presented to gain Republican support is not entirely free of partisan rancor. President Eisenhower, according to Gubser, did not give the revised bill forceful support because of its outright-grant provisions. In the ensuing debate, he explained, the Democrats realized that the Committee bill had no chance of passing and then

. . . announced their intention to compromise and accept the President's proposal which . . . would be based solely on need. In my opinion if the com-

promise had been offered at an earlier date a realistic and sensible bill could have passed. Just about that time, Smith of Virginia, a Democrat, made a move to strike the enabling clause, which in effect killed the whole bill.³⁰

Gubser explained that he had voted against striking the clause because he felt there was a chance to work out a sensible bill that did not violate his belief in states' rights, not because he favored the bill before the House. The House vote in favor of striking the enabling act ended the matter. As he concluded, "Looking back, I feel that the President's proposition would have been good for the country, but I do not believe that the Democratic bill which was before us was acceptable at all."³¹ What the timing had to do with the substance of the legislation is not clear. Gubser was still willing to compromise. Why not the President? Why did so many of Gubser's fellow Republicans not follow his example? Also interesting for its absence is any explanation of the obstructionist tactics used by Chairman Howard Smith of Virginia in his role as House Rules Committee Chairman to prevent the passage of school-aid legislation.

Gubser's vote against the Smith amendment caused him some trouble. He was forced to refute the charges of some of his constituents opposed to federal aid that he had actually favored the Democrat-sponsored bill with its state-grants component over his previously announced proven-need position.³² One senses the Congressman's growing frustration over the federal-aid issue that so divided his constituency.

Gubser's attitude about the accomplishments of the 84th Congress did not belie his mood. "This session of Congress is about the most ridiculous thing I have ever attended, and it is dragging on for no good reason," he wrote P. J. Heller. "It has taken us longer to accomplish less than any other Congress I have ever been a part of."³³ Anxious to get on with his reelection campaign, the Congressman had little tolerance for continued work on controversial proposals.

The successful launching of *Sputnik* by the Soviet Union in the fall of 1957 temporarily altered the context and the thrust of the debate over federal aid to education. With a marked shift in official administration policy, the school-construction issue slipped into the background, while the alleged scientific-technological gap between the USSR and the USA occupied center stage. Discussion centered on the most effective

means to encourage scientific-technical education as the basis of our national security.³⁴

Taking advantage of growing public anxiety about the Soviet challenge, the administration withdrew its "support" for the school construction program it had so lukewarmly advocated in 1955, 1956, and 1957. (Decreasing support had already been evident by the spring of 1957 and, despite Gubser's explanation, played a key role in the demise of the school construction bill.) Though it still acknowledged the classroom shortage, the administration announced in a letter from Health, Education, and Welfare Undersecretary Elliot Richardson to Graham Barden, Chairman of the House Labor and Education Committee, that local and state construction programs were keeping abreast of enrollment increases and making slow progress in removing the backlog of need. It was important, the administration insisted, that it concentrate on ". . . other needs and deficiencies in our educational system" which were ". . . brought into sharp focus by the events of the past year."³⁵ The result was the passage of the National Defense Education Act.

Congressman Gubser's correspondence reflected this change in emphasis. His initial response to *Sputnik* was a sharp critique of our armed forces for permitting interservice rivalries to slow our rocket missile program. He called for the consolidation of all such activities under one responsible head.³⁶

Discussions of educational solutions to the Russian challenge began to appear early in his 1958 correspondence. Gubser saw the problem as one of ". . . stimulating the production of scientific minds in our educational system."³⁷ That would include the development of more effective means of stimulating those with ability to use their talents to the fullest. "One criticism I personally have of our school system is that we have placed too much emphasis on mass education," he explained to M. G. Herbert in February. "Though this has proven to be advantageous to those with lesser ability, it has also tended to give mediocre instruction to those with those with superior ability."³⁸ The superior student thus deserved a more challenging education.

Most of Gubser's 1958 correspondence centered on his support for federal scholarships and loans for gifted and needy students. Much of it also contained reassurances that he would not support any kind of program that would give the federal government control of the educational system. Typical of his position was the following explanation to E. A. Gibbs:

I favor the principle of giving federal scholarships to gifted children who would not otherwise be able to secure a higher education. This in my own opinion is necessary in view of the scientific accomplishments of the Soviet Union. However, I can assure you that I do not favor federal control of our educational system and will vote against any provisions of Senator Hill's bill which will accomplish this.³⁹

Gubser objected strongly when the Democrat-controlled House Education and Labor Committee passed its version of the National Defense Education Act because "this bill providing college scholarships under government sponsorship has gone much further than is necessary and certainly much further than President Eisenhower requested."⁴⁰ He did withhold his support, and the bill was amended to conform to the administration's recommendation that it not result in an increase in the federal budget.

Public response to the NDEA was immediate. On October 6 Gubser wrote to the congressional liaison officer for HEW, noting that he had received several inquiries from his constituents requesting information about how to apply for assistance under the NDEA. Two of the letters were from prospective teachers who were experiencing difficulty in financing their studies.⁴¹ If Gubser's correspondence is any indicator, the NDEA had the effect of distracting attention from a general federal-aid-for-education bill. Though hearings on such bills were held in both houses in 1958, no bills were reported out of committee that year.⁴²

Despite the administration's shift away from support of school construction, the issue refused to go away. In 1959, the National Education Association pushed for the Murray-Metcalf Bill that called for federal aid for classroom construction and teachers' salaries. The administration countered reluctantly by offering a more restricted alternative bill, while reminding Congress of the necessity for fiscal restraint. While the Senate and House committees discussed both bills, neither came up for floor action that year.

From January to June 1959, Gubser informed his constituents that he was in general accord with the principles of the Murray-Metcalf Bill and that he was looking forward to the committee hearings so he would have the benefit of the facts they would bring out about the bill.⁴³ In April he wrote Chairman Graham Barden of the House Education and Labor Committee urging the addition of a proviso in the bill requiring that federal grants for teachers'



Milling students in front of newly-constructed Ralph Waldo Emerson Junior High School, Los Angeles, 1946. By 1953, when Gubser left California for the 83rd Congress in Washington, the need for more schools to service the post-World-War-II baby boom was critical; Gubser spent his term in Washington attempting to rectify that problem, with little success. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

salaries augment, rather than replace, the portion of those salaries paid from local funds. Gubser argued that if that step were not taken, ". . . it would be possible for local school districts to reduce the amount of local effort and replace it with federal money, in which case, they could honestly state that the authorized amount of federal money was used for salaries."⁴⁴ He had not abandoned his insistence that maximum local effort be the basic criterion for federal aid.

In June he revealed his increasing pessimism about the Murray-Metcalf Bill to a school superintendent from a small community in his district:

I share your views about government interference but admit I am a school man at heart. Frankly, I am hoping that the Murray-Metcalf Bill will be watered down to a position where some benefits will be provided to school systems but some of the problems I see connected with it will be eliminated.⁴⁵

This and subsequent letters suggest that Gubser was becoming more conservative, more alarmed about Democratic willingness to ignore budgetary restraints and push a program that substituted subsidized centralized control for local effort. He expressed his growing disillusionment with the current situation in a letter to one of his more conservative constituents:

I don't think the American people realize how serious the situation is getting. Were it not for the fact that we have become an exceptionally well-organized minority, I am sure that the present leadership of the Democratic Party would have placed us in a tailspin leading to Socialism. At best we can do nothing more than fight a delaying action and hope that some day the American people will wake up to the fact that the solutions to their problems lie in individual effort rather than an appeal to Washington, D.C.⁴⁶

The Congressman closed his 1959 discussion of federal aid by informing a constituent that the political and economic situation was not ripe for the Murray-Metcalf Bill to become law during the immediate future. He did, however, make a prediction: "I am convinced that some form of federal aid will eventually be enacted. If not next year, certainly in the next few years thereafter."⁴⁷ He had experienced too much frustration in dealing with that issue in the face of his own divided constituency to go beyond that general prediction.

Gubser's prediction proved to be correct. Though both the House and Senate passed classroom-construction bills in 1960, the bills differed markedly, thus requiring a joint conference committee

to iron out the differences. Unfortunately, the Chairman of the House Rules Committee, Howard Smith of Virginia, a conservative opposed to federal aid, refused to permit the naming of House conferees to try and work out the differences between the two bills.⁴⁸

As for Congressman Gubser, he finished the Eisenhower years about where he had begun—insisting that he supported temporary aid for classroom construction after the local school districts had done all they could, insisting on the preservation of local control, and hopeful that other states would adopt a state equalization formula that benefited needy school districts similar to the one used in California.⁴⁹ He predicated his grudging decision to support federal aid for teachers' salaries on his proposed amendment to the Murray-Metcalf Bill that would have required continued maximum local effort to prevent the substitution of federal for local funds.⁵⁰

It is significant that no general federal-aid-for-school-construction bill became law during the Eisenhower years. The discussion of the issue in the correspondence examined for this study illuminates the difficulties of arriving at a consensus on an issue where agreement on the necessity for such legislation became the hostage of a number of conflicting priorities, including partisanship, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Eisenhower administration, which seemed torn because of its fiscal conservatism and genuine disagreements about the best means to deliver the aid, and the beliefs of many that federal aid would or should be used to hasten school desegregation. Any one of these priorities provided major obstacles for the advocates of federal aid who sought to build a successful congressional coalition. Together, they proved insurmountable. GHS

See notes beginning on page [64].

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island: A New Hypothesis on Her Origin

by Marla Daily



Plaque in the Santa Barbara Mission cemetery garden honoring Juana Maria, the Lone Woman removed from San Nicolas Island in 1853. The exact location of her remains within the cemetery is unknown. *Courtesy William B. Dewey*

Was the "Lone Woman" of San Nicolas Island a native Nicoleño? The currently accepted view, as first articulated by anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, is that native Nicoleños were speakers of a Gabrieliño dialect, shared also with the adjacent mainland Indians.¹ New information, when combined with a review of certain previously published facts, leads to the conjecture that she may not have been a native Nicoleño at all, but in fact an Indian from elsewhere. It is entirely possible that her origins were connected to peoples from the north who were involved in the sea-otter trade in southern California during the early nineteenth century.

The story of the "Lone Woman" of San Nicolas Island is well-known. Her abandonment there sometime around 1836, and subsequent removal to Santa Barbara in 1853, have been recounted numerous times. The few recorded facts regarding her language and culture have been studied for over a century by anthropologists because they have been considered to constitute the only source of information regarding native Nicoleños.² In 1961, novelist Scott O'Dell fictionalized her story in his popular book, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.³ Universal Studios filmed the novelized version in 1964, further heightening public awareness. The late anthropologist Travis Hudson of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History meticulously reviewed both published and unpublished accounts of information concerning the Lone Woman, adding significantly to the body of knowledge available.⁴

Periodically, new information is discovered concerning the woman who was baptized on her deathbed as Juana Maria, as her story continues to be spread both by oral tradition and by scholars investigating further facts concerning Juana Maria's circumstances. A recently-discovered unpublished manuscript by Emma Hardacre, an author investigating the subject in 1880, led to a further review of

available information. Particular attention was paid to the nature of the California sea otter trade, Juana Maria's language, and an account of the physical appearance of her San Nicolas Island dogs. The following is a presentation of facts supporting a new hypothesis regarding her origin.

EMMA HARDACRE'S DIARY

During a 1986 oral interview of native Santa Barbaran Isaac (Ike) Bonilla, who was born in 1903, the author was surprised to find among his library a leatherbound book containing undated holograph notes written during the 1870s by Emma Hardacre, Santa Barbara's nineteenth century expert on the Lone Woman of San Nicolas.

Mr. Bonilla, a Santa Barbara historian and collector of "Santa Barbarana," had purchased the logbook some decades ago from a used book dealer whose name had been forgotten. The book, twelve and one-half inches tall by eight inches wide, contains several hundred pages, only six of which were used by Hardacre to write notes pertaining to San Nicolas Island. (The majority of pages, written in an unknown hand, contain accounting information for a business in the year 1866. Seventy-four of the book pages have been covered over with newspaper clippings in the form of a scrapbook, some of which mention Emma Hardacre or her niece, Elizabeth Mason.)

Emma Hardacre had arrived in Santa Barbara in 1876, 23 years after the Lone Woman's death.⁵ According to an interview conducted with Hardacre in 1913 by John P. Harrington,⁶ she was asked to research the subject of the Lone Woman by three Santa Barbarans—a Dr. Dimmick, Henry C. Ford, and James Calkins. Hardacre's work on the subject culminated in the publication of a popular account in *Scribner's Monthly* in 1880.⁷ Of particular importance in the logbook containing Hardacre's

holographic notes is the following unpublished, undated entry:

There is a doubt in my own mind whether the woman was Indian. There is a rumor that a very short time before the island was depopulated, a woman was cast ashore from a wreck, and that shortly after she gave birth to a child. This information has reached me since the material was gathered for my article as originally published. The search for facts was undertaken by four persons, Dr. (L. N.) Dimmick, Henry Chapman Ford, artist, and James Calkins, Banker all three residing in Santa Barbara and now deceased. They interested me in the subject, and by interpreters the Spanish and Indian residents of Santa Barbara from 1853 were interrogated. At that time (1879) the principal actors in the rescue were living. As I sifted the material the doubt arose in my mind as to the woman being a native Islander. Her manner of meeting her rescuers was not that of a wild woman, but of one who had knowledge of the amenities of life. Her entrance into civilized homes, was not that of a creature utterly unfamiliar with house conveniences—her tact in meeting strangers, receiving their gifts politely, and after they were gone—distributing them among the children of her host. Her conversing continuously in a tongue unknown to any—but evidently a language with which she was thoroughly familiar—no hesitation or forgotten phrases. A search was made for the people from San Nicholas (*sic*) but they were few and scattered over the country, and were never located. They were simply Mission Indians. She told her story by expressive pantomime and what seemed to be an account of shipwreck—swimming—and looking for rescue—the pictures on the wall of the cave.⁸

Hardacre was interviewed by John P. Harrington in 1913, the notes of which were published by Travis Hudson.⁹ Nowhere in this interview does Harrington report Hardacre's doubt about the Lone

Woman's origin, and therefore it is not known if her doubts were voiced to him.

SEA OTTER HUNTING

San Nicolas Island had long been the scene of sea otter hunting by various nations, including Russia, the United States, and Spain. Historian Adele Ogden identified vessels engaged in the California sea otter trade during the sixty-two-year period from 1786 to 1848, during which political conflicts and competition developed among otter hunters around the Channel Islands.¹⁰ It is known that San Nicolas Island was the scene of some of this activity and conflict. It is also known that women occasionally accompanied the foreign ships. In 1856 the Sacramento *Daily Union* reported:

In the year 1811, a ship owned by Boardman & Pope of Boston, commanded by Capt. Whittemore, trading on this coast, took from the port of Sitka, Russian America, about thirty Kodiak Indians, a part of a hardy tribe inhabiting the Island of Kodiak, to the islands in the Santa Barbara channel, for the purpose of killing sea otter, which were then very numerous in the neighborhood of these islands. Capt. Whittemore, after landing the Kodiaks on the island, and placing in their hands fire arms and the necessary implements of the chase, sailed away to the coast of Lower California and South America.

In the absence of the ship, a dispute arose between the Kodiaks and the natives of the islands, originating in the seizure of the females by the Kodiaks. The Kodiaks, possessing more activity, endurance and knowledge of war, and possessing superior weapons, slaughtered the males without mercy, old and young. On the island of San Nicolas, not a male was spared. At the end of a year, Capt. Whittemore returned to the islands, took the Kodiaks on board, and carried them back to Sitka.¹¹

There is a doubt in my own mind, whether the woman was Indian. There is a rumor that a very short time before she gave a wreck, a woman was cast the Island was since the child. This information has reached me since the material was gathered for my article, and was published. The search for my article, Henry Chapman had the artist, and James Barber, and several all three residing in Santa Barbara, and were deceased. They interested me in the subject, and by interpreters all the residents of Santa Barbara in 1853 and previous were of Santa Barbara that time (1879) the principal actors in the rescue were living. As I sifted the material the doubt arose in my mind as to ~~the~~ ^{the} being a native Islander. Her manner of meeting the rescuers, was not that of a wild woman, but of one who had knowledge of the American homes, was not that of a creature utterly ignorant of life - Her entrance into ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~house~~ ^{house} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~her~~ ^{her} ~~strangers~~ ^{strangers}, receiving their gifts politely, and after they were gone - distributing them among the children of her host. Her conversing continually in a tongue unknown to any - but evidently a language with which she was thoroughly familiar - no hesitation - or forgotten phrases - so one of the various Indian tribes obtained could understand one word uttered - to reach they were scattered over the San Nicholas, and were never located. They were simply Mission Indians - He told his story by expressive pantomime - and what seemed to be an account of Shipwreck - mining - and looking for us - the pictures on the walls of the case

Emma Hardacre's original diary reveals that there was a doubt in her own mind whether Juana Maria was in fact Indian from San Nicolas Island. Courtesy William B. Dewey

In 1814, Spain sent orders for its local authorities in California to limit trade with the Russians to agricultural and manufactured products only. As a result of the violation of this order, Russian otter hunter Boris Tasarov, commander of the vessel *Ilmen*, was placed under arrest in Los Angeles in 1815. During his trial, Tasarov stated that he had been in charge of Aleuts left on the Channel Islands by the *Ilmen*. While he and his men had been stationed on San Nicolas Island for seven months, they had obtained 955 otter skins. These skins were deposited on the islands, where a number of hunters were still at work.¹²

Author Phil Orr states that there were more than 450 northwest Indians and 80 Hawaiian hunters on the California coast between 1803 and 1811, some of whom may have become assimilated into Channel Island cultures. Padre Senan of Mission San Buenaventura wrote on June 15, 1816:

Ignacio and certain others of our neophytes returned yesterday from a trip to the Islands where they had gone to look for some gentiles who wished to become converts. Our people brought back 16 of them, and on their first trip last week they brought 20. Among the crowd of yesterday there were four Russian Indians, or from Russia territory.¹³

At the time of the rescue of the Lone Woman from San Nicolas Island in 1853, her rescuing party was itself engaged in sea otter hunting.¹⁴

LANGUAGE

One common thread which reappears consistently throughout the literature is the fact that in 1853 no one could be found who understood the

Lone Woman's language. The *Daily Democratic State Journal* of October 13, 1853, six days before Juana Maria's death, reported:

The wild Indian woman who was found on the Island of San Nicolas, about 70 miles from the coast, west of Santa Barbara, is now at the latter place, and is looked upon as a curiosity. It is stated that she has been some eighteen to twenty years alone on the Island. She existed on shell fish and the fat of the seal, and dressed in the skins and feathers of wild ducks, which she sewed together with the sinews of the seal. She cannot speak any known language—is good looking, and about a middle age. She seems to be contented in her new home among the good people of Santa Barbara.¹⁵

Both Captain George Nidever and Carl Dittman, who were participants in the Lone Woman's removal from San Nicolas Island to Santa Barbara, stated that although various Indian dialects were spoken to her, she was unable to understand them. They also reported that priests sent for various mission Indians to attempt to communicate with her, but as far as they knew, no one was successful.¹⁶ Hardacre attributes four words given as a part of the vocabulary of the Lone Woman: "to-co" (hide), "nache" (man), "te-gua" (sky), and "pinche" (body). There is considerable confusion as to the meaning ascribed to these words. Kroeber identified them as belonging to a Shoshonean dialect. In December of 1913, Harrington recorded on wax cylinders two versions of a song attributed by informants to the Lone Woman. Musicologist Gary Tegler noted that this particular song was rhythmically unique. To date, a search for familiarity between Juana Maria's words and various northwest languages has failed to find any correspondence. Aleut, Koniag, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Yupiak, and Inupiaq languages have been examined, thus far without result.¹⁷

DOGS FOUND ON SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

Both Nidever and Dittman reported the presence of dogs on San Nicolas Island at the time of the removal of the Lone Woman. In notes furnished by Dr. Dimmick, Nidever is attributed with the following statement:

In the neighborhood of the huts near the shore we saw seven or eight wild dogs. They were about the size and form of a coyote, of a black and white color. I have seen the same kind of dogs among the Northwest Indians.¹⁸

Additionally, the Reverend Stephen Bowers, in an unpublished manuscript now located in the Southwest Museum, states:

In November, 1915, I met at Alamos Harbor, Santa Cruz Island, George Nidever, 70 or more years of age. He was there (with his wife) engaged in crawfishing. His father, Capt. George Nidever, brought the lone Indian woman from San Nicolas Island to Santa Barbara in 1853. The son, though then a small boy, remembers having seen the woman. Nidever told me that when he was about 10 years old he went to San Nicolas with Capt. who went there to kill the dogs on the island and that all were shot that could be found. I presume this was done so that the island might be safely stocked with sheep. He told me that the dogs were of the Alaskan breed!¹⁹

Captain George Nidever's son was born in 1847, thus placing him and his father on San Nicolas Island to shoot the dogs sometime around 1857, four years after the woman's removal. What stands out as particularly important is the report that the dogs were "of the Alaskan breed." The above accounts lead to the speculation that perhaps the dogs were introduced to San Nicolas Island from the north. Whether or not their introduction to San

Nicolas Island coincided with that of the Lone Woman can only remain speculation.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Given the following facts, there is reason to propose that the Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island may have been an Indian from the north, and not a native Nicoleño:

1. Indians from the north, particularly peoples from Kodiak Island and the Aleutian Islands, participated in the California sea otter trade on and around San Nicolas Island during the first part of the nineteenth century. Was this woman on the island as a result of this activity?
2. At the time of her rescue, no one could be found who understood the language spoken by the Lone Woman. Did she in fact speak a language from another Indian territory?
3. Were the dogs on San Nicolas Island, who were described as being of "the Alaskan breed," her companions as a result of circumstances related to her presence on the island?
4. Why did Emma Hardacre, local expert on the subject, doubt the Lone Woman's origin? In her log, she noted that these doubts arose *after* the publication of her article on the subject, the article upon which all subsequent articles have been based. CHS

See notes beginning on page [65].

An anthropologist and authority on the Channel Islands, Marla Daily is the President of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and author of California's Channel Islands, now in its second edition.

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Edited by James J. Rawls

*The Elusive Eden:
A New History of California.*

By Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard J. Orsi. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, xix, 620 pp., \$28.00 hardbound.)

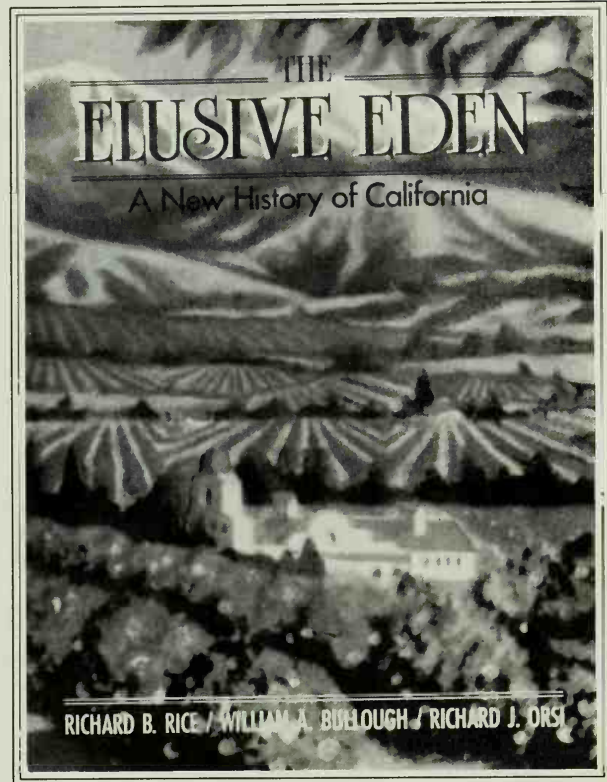
Reviewed by Donald H. Pflueger, Professor Emeritus, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

A triumvirate of California State University, Hayward, history professors has just authored a new general history of the state that will be equally at home on the coffee table, in the library, or at the desk of a college student. New overall state histories come along so infrequently that they deserve more attention than they usually get; a more common phenomenon is an updating of an earlier work. Californians are indeed fortunate to have so many fine single-volume histories; this new effort is a welcome addition.

First off, *Elusive Eden* is a physically attractive book. The authors have done a splendid job of organizing their material into nine eras, which become Parts, each of which has a good list of items for further reading. Each Part has as its initial chapter an in-depth look at a particular problem, event, or personality, while subsequent chapters carry on with the chronological narrative. On top of these there are thirty short thought-provoking essays interspersed throughout the volume that range from Father Serra to Ansel Adams and from Spanish-Mexican culture to contemporary cultural maturity and diversity. The 185 photographs are outstanding, while the 20 maps are very helpful. If the authors even looked at earlier texts, it does not show. Their teamwork was remarkable; the overall unity and lucid style of writing would make it appear to be the work of a single author.

Without seeming so, the volume is encyclopedic, missing very little despite the fact that in their Preface the authors apologize for cutting "favorite stories." Cesar Chavez gets about equal treatment with Father Serra. Pensioner George McLain made it; pensioner Myrtle Williams did not. Smallpox made it; AIDS did not. Swindler C. C. Julian made it; swindler J. David did not. Jane Fonda made it, but Thomas Starr King, whose statue stands in the nation's capitol as one of two outstanding Californians, did not, and for good reason. This game could go on, and prove little.

We are still in an era of rebellion against an Edenized California, created not only by such nineteenth-century writers as Nordhoff, Truman, and McGroarty, but also by more recent



The cover of *The Elusive Eden* depicts a red-tile-roofed farmhouse amidst orange groves, backed by snow-capped mountains—an idyllic scene of rural California in the early 20th century, taken from the packing label of Redlands Foothill Groves, Redlands, California. Photographic reproduction courtesy of University Relations Office, CSU Hayward

"professional historians [who] bear part of the blame for the state's skewed history." The authors claim that "ideas about race, ethnicity, sex roles, and other questions have also changed dramatically since the 1950s, requiring a reevaluation. . . . Instead of celebrating the achievements of frontier rugged individualism, this volume will emphasize the important role of human interaction and organization." The authors deliver on their promise of a reconsideration, but their history is not the radical departure that they want to make it seem. Recently updated versions of the works of Rolle, Bean and Rawls, Caughey and Hundley, among others, certainly display a new sensitivity to ethnic minorities, the role of women, the various environmental themes, social movements, group interaction, and other previously ignored threads in the California historical fabric. What the authors have done, it would seem, is to push a bit harder in these directions.

Have they, and others, gone too far in these directions is the philosophical question. This reviewer is unsure. It is easy to dwell upon California's record of exploitation, ranging from the rape of the environment to the mistreatment of everyone from the Indians to grape pickers. Greed, corruption, and dishonesty abound, but Californians have also exhibited great humanity, achieved enormous projects for the common good, and made honest efforts to right the wrongs of the past. More needs to be said about these things.

No matter how hard they try, historians seem unable to overcome either their attachments to place or political philosophy. As for place, look at the treatment given to the Gold Rush *vis a vis* the Boom of the Eighties. In *Elusive Eden* the Gold Rush received two whole chapters as well as a prologue to Part IV; the Boom of the Eighties is dispensed with in five paragraphs. Dianne Feinstein rated a portrait; San Diego, now the second largest city, apparently has had no mayor since Pete Wilson and he was mentioned only in context of his favoring slow-growth measures. San Francisco gets its Opera House, but the gays are largely closeted; Los Angeles gets a whole chapter on Aimee Semple McPherson, whose antics testify to "cultural vacuity."

As for political philosophy, it is somewhat revealing that Chief Justice Rose Bird's removal by the citizenry had "heavy sexist overtones" while nothing was said about her stand on the death penalty. Jerry Brown seems not to have been troubled by the medfly, and somehow his budget cutting was humanitarian, while Ronald Reagan's was not. These are isolated and overdrawn examples; overall the history is fair-minded.

If the Frontispiece and endsheets are dreamy, even Edenesque, then the cover and dust jacket are even more so. Both are replicas of an orange box label depicting a red-tile-roofed home set amid a sea of orange trees with snow-capped mountains in the distance, a scene identical to this reviewer's birthplace and childhood home, since enveloped—and devastated—by greater Los Angeles. Hoping for a nostalgia trip, this reviewer was profoundly surprised to find that the citrus industry was passed off in a single paragraph of six sentences, none of which treat of the Eden aspects of citrus civilization or take into account that citrus was the single largest economic factor in the state for a period of half a century.

The authors are to be congratulated on producing a splendid and fresh new history, brilliantly organized, provocative in content, well written, carefully edited, mature and sobering, beautifully illustrated, and certain to be widely read by countless students and concerned Californians. CHS

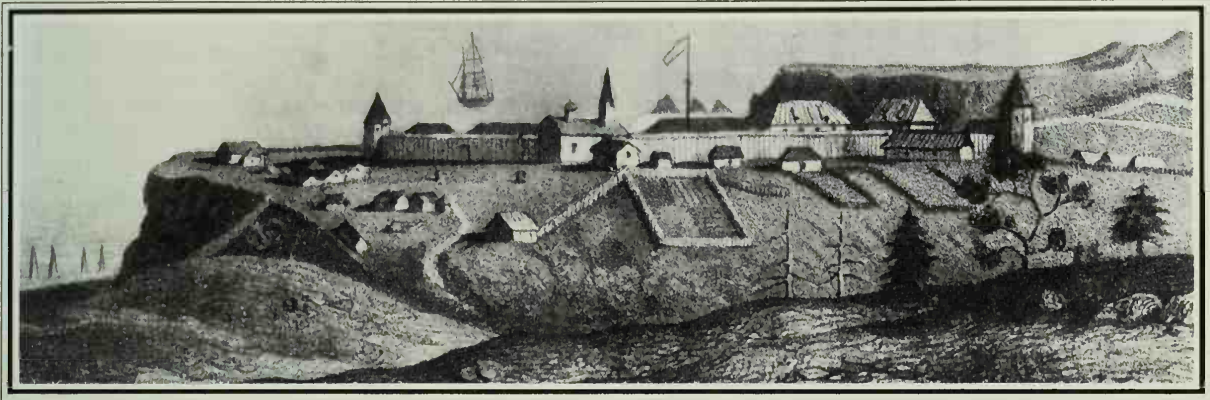
Mexico Through Russian Eyes, 1806-1840.

By William Harrison Richardson. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988, 287 pp., \$29.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by Sasha Schmidt Honig, Professor of History at Bakersfield College.

A familiar figure in California history is Nikolai Rezanov, sailing to California to find help for Sitka's suffering colonists. California *pozole* must have looked like ambrosia to him compared to the dried fish and fir cone beer on which his compatriots were barely surviving. In the first chapter of *Mexico Through Russian Eyes, 1806-1840*, William H. Richardson gives us a glimpse of how Russian visitors from that time to the 1830s viewed Alta California as a "fine and fruitful country," a paradise, abundant in the necessities of life, a land of wheat and meat, milk and honey, a land they would have liked to see in Russian hands rather than Spanish or Mexican. Richardson summarizes the writings of Rezanov, Langsdorff, Tarakanov, Khvostov, Kotzebue, Golovnin, Zavalishin, Khlebnikov, and, finally, Wrangell and gives a good idea of what these men thought of California, its resources, its institutions, and its people.

Although the author hypothesizes in his introduction that Russians differed from the majority of European and American visitors to Mexico in feeling less superior, less alienated, and more at home with the Mexican people and culture, this idea does not apply well to the early period. Instead, Rezanov and the others seem to have reacted to Alta California in much the same way as other foreign visitors. Dana's comment "In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be! . . ." could have been said by any of the Russians included by Richardson. In that era of expansionism, national pride caused Americans and Russians alike to feel superior toward *californios* and their government. Hence, Russians, too, wrote of the inefficiency of the government, the exploitation of the neophytes, the laziness of the people, and the mismanagement of resources. However, the Russian reaction has a special edge to it when we consider the contrast between the starkness of life in Sitka and the relative ease of life in California. As Richardson points out, what seemed to Spain or Mexico as an uncomfortable frontier was a potential Garden of Eden to Russians. No doubt, anyone who experienced the numbing cold of a Sitka winter would regard as heavenly even the densest of California fogs. Golovnin expressed this thought when he referred to California as "a blessed region."



A contemporary depiction of Fort Ross, about 1830. This small settlement, Russia's sole foothold in nineteenth-century California, constituted one of the perceived threats to American "interests" and provoked much debate about the need for westward expansion into California in order to consolidate those interests. *Courtesy California State Library*

Although Russian yearning after California resources is palpable in the writings cited in this work, surprisingly little seems to have been written by the Russians directly about their foreign rivals. Not much was made in these pages, for example, of the Boston men, although Russian grain buyers were in competition with them and knew that the stakes were high; to Sitka, California grain meant the difference between survival and starvation. However, we do read of Russian efforts to pry a favorable trade agreement out of Mexico, culminating in Wrangell's unsuccessful dealings with the Santa Anna government in 1836. Mention is also made of Zavalishin's efforts in the 1820s to persuade *californios* to accept a Russian protectorate. Neither Zavalishin nor Wrangell received much encouragement from the tsarist government. It was perhaps beyond the scope of this book to go far into the reasons for the tsar's lack of support.

Writers made it clear that they disliked Roman Catholicism, that they considered their own religion more benign, and that they were repelled by conditions at the missions. Most of them were well-educated, Europeanized Russians, employed by the progressive Russian American Company. One of them (Zavalishin) was later arrested as a Decembrist conspirator, but one would like to know more about reformist tendencies among other writers, particularly the impact of the Enlightenment upon them. Treatment of this theme is sketchy. In later contexts (e.g., Russian travelers observing peonage in late 19th century Yucatán) Richardson suggests that many Russians

used Mexican subjects as a way of actually writing about Russian social, political, or economic conditions. Russian readers, he says, knew to read between the lines. An intriguing question is the extent to which this might also have been true of Zavalishin or others of his era.

Beyond the first chapter, this work is devoted to Russian views of central Mexico, which will be interesting to Mexicanists, but Californianists will nevertheless find here a convenient and worthwhile compilation of Russian writings on the early California scene. CHS

*Jessie Benton Frémont:
American Woman of the 19th Century.*

By Pamela Herr. (New York: Franklin Watts, 1987, 512 pp. \$24.95 cloth)

Reviewed by Robert L. Griswold, Associate Professor of History, and author of Family and Divorce in California, 1850-1890.

Pamela Herr's biography of Jessie Benton Frémont will be of great interest to the general reader. It is a biography that tells a grand story in an old fashioned way, a story full of triumphs and heartbreaks, big dreams and long falls. From a variety of

sources, including hundreds of heretofore unexamined letters, Herr sensitively chronicles the life of this remarkable woman, who found herself tied to a man who ultimately failed and to a culture that provided few outlets for her ambitions and abilities.

Herr's primary achievement is to offer a gracefully written, often moving account of Jessie Frémont's life. And what a life it was: daughter of a famous United States Senator, wife of a man of national prominence, Jessie Frémont found herself caught up in the central dramas of the nineteenth century. All of this is well told: Jessie emerges from these pages as a fiercely loyal, ambitious, and romantic woman who spent much of her time and talent defending her sometimes daring, often feckless husband. Herr's work will surely be the definitive biography of Frémont for years to come.

The strength of the book is its narrative sweep; it is also the book's main limitation. Herr seems little interested in pursuing broader questions regarding the history of nineteenth-century women; perhaps, given her subject, that decision was altogether reasonable if not inevitable. Frémont was no Catharine Beecher, whose life and thought was so insightfully

examined by Kathryn Sklar. Frémont made no lasting contributions to any variant of feminism—domestic or otherwise—and her literary works are all but forgotten. She was, as Herr points out, a woman who lived her life through her husband: her joy in his dazzling triumphs, her defense of his dreary failures was her main connection to a world of which she yearned to be a part.

Herr does not shy away from assessing the psychological costs to Jessie Frémont of her secondary status in nineteenth-century America. Frémont's story is one of thwarted ambition, boundless yet deflected energy, and steadfast but often misguided loyalty. What is missing from Herr's account is an effort to assess the meaning of Frémont's life in ways that make use of findings by other scholars of nineteenth-century women. Frémont's ties to other women, for example, deserve more analysis than Herr offers. Married to a peripatetic schemer and dreamer, Jessie lived much of her life in the company of women, yet the implications of this fact are left largely unexplored. Perhaps Frémont did not belong to "the female world of love and ritual," but Herr seems uninterested in the question. Or, to take another issue, one wants to know more about

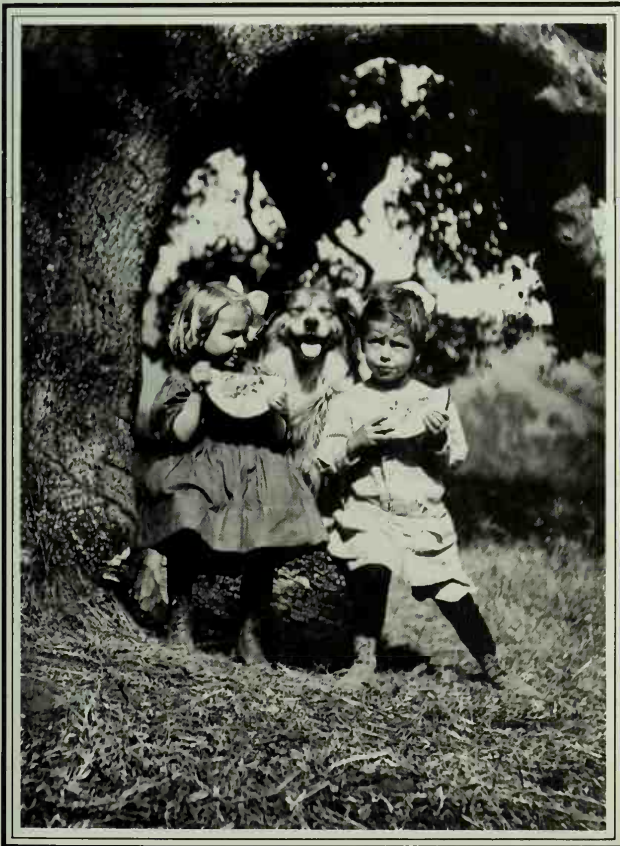


John Charles Frémont (1813-90) and his wife Jessie Benton Frémont, with their daughter, at General Frémont Tree in Big Basin Park, Santa Cruz County, ca. 1880. CHS Library, San Francisco

her devotion to her husband. Does it tell us anything about the psychological dependencies among middle- and upper-class Victorians? Was her devotion a source of power or dependence? And what of Frémont's literary output? Herr eschews a systematic analysis of Jessie's writing, apparently agreeing with Frémont's own assessment that most of it was "harmless pudding." But was it? Scholars who have taken a close look at the writings of nineteenth-century women have found that women wrote with a different voice and saw with a different vision than that of their male counterparts. Perhaps Frémont's

work is truly without merit, but surely some critical attention to her stories, memoirs, and personality sketches would deepen our understanding of the woman.

These issues—and others could be raised—are of more interest to scholars of women's history than they are to the average reader interested in Victorian women in general or the experience of women in nineteenth-century California in particular. Such scholarly questions and concerns may be beside the point. This is, after all, a book directed at the general reader, and it is, in the last analysis, a very good read. CHS



Although photographed at the turn of the century, Isabel Porter Collins' idyllic portrait still evokes wonderful memories of childhood. Isabel Porter Collins Collection, CHS Library, San Francisco

*California Childhood:
Recollections and Stories
of the Golden State.*

Edited by Gary Soto. (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1988, 255 pp., \$16.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.)

Reviewed by Jim Silverman, children's historian and storyteller, Larkspur, California.

Childhood memories fascinate me. I want to ask, "Tell me about when you grew up." I want to hear favorite adventures and misadventures from youth. Yet I do not entirely trust childhood memories. I suspect they are truths distorted by conflicting memory sources. Is this something I remember for myself, or am I recalling my mother's, my sister's, or my best friend's version? This is especially true of an anthology subtitled "recollections and stories." Should this book be considered literature, autobiography, or history?

Editor Gary Soto provides few observations on childhood in California based on these thirty-two pieces of childhood autobiographies by twentieth century California writers. He offers no analysis of childhood, but poetically evokes it. California childhood "sees images of itself learned from TV and movies-made-for-TV, thinks nothing of poor people sharing the same sidewalk with the rich, or the daily bump against people of different colors." To Soto, "Childhood is not only about place, but a response to place."

A sample of opening lines reflects the sense of place and response to place portrayed in the stories. "Five generations of my family have lived in the San Fernando Valley." "I had this dream where I was inside a museum surrounded by ancient Chinese artifacts." "The first time I met Lora she was getting her hair pressed." "For a while, when I was very



Entitled "Vaqueros at Majordomo's Quarters," this photograph depicts cowboys on Tejon Ranch in Kern County, California, ca. 1870s. CHS Library, San Francisco

young, my father was a water witch." It seems curious that some best remember themselves, while others remember their father, brother, or best friend.

Reginald Lockett remembered that, as a tough, black, junior high school student in Oakland, he was sent to a creative writing class. There the staff hoped he would find an outlet for his angry, antisocial behavior. "What had I done this time? Was it because I snatched Gregory Jones' milkshake during lunch a couple of days ago and gulped it down, savoring every drop like an old loathsome suck-egg dog, and feeling no pain as the chump, big as he was, stood there and cried." Poetry pierced Reginald's soul, but left his morals unscathed. "Instead of raiding Roger Smith's Men's Shop, Smith's and Flagg Brothers' Shoes, I was stealing books by just about every poet and writer Miss Nettlebecke read to the class. That's how I started writing poetry."

Diversity and individuality characterize these memories of growing up in California. Like the group of sightless people describing an elephant while touching different parts of the animal, each writer depicts a personal Californian world. How is William Saroyan's sketch, "Guggenheim's Water Tower" in Fresno, related to Maxine Hong Kingston's self-portrait in

"The Quiet Girl" of Stockton? It is fascinating to notice the themes that emerge from the stories; personal growth, rebellion, family relationships, environmental awareness, and the impact of cultural heritage. Since these essays are all crafted by writers, it would be interesting to compare them with childhood stories and recollections by people in other professions. CHS

Cowboy Country.

By Bob Powers. (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1987, 158 pp., \$22.00 cloth.)

Reviewed by Judson A. Grenier, Professor of History at California State University, Dominguez Hills and author of California Legacy: the Watson-Dominguez Family.

Bob Powers is the descendant of two pioneering California families who drove cattle across the plains in 1852 and 1861 and settled on the range of eastern Kern County. Born to the

saddle in 1924, Powers worked as a cowboy, rancher, and forest ranger before taking up the pen in 1971 to write *South Fork Country*. Since then, six of his books on Kern ranchlands and high country have been published, of which this is the latest.

Like the others, *Cowboy Country* has its genealogical aspects. Powers tells stories of local rural families, the famous and the forgotten, in great detail. The book also is highly autobiographical, the author spicing up his history with personal impressions and anecdotes.

The book is something of a potpourri and is difficult to categorize. Early chapters deal with Spanish ranchos stocked with longhorns, breeding and cross-breeding, cross-country drives to the goldfields, and Yankee ranches such as the Miller and Lux. But the author soon hones in on his home territory, the Kern River, and there he remains, except for a summer herding with a chuck wagon in Oregon. Every page is crammed with names and photos of locals.

The author also generalizes extensively on the problems faced and pleasures enjoyed by cowboys through the years, and we gain a realistic picture of life in the saddle. He even offers tips on hunting, cooking, roping, and branding.

The unusual closing chapters contain a reprinting of a segment of Powers-family history originally written for *South Fork Country*, advice on how to run a cattle business today, and proper techniques for grazing on public domain land. Copiously illustrated, *Cowboy Country* includes a 12-page color portfolio, many historic portraits and group shots, Powers' own photos of his neighbors, and maps. There are no footnotes, but sources occasionally are mentioned within the narrative, and names are indexed. CHS

*Mark Twain's Letters:
Volume 1, 1853-1866.*

Edited by Edgar Marquess Branch, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, xlvii, 616 pp., \$35.00 cloth.)

Reviewed by Richard W. Etulain, Professor of History, University of New Mexico, coeditor of *The Twentieth-Century West: Historical Interpretations*, and coauthor of *The American West: A Twentieth-Century History*.

The first installment of a multivolume project to publish all 10,000 of Twain's extant letters, this noteworthy collection of more than 100 letters, covering Twain's life from ages seventeen to thirty-one, is a major contribution to American and western American scholarship. Useful for scholars in history and literature and equally valuable for biographers and students of early California culture, *Mark Twain's Letters* supplies enlarged perspectives on the opening segment of Twain's career.

Most of all, this superbly edited volume furnishes a more intriguing portrait of Samuel L. Clemens, the Gilded Age young man and aspiring author. Here are illuminating letters about Clemens' experiences as teenage typesetter, newspaperman, river-boat pilot, unsuccessful miner, and finally, by turns, a lionized local, regional, and nationally recognized journalist and humorist. Twain's amazingly rapid rise in four or five years from a dejected prospector to a notorious California scribbler unifies the latter sections of the letters. Here too are Twain's fitful moods of despair, depression, near suicide—and then those of braggadocio, optimism, and exhilaration. Above all, one gets a fuller, more brightly limned portrait of a major American author—the ambitious writer shadowed against the backdrop of an inchoate far-western society and culture of the 1860s.

Scholars as well as general readers will encounter much useful and interesting material here. For specialists, in addition to the fulsome explanatory notes following each letter, there are lengthy appended backnotes supplying nearly one hundred pages of erudite textual commentaries, thirty pages of bibliographical references, and a thorough index. Other appendixes furnish information on Twain's piloting days, maps of Nevada Territory, a gathering of revealing family photographs, and a useful clutch of facsimiles of about ten of the printed letters. But these sections, placed at the back of the volume, should not distract readers interested only in the letters edited and annotated in the first 375 pages. The other forty-five pages of prefatory material contain helpful introductions and a discussion of editorial practices used in the volume.

Although books like this often inhabit only the shelves of scholars, general readers will find more than enough interesting and lively information here to be worth their time and investment. For students of American culture, the early years and ideas of one of our most significant authors are displayed more tellingly here than in previous publications about Twain's first public years. And as citizens we should be encouraged that some of our taxes supplied to such groups as the National

Endowment for the Humanities are being used to support such worthwhile projects as the Mark Twain Papers. CHS

*Passage from India:
Asian Indian Immigrants in North America.*

By Joan Jensen. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, x, 350 pp., \$32.50 cloth.)

Reviewed by Alexander Saxton, Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of *The Indispensable Enemy*.

Joan Jensen's complex and splendidly researched study, *Passage from India*, fills a gap in the expanding historiography of migration to North America. During the last three decades, historians reexamining the Atlantic migration (including the slave trade) have placed their subject matter not simply as subsections of national history, but as segments in a worldwide demographic and cultural exchange. This "new" immigration history has proved more demanding than the old because—since it set out to comprehend both push and pull—it required close familiarity with the history and cultures of at least two societies on opposite sides of the Atlantic.

Pacific historians perhaps enjoyed an advantage in that not much existed in the way of older historiography that had to be transcended. On the other hand, the basic spadework of accumulating and periodizing data had scarcely begun; and the difficulties involved in mastering the history and cultures of societies on opposite sides of the Pacific have probably exceeded comparable difficulties facing Atlantic migration scholars. Recent work by historians like Sucheng Chan, Yuji Ichioka, and Ron Takaki shows that Pacific migration history can certainly match the Atlantic studies in quality and sophistication. This body of work, however, focuses mainly on Chinese and Japanese migration. Until Jensen's book, nothing of comparable scope had been attempted with respect to migration from India or Southeast Asia, Korea, the Philippines or the Pacific Islands. *Passage from India* thus not only meets a need in its own right, but points the way to new ventures in historical research.

Beginning with a social and economic overview of late nineteenth century British India, Jensen sketches the Indian dias-

pora, which, like comparable outmovements from China and Japan, swept masses of poverty-line laborers (together with scatterings of aspirant entrepreneurs and even more avidly aspirant intellectuals) into the colonies and peripheries, sometimes into the heartlands, of the industrializing West. Her focus then narrows to a single contingent of the Indian diaspora—those who made their way to the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada.

At once we find ourselves on familiar ground. In the early twentieth century the anti-coolie boycotters and white supremacist politicians who had hounded Chinese since the 1860s and were already in full cry against the Japanese, turned their hostilities on Asian Indians. Immigrants from India were denounced as cheap, dirty, disease-ridden polygamists and corrupters of white womanhood. Based in organized labor, exclusion leagues worked in tandem north and south of the border. Alien land acts and miscegenation laws at the state level targeted Asian Indians, as well as Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos. Jensen makes effective use of individual case studies to illustrate the determination and resourcefulness with which Asian Indians survived, sometimes even prospered, despite these obstacles. But the survivors, and the few who prospered, did so within an environment of ruthless hostility. "Excluded from immigration," Jensen writes, "prosecuted for their political activities, threatened with deportation, excluded from citizenship, denaturalized, excluded from land ownership, and regulated even in the choice of a mate in the states where most of them lived, Indians now formed a small band of people set apart from Americans by what truly must have seemed a great white wall."

One of many impressive aspects of Jensen's work is her ability to sustain continuing connections between the relatively narrow stream of Indian migration to America and the Indian diaspora as a whole, with its global network of political and international ramifications. While Asian Indians on the Pacific coast worked as laborers or strove to hold on to painfully acquired farm lands, other Indians, like Gandhi, were organizing resistance against racial discrimination in South Africa. Indians studied at Harvard and Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, and Berlin; while still others worked to establish fraternal ties with labor unions and socialist parties in western Europe, Japan, and Russia.

The British government, meanwhile, anxious to guarantee American support in the upcoming struggle for empire, deployed its enormous powers of persuasion and subversion to destabilize Indian immigrant communities and to prejudice American opinion against the cause of Indian independence.

Advocates of Free India were hunted and harassed in North America and around the world by British secret agents, often assisted by their American and Canadian junior partners. With the outbreak of world war, Germany offered sympathetic gestures toward Indian independence, which—whatever other results they may have achieved—served to reinforce British efforts at silencing any sympathetic responses in the United States. President Wilson, when he brought his grand talk of national self-determination to Versailles, had already deleted India from the list of eligible candidates. These events, as Jensen indicates, have poisoned the subsequent history of India. Certainly they helped to sow the seeds of bitter conflict for Indian overseas communities in the colonial empires. [CHS]

Phelps produced two accounts of his participation in these events: the first, his 1846 journal; the second, written some twenty-four years later in *Fore and Aft: Or Leaves from the Life of an Old Sailor*. The editor, Briton Cooper Busch, points out significant differences and provides, as well, a skillfully written introduction that puts the journal in the context of 1846.

Phelps was a seasoned veteran of the California trade. His involvement in the hide and tallow trade led to a familiarity with the society of the time. He knew many of its leading figures on a first-name basis, was a good observer, had a sharp sense of curiosity, and wrote well. Such things combined to help him produce a journal that is filled with interesting detail and a number of insights into the reality of that time. This is really an insider's view of things. Phelps is not a spear carrier but an important figure on the stage who provides supplies and services to Frémont; hence the title, *Frémont's Private Navy*. His involvement with major figures like Frémont, Sam Brannan, and Pío Pico, and events equally varied make this as interesting and informative, at times, as the far-better-known journal of Richard Henry Dana. An index and footnotes are scholarly embellishments. [CHS]

*Frémont's Private Navy,
The 1846 Journal of
Captain William Dane Phelps.*

Edited by Briton Cooper Busch. (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1987, xvi, 75 pp., \$36.00 hardbound.)

Reviewed by David A. Williams, Professor of History Emeritus, California State University, Long Beach.

This modest but elegant volume, which is typical of the fine printing of the Arthur H. Clark Company, is the 1846 journal of Captain William Dane Phelps, a seasoned mariner on the California coast of the 1840s. It provides a first-hand account of the events which crowded that tumultuous "Year of Decision," when political disintegration within, rumors of British and American naval squadrons on the prowl, and the arrival of John C. Frémont's third expedition of exploration-reconnaissance were portents of fast-developing events. The culmination of these was a change of flags and sovereignty and the acquisition of California by the United States through conquest.

*Chinese American Portraits:
Personal Histories, 1828–1988.*

By Ruthanne Lum McCunn. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988, 175 pp., \$16.96 paper.)

Reviewed by Sucheng Chan, Professor of History and Asian American Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910*.

History is probably the only discipline left where a non-academic researcher can still make a contribution. This fact has been clearly demonstrated in the last two decades by numerous studies of Asian Americans published by individuals unaffiliated with any institution of higher learning. The

latest example of such a work is *Chinese American Portraits*, by Ruthanne Lum McCunn, who has made a reputation for herself by the "biographical novels" she has written.

Like McCunn's earlier efforts, Part One of *Chinese American Portraits* brings some memorable characters back to life. Included are the life histories of Yung Wing, the first Chinese to receive a bachelor's degree from an American university (Yale, 1854); Mary Bong, who braved frontier conditions in Alaska; Lue Gim Gong, a horticultural wizard; Mary and Joseph Tape, who fought for their children's right to attend public school; Chin Gee-hee, builder of railroads on both sides of the Pacific Ocean; Ing Hay, a herbalist-physician; Lung On, an entrepreneur and gambler; Wong Sing, a merchant trading among American Indians; and Li Khai Fai and Kong Tai Heong, a married-couple of doctors who practiced in Hawaii.

While these biographical vignettes shatter the widely held image that virtually all Chinese immigrants were lowly-paid laborers, they also run the danger of creating an opposite stereotype—that somehow, most Chinese immigrants managed to overcome the hostility against them. Such, certainly, was not the case.

Part Two traces the history of several families, whose members were kept apart for decades because of the Chinese exclusion laws, while Part Three offers glimpses of several notable contemporary Chinese Americans, but nowhere does McCunn discuss how and why she chose certain families and individuals and not others. Readers thus have no idea how representative these people and their experiences may be.

The book also suffers from a lack of distinction between fact and fiction. McCunn begins each life history with a little story to create "atmosphere," but it is impossible to tell upon what documentary evidence she bases these sketches. Moreover, she uses quotations from some of her long-dead characters, but since she does not use footnotes—though there is a list of references at the end of the book—there is no indication where these sayings came from. If the individuals involved indeed said such things, did they speak in English or Chinese, and if the latter, who translated their statements?

Precisely because the book contains so much human interest, it is likely to be widely cited by students and scholars alike. Therein lies its problematic nature: some figment of the author's imagination may unwittingly be disseminated as validated historical fact. The trick is to know which sentences or paragraphs are reliable and which ones are not, but readers really should not be so burdened. These faults notwithstanding, this handsomely produced and nicely illustrated book is well worth reading. CHS

Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s.

By Bruce Nelson. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988, xiii, 352 pp., \$29.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by Robert W. Cherny, Professor of History at San Francisco State University and co-author of San Francisco, 1865–1932. Professor Cherny is currently preparing a biography of Harry Bridges.

During the past two decades, labor history has been fundamentally transformed as historians have taken the subject out of the domain of institutional economics and made it a part of social history. Instead of focusing on union leaders, the new labor history practitioners have studied labor organizations by examining the lives of workers' and relating the characteristics of workers' organizations to their experiences and values.

Bruce Nelson, in *Workers on the Waterfront*, applies the approach of this "new labor history" to some of the most dramatic events in the labor history of the Pacific Coast: the coastwide maritime workers' strike of 1934; the 1934 San Francisco general strike; the rebirth of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), its transformation into the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) in 1937, and the emergence of Harry Bridges as its most important leader; the revitalization of the moribund Sailor's Union of the Pacific (SUP) under the leadership of Harry Lundeberg; and the activities of the Communist party (CP) in the maritime unions. Nelson's skillful dissection of the conflict between Bridges's ILA/ILWU and Lundeberg's SUP is especially noteworthy.

Nelson presents seamen's lives as characterized by exploitation, degraded living conditions, low social status, isolation from mainstream social institutions, and an international outlook. On the Pacific Coast, he suggests, these conditions produced both the SUP in the years before World War I and an attraction to the syndicalism of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), especially during the open-shop 1920s.

Acknowledging that "the Communist party played a major role in the maritime insurgency of the 1930s," Nelson explores that role by focusing on the actions and attitudes of grassroots CP members, not on the maneuverings of party leaders. The Marine Workers Industrial Union, he argues, was not solely a CP front but attracted significant numbers of non-

Communist seamen who held to a strong strain of syndicalism derived from the IWW. CP leaders in San Francisco in the early 1930s, notably Sam Darcy, sometimes ignored the official party line and worked with AFL unions when that course held the promise of influencing larger numbers of workers. Nelson also provides thoughtful treatment of the role of the CP in attacking deeply ingrained labor racism and in encouraging stable collective bargaining during the Popular Front period.

In explaining the events of 1934 and after, Nelson relies on two key concepts: Pentacostal enthusiasm and a "syndicalist renaissance." In characterizing this as a "Pentacostal era," Nelson intends no religious reference but instead understands "a zealous commitment to new leaders and new, or transformed, institutions and . . . an apocalyptic sense of urgency." He derives the term from a comment by SUP leader Andrew Furuseth in 1929, but uses the term differently than Furuseth and provides no citations to any usage of the term during the 1930s. In the end, this Pentacostal imagery detracts more than helps in defining the era. Following the lead of David Montgomery, Nelson depicts syndicalism as central in the attitudes of maritime workers and their unions, and argues that grass-roots syndicalist sentiments derived from the realities of maritime workers' lives. While Nelson claims that "syndicalist themes cropped up again and again among Communists and non-Communists alike," his examples fall short of supporting such claims.

Nelson's treatment provides an important exception to recent claims by John Bodnar that the workers who swelled the ranks of the CIO were less concerned about ideology than about security, and by Melvyn Dubofsky that the 1930s were, in fact, a "not-so-turbulent" era. Nelson describes workers who were certainly ideological and waterfronts that must be characterized as turbulent.

Nelson is a member of the History faculty at Dartmouth College; this book is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, done at the University of California, Berkeley. CHS

CORRECTION

*The editor regrets that in the September, 1988, issue of this quarterly an error was made in a book review by Gordon Bakken of John E. Boessenecker's book, *Badge and Buckshot: Lawlessness in Old California*. Professor Bakken has requested that the following be printed in this issue:*

My review of Boessenecker, *Badge and Buckshot*, in the September 1988, issue of *California History* contains a terrible error of fact for which I alone am responsible and for which I apologize to the author and to our readers. Colorado is a mining camp in Mariposa County, California. My error of fact in the review should not in any way be construed as implying that this book was not carefully and exhaustively researched. Rather the events are carefully described in great detail evidencing the author's close and professional attention to research.

Gordon Morris Bakken
Professor of History
California State University, Fullerton

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Atkinson, Janet L. *Los Angeles County Historical Directory*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 1988. \$24.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-89950-301-2. Order from: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers; Post Office Box 611; Jefferson, NC 28640.

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Bearchell, Charles A. *The San Fernando Valley: Then and Now: An Illustrated History*. Chatsworth: Windsor Publications, 1988. \$27.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-89781-285-9. Order from: Windsor Publications Inc.; 9121 Oakdale Avenue; Chatsworth, CA 91313.

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Bunnell, David. *Sea Caves of Santa Cruz Island*. Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, 1988. \$12.00 (paper) ISBN 0-87461-076-1. Order from: McNally & Loftin, Publishers; 5390 Overpass Road; Santa Barbara, CA 93111.

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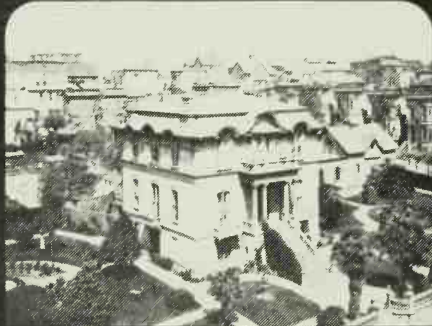
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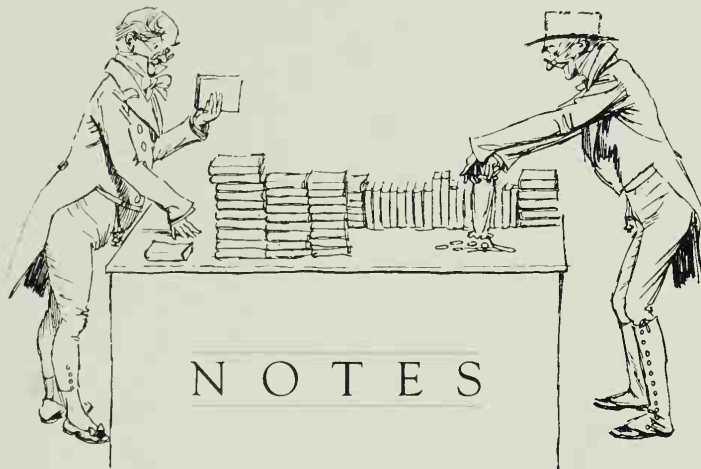
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NOTES

BULLOUGH, "Muybridge and Mint," pp. 2-13.

1. Robert Bartlett Haas, *Muybridge: Man in Motion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 1-11, *passim*; Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, rev. ed., 1982), 15-25, 117-23. The photographer was born Edward James Muggeridge in 1830 at Kingston-upon-Thames, near London. Over the years, he used several versions of his name: Edward Muygridge, Eadweard Muygridge, Edward Muybridge, and even Eduardo Santiago Muybridge. He called himself Eadweard J. Muybridge fairly consistently after he returned to California in 1867.
2. Haas, *Muybridge*, 9-12; Newhall, *History*, 110-15; Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1981), 36-8.
3. *Catalogue of Photographic Views, Illustrating the Yosemite, Mammoth Trees, Geyser Springs, and Other Remarkable Scenery of the Far West, by Muybridge* (San Francisco: Bradley and Rulofson, 1873) lists approximately 2000 separate images. See also Robert B. Haas, "William Herman Rulofson," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 34 (October 1955): 289-300 and 35 (March 1956): 47-58. The Bradley and Rulofson Gallery announced the sale of Muybridge's Modoc War photographs in *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 May 1873.
4. Treatments of Muybridge's life and work include Haas, *Muybridge*; Anita Ventura Mozley, intro., *Eadweard Muybridge: The Stanford Years, 1872-1882* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Department of Art, 1972); Mary V. Jessup Hood and Robert B. Haas, "Eadweard Muybridge's Yosemite Valley Photographs, 1867-1872," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 42 (March 1963): 5-26.
5. Haas, *Muybridge*, 45-49; Norman E. Tutorow, *Leland Stanford: Man of Many Careers* (Menlo Park, CA: Pacific Coast Publishers, 1971), 168-77.
6. Muybridge's publications gave attention to the photographic processes involved in his studies as well as their results. *Animals in Motion*, for example, is subtitled *An Electro-Photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Progressive Movements*. See also his *Descriptive Zoöpraxography, or the Science of Animal Locomotion Made Popular* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1893).
7. Haas, *Muybridge*, 109-120, 194-203; Kevin McConnell, *Eadweard Muybridge: The Man Who Invented the Motion Picture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972); Beaumont Newhall, "Muybridge and the First Motion Picture: The Horse in the History of the Movies," *Image* (January 1956): 4-11; Gordon Hendricks, *Eadweard Muybridge: The Father of the Motion Picture* (New York: Grossman's, 1975).
8. E. Bradford Burns, *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala, 1875: The Photographer as Social Recorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
9. Haas, *Muybridge*, 39-40, 63-78; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 21 December 1874, 21 January 1875, 6 February 1875. Issues of other San Francisco newspapers and the *Napa Daily Register* published detailed coverage of the episode from October 18, 1874, through the first week of February 1875.
10. Burns, *Eadweard Muybridge*, 14-22, and *passim*.
11. Thomas Annan, *Photographs of the Old Streets and Closets of Glasgow 1868-1877*, intro. Anita V. Mozley (New York: Dover, 1977); Arnold Genthe and Will Irwin, *Pictures of Old Chinatown* (New York: Little, Brown, 1909); John K. W. Tchen, *Genthe's Photographs of San Francisco's Chinatown* (New York: Aperture, 1984); Berenice Abbott, *The World of Atget* (New York: Putnam's, 1979). Like Atget, Muybridge sold photographs to artists, including Albert Bierstadt, to use as models for their work; see Haas, *Muybridge*, 20-1.
12. See Haas, *Muybridge*, 81-92; Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Wells Fargo Bank History Department, *San Francisco 1878: Portrait of the City* (San Francisco: Wells Fargo & Co., rev. ed., 1987); Paul A. Falconer, "Muybridge's Window on the Past: A Wet-Plate View of San Francisco in 1877," *California History*, 57 (Summer 1978): 130-57. Original prints of the 1878 series are held in the Bender Room, Department of Special Collections, Cecil H. Green Library, Stanford University. The California Historical Society collection includes an original set of the 1877 panorama.
13. Panel numbers refer to Wells Fargo, *San Francisco 1878*. Haas, *Muybridge*, 85-92, numbers them 10, 13, 9, 3-5, 8, and 11, respectively.
14. Congress appropriated funds to purchase the property on 2 July 1864, for construction on 3 March 1869, 15 July 1870, and 3 March 1871, and for equipment on 10 June 1872, 3 March 1873, and 23 June 1874. The Coinage Act of 1873 elevated the Mint to full rather than "branch" status.
15. *San Francisco Alta California*, 6 November 1874; *San Francisco City Directory*, 1872, (San Francisco: Henry F. Langley Co., 1872), 615; "Mullet, Alfred Bult," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White, 1937), XXVII, 425; "CHC Efforts to Save the Mint Pay Off—With a Museum to Boot," *California Heritage Council Newsletter*, 7 (May 1973): n.p.; S. Allen Chambers, Jr. and others, *The Old San Francisco Mint, 1869-1874 [sic]: Summary Report for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1969), 12-13, 17-20. Olga Widness, Director of the Old Mint Museum, provided information concerning construction and restoration.
16. Muybridge Collection, No. 9015-9024, No. 9029, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Muybridge scratched "Helios" into the emulsion of about half of his glass-plate negatives.
17. Haas, *Muybridge*, 18; E. J. Muybridge, letter signed "Helios," *Philadelphia Photographer* (May 1869): 142-4. Extremely

blue-sensitive emulsions produced overexposed skies in negatives and almost blank areas in prints. Muybridge's "sky shade" reduced sky exposure on negatives, simplified printing procedures, and vastly improved results. Sky details in Plates One and Seven are so similar that they suggest that the same photographer—not Muybridge—produced both.

18. San Francisco *Alta California*, 1 and 16 April 1869; San Francisco *Bulletin*, 1 May 1869.
19. Chambers, *The Old San Francisco Mint*, 9.
20. San Francisco *Alta California*, 25 May 1870. The cornerstone and its still-unopened "time capsule" are located at the building's Fifth and Jessie street corner.
21. The stone attached to the derrick is numbered C2. N° 28 M; the one on the ground at center right bears C2. N° 39 M.
22. Chambers, *The Old San Francisco Mint*, 21-4; Wells Fargo, *San Francisco 1878*, 7; *San Francisco City Directory*, 1871, 741; Muybridge Collection, No. 9024, Bancroft Library.
23. The Bancroft Library's Muybridge Collection Photograph No. 9023 (Plate Four) is an earlier Muybridge photograph made from the same vantage point as Plates Five and Six. It is a full-plate 10x8-inch print that shows only the basement walls completed. It is signed "Helios" in the lower left corner beyond the gas lamp that appears in Plates Four and Five. Those two prints are smaller (approximately 9x7 inches), suggesting that trimming may have eliminated signatures.

Muybridge frequently used a short focal length or wide-angle lens on his full-plate 8x10 camera to achieve linear convergence in his compositions. See, for example, his "Steamer *Golden City* on the California dry-dock, San Francisco," Muybridge Collection, Bancroft Library; Bradley and Rulofson *Catalogue*, No. 4123.

24. As late as 1890, only 56% of San Francisco's streets and alleys were paved, about average for American cities; U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report on the Social Statis-*

tics of Cities in the United States, Eleventh Census, 1890 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 58-62.

25. Posters could be used in conjunction with contemporary newspapers, if necessary, to confirm the dates of photographs.
26. Careful photographers use view camera adjustments to keep vertical lines parallel. Muybridge habitually employed the controls to achieve precise renderings of architectural subjects.
27. *San Francisco City Directory*, 1872, 873.
28. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 23 May 1873; *San Francisco Examiner*, 23 May 1873; *San Francisco City Directory*, 1872, 81.
29. *San Francisco City Directories, 1890-1900*.
30. See, for example, Peter Palmquist, "Fredrick Coombs: Eccentric Daguerrean in Early California," *The American West*, 19 (July/August 1982), and other articles by the same author; John Darling, "Peter Britt of Old Oregon," *Darkroom Photography*, 11 (February 1989); Dennis A. Anderson, "Clark Kinsey: Logging Photography, 1914-1945," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 74 (January 1983); JoAnn Roe, "Frank S. Matsura: Photographer of the Northwestern Frontier," *The American West*, 19 (July/August 1982); Richard S. Street, "A Kern County Diary: The Forgotten Photographs of Carleton E. Watkins," *California History*, 61 (Winter 1983); Karen B. Ohrn, "The Photoflow of Family Life: A Family's Photograph Collection," *Folklore Forum*, 12 (May 1975).

MATHES, "Bidwell," pp. 14-25.

1. *Chico Record*, 10 March 1918, front page, continued p. 8. See also "Mrs. Annie E. K. Bidwell is Called by Death," *Oroville Daily Mercury*, 11 March 1918, p. 6. She died at 6:20 Saturday evening, March 9, 1918. This article is a revision of the paper delivered at the Western History Association meeting in Wichita Kansas in October 1988.

2. "Resolutions Voice Deep Feeling of Country's Loss in Death of Mrs. Bidwell," *Chico Record*, 12 March 1918, p. 8.
3. "Mrs. Bidwell," *Chico Record*, 12 March 1918, editorial page.
4. "Mrs. Bidwell, Chico's Godmother, to be born to Resting place today: Flowers to strew path to Bourne," *Chico Record*, 12 March 1918, pp. 1, 8. See also "Benefactor of Chico laid to Rest," *Oroville Daily Mercury*, 12 March 1918, p. 1.
5. "Indian and Babe Cry Their Grief," *Chico Record*, 13 March 1918, p. 8.
6. "Funeral of Mrs. Annie E. K. Bidwell is Held, 10,000 pay Tribute: Truth leads Patriarch to High Plane," *Chico Record*, 13 March 1918, p. 1.
7. "Shaft of Golden Light Plays Through Clouds," *Chico Record*, 13 March 1918, p. 8.
8. "Warm Tribute is Paid to Mrs. Bidwell: Gratitude is Spirit of Memorial Service," *Chico Record*, 19 March 1918, p. 5.
9. For all of the bequests, see Annie Ellicott (Kennedy) Bidwell 1839-1918, "Will, and Codicil," Northeast California Collection, Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico, California. See also "Wells Fargo Bank and Union Trust Company . . . Statement of Wells Fargo Bank & Union Trust Company," *Ibid.* See also "Mrs. Bidwell Will Filed," *Oroville Daily Mercury*, 8 April 1918, p. 1, 4; "Bequests of Mrs. Bidwell are Legion," *Chico Record*, 9 April 1918, pp. 1, 4.
10. This undated letter to the College Board of the Presbyterian Church can be found in Box 5, Part I, Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

The co-educational school was never built. The church sold the mansion to the state of California in 1921 for \$10,000. From the fall of 1922 until 1953, it served as a women's residence hall for the State Normal College, now California State University, Chico. From 1953 until 1964 it served as classrooms for the art and home economics departments. Finally in 1964 the California State Division of Parks and

- Beaches took over the mansion and has since returned it to the splendor of the Bidwells' days. See "Mansion May not Have Been Built for Annie but it was Fine Wedding Gift," "Centennial Edition: Reviewing a Century of Progress," *Chico Enterprise-Record*, 2 October 1972, p. 2A; and John Hetherington, "The Bidwells: Benefactors to a City," *The Sacramento Bee*, 21 July 1963, p. B4.
11. For the grant of the chair see the "Codicil to the Last Will of Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell," Northeast California Collection, California State Library, Chico.
 12. John Bidwell was the first philanthropist in the family. He donated land to Chico for a plaza, for Chico State Normal School, for the cemetery and a scenic carriageway, and offered a free lot to anyone willing to build in the new town. In addition, he gave thirty acres to the State Forestry Station, donated land for all of Chico's churches, contributed \$13,000 toward the construction cost of the Presbyterian church, and spent \$50,000 toward the building of the Humboldt Road.
For John Bidwell's donations see Rockwell D. Hunt, *John Bidwell: Prince of California Pioneers* (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1946), 364-80. See also S. G. Wilson, "The Heart of the Sacramento Valley," *Overland Monthly* 27 (February 1896): 198; John Hetherington, "The Bidwells: Benefactors to a City," *The Sacramento Bee*, 21 July 1963, pp. B1, B4; and *The School Journal* 34 (8 October 1887): 193, found in Box 122, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collections, California State Library.
 13. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860," *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 21-41. See also Glenda Riley, "The Cult of True Womanhood: Industrial and Westward Expansion, 1816-1837," *Inventing the American Woman: A Perspective on Women's History* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davison, Inc., 1987), 63-87; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 2-7, 67, 75, 84-5. For a detailed study on domesticity see Mary P. Ryan, "American Society and the Cult of Domesticity, 1830-1860," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1971. For a current historiographical study of the "separate sphere," see Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39.
 14. Barbara J. Berg, *The Remembered Gate: The Origins of American Feminism: The Woman and the City, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 67.
 15. Mary P. Ryan, *Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1979), 58, 75. For more on woman's sphere see Carol Hymowitz and Michaele Weissman, *History of Women in America* (New York: Bantam Books, 1978), 64-75.
 16. Annie E. Kennedy to John Bidwell, 7 October 1876, MS3, Box 1, folder 7, Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico, California. This letter is also reprinted in Chad L. Hoopes, ed. *What Makes a Man: The Annie Kennedy-John Bidwell Letters, 1866-1868* (Fresno, California: Valley Publishers, 1973), 65-7. The original can be found in the Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library, Sacramento, California.
 17. *The American Evangelicals 1800-1900: An Anthology*, ed. William G. McLoughlin (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 18.
 18. For a discussion on the increased role of women during the latter part of the nineteenth century, see Riley, "Reshaping American Life and Values: The Reform Era, 1837-1861," and "Womanly Strength of the Nation: The Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Gilded Age, 1861-1890," *Inventing the American Woman*, 89-119; 121-51.
 19. Berg, *The Remembered Gate*, 79. See also Barbara Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion, 1800-1860," *Dimity Convictions*, 83-102; Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 21-3; and Barbara Welter, "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-Century America," *Women in American Religion*, ed. Janet Wilson James (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 111-25.
 20. Nancy F. Cott, "Religion and the Bonds of Womanhood," *Our American Sisters: Women in American Life and Thought*, ed. Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade (Lexington: D.C. Heath and Company, 1982), 196.
 21. Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 44.
 22. *Women and Religion in America: The Nineteenth Century: A Documentary History*, Vol. 1, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 311. For a detailed study of Catharine Beecher see Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).
 23. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The American as a Reformer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 12.
 24. For the first thought see Annie E. Kennedy to John Bidwell, 17 December 1867, Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 79, and Annie to John 7 October 1867, 66.
 25. Annie E. Kennedy to John Bidwell, 19 March 1867, MS3, Box 1, folder 4, Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico. This letter is published in Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 40.
 26. Annie E. Kennedy to John Bidwell, 26 August 1867, Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 59.
 27. Annie E. Kennedy to John Bidwell, 24 February 1868, Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 93.
 28. See Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 8.
 29. John Bidwell to Joseph G. Kennedy, 15

- October 1867, Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 68.
30. For a general study of philanthropy see Robert H. Bremner, *American Philanthropy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Decline of Radicalism: Reflections on America Today* (New York: Random House, 1969), and Merle Curti, "American Philanthropy and the National Character," *American Quarterly* 10 (1958): 420-37.
 31. Anne Firor Scott, *Making the Invisible Woman Visible* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 282. See her entire chapter, "Women's Voluntary Associations in the Forming of American Society," 279-94. See also Sheila M. Rothman, *Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1978), 22-77.
 32. "Mrs. Bidwell's Activities Covered Varied Spheres: Was Friend of Lincoln," *Chico Record*, 10 March 1918, p. 8. Hunt, *John Bidwell: Prince of California Pioneers*, 386-7; Hoopes, *What Makes a Man*, 7, 72. "Letter from the People: Some Short Biographies Bearing on the Early History of Meadville," *Meadville [Pennsylvania] Tribune Republican*, 3 March 1897, clipping enclosed with Annie to John Bidwell, March 17, 1897, Folder 21, Box 2, Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico; Pamela Giuliani, "The Woman Behind the Myth," *Unstill Lives: Portraits of Northern California Women* (The Deering Endowment: California State University, Chico, n.d.), 56; Virginia J. Goss, "Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell, 1839-1918," Master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1981, 4-5; and Oroville *Daily Mercury*, 11 March 1918, p. 6.
 33. For an interesting study of the interaction between women and Indians on the frontier see Glenda Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), *passim*, but especially 1-36.
 34. Hunt, *John Bidwell*, 137, 157-8; and "Recollections of Life in Early Chico and of General and Mrs. Bidwell," Helen Sommer Gage to John Sharpe, November, 1972, transcription, Association for Northern California Records and Research and California State University, Chico Oral History Program, California State University, Chico, 3-4.
 35. No attempt will be made in this paper to detail Annie Bidwell's work among the Mechoopda and other Indians. For a detailed discussion of her Indian reform activities see Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Indian Philanthropy in California: Annie Bidwell and the Mechoopda Indians," *Arizona and the West* 25 (Summer 1983): 153-66. See also Goss, "Annie Ellicott Kennedy Bidwell, 1839-1918," 21-39. For general information on the Mechoopda see Dorothy Jean Hill, "Indians of Chico Rancheria: An Ethnohistoric Study," (Master's thesis, Chico State College, 1970), *passim*; Dorothy Hill, *The Indians of Chico Rancheria* (Sacramento: Department of Parks & Recreation, 1978), *passim*; and Annie E. K. Bidwell, *Rancho Chico Indians*, ed. Dorothy J. Hill (Chico: Bidwell Mansion Association, 1987), *passim*.
 36. "Indian Industrial Mission School," notebook: "Record of Indian School, June 11, 1875-1877"; "Record of Indian School, 1876," all in Box 32; and Annie to John Bidwell, 1 February 1876, Box 89, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library.
 37. Mathes, "Indian Philanthropy in California: Annie Bidwell and the Mechoopda Indians," 158-9.
 38. "Religious Redskins: Their New Church Dedicated on Sunday," *Weekly Butte Record* [Chico], 9 December 1882.
 39. Mathes, "Indian Philanthropy in California: Annie Bidwell and the Mechoopda Indians," 159-60.
 40. The goals of the WNIA broadened to include adequate educational facilities on reservations, the upholding of all treaty commitments, allotment of land in severalty to Indians, and full rights for all Indians under the law. For a detailed discussion of the WNIA see Helen M. Wanken, "Women's Sphere' and Indian Reform: The Women's National Indian Association, 1879-1901" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1981). In 1902 the organization changed its name to the National Indian Association.
- Unfortunately scholars of women's reform groups have totally neglected the role of the WNIA which, ironically, in organization, resembled the much better known Women's Christian Temperance Union. The WNIA continued its work in behalf of the Native Americans until 1950 and deserves to be included among the various benevolent volunteer organizations that nineteenth century women joined.
41. On August 10, 1891, a branch was organized at San Francisco, followed by one at San Jose on July 23, 1894, and a branch in Chico the following year. Women's National Indian Association [WNIA], *Annual Report* (Philadelphia, December, 1893), 20; *Annual Report* (Philadelphia, December, 1894), 24; *Annual Report* (Philadelphia, December, 1895), 23.
 42. Haskell Institute, *YMCA Bulletin*, II (April 1913): 1; Burney O. Wilson to Annie Bidwell, 2 September 1916, Boxes 31 and 32, respectively, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library; and NIA [WNIA], *Annual Reports* (New York, December, 1913), 24; NIA [WNIA], *Annual Report* (New York, December, 1917), 16-17. See also Burney O. Wilson to Annie Bidwell, 31 March 1913, MS3 Box 3, f. 28, Annie Ellicott (Kennedy) Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico, in which he thanks her for money and tells her of his election as treasurer of the YMCA. See also Burney O. Wilson to Annie Bidwell, 2 September 1916, Box 32, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library in which he writes that he hopes to become a minister and needs money to attend Park College.
 43. NIA [WNIA], *Annual Report* (New York, December, 1915), 19.
 44. NIA, *Annual Report* (December, 1913), 26;

- Annual Report* (December, 1914), 17; *Annual Report* (December, 1915), 10; *Annual Report* (December, 1916), 18; and *Annual Report* (December, 1917), 16.
45. Annie E. K. Bidwell Diary, 13 February 1909, Vol. 15, Reel 3, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library.
 46. Annie Ellicott (Kennedy) Bidwell, "Will and Codicil," 7 Northeast California Collection, California State University, Chico.
 47. The particular legacy proved a burden for the Presbyterian Board of Missions. They refused to accept title to any of the property including her home and grounds because they had no funds with which to administer it. The State of California purchased the mansion and grounds in 1923 as part of the College campus. For more on this see Annie H. Currie, "Bidwell Rancheria," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 36 (December 1957): 313-25; and Currie, "Bidwell Rancheria," *Butte County Historical Society Diggins* 4 (Fall 1960): 7-8. See also "Unrecorded Deed Shows Land Grant to Chico Indians," *Chico Enterprise Record*, 22 May 1934, pp. 1, 2.
 48. A. K. Bidwell, "The Mechoopdas, or Rancho Chico Indians," *Overland Monthly* 27 (February 1896): 204-10; Mrs. Annie Kennedy Bidwell, "An Example of Indian Civilization," *The Women's National Indian Association* (November 1891), 1-8 (reprinted in Annie E. K. Bidwell, *Rancho Chico Indians*, ed. Dorothy J. Hill, 8-16); Annie E. K. Bidwell, "Sketch of address, regarding needs of California Indians — dictated in 1906," MS3, Box 2, fd. 25, Annie Ellicott (Kennedy) Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico (reprinted in Bidwell, *Rancho Chico Indians*, 53-64); Annie E. K. Bidwell, "The Indians of California," MS3, Box 2, fd. 35, Bidwell Papers, California State University, Chico (reprinted in Bidwell, *Rancho Chico Indians*, 17-21), and Annie E. K. Bidwell "My theme to day is the Mechoopda Indians as they were when I saw them. . . ." Northeast California Collection, California State University, Chico (reprinted in Bidwell, *Rancho Chico Indians*, 22-51). Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers in both the State Library, Sacramento, and at the Bancroft Library, the University of California, have copies of these various speeches and articles. See also Hill, "Partial Reconstruction of Aboriginal Life and the Missionary Influence of Annie E. K. Bidwell, 1868-1918," *The Indians of Chico Rancheria*, 45-71.
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 53. "Annie Bidwell—a Woman of Love for Mankind and Determination," *Chico Enterprise Record* (October 2, 1972), p. 2A. Box 36, 37, and 38, of the Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library are devoted to the temperance work of Annie and John. See also conference paper, Renee Kogel, "Annie Bidwell: The Lady as Reformer," (California State University, Chico, n.d.), 8-27.
 54. Annie E. K. Bidwell Diary, February 4, 1888, Vol. I, Reel I, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library.
 55. March 21, 1911 receipt from the Treasurer of the WCTU of California, and 16 June 1912 check to Charles R. Jones for National Prohibition work, Boxes 38 and 39, respectively, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library.
 56. C. E. Pitts to Annie Bidwell, 11 December 1916, Box 38, Annie E. K. Bidwell Collection, California State Library. In his letter Pitts thanked Annie for her February 23, 1914 pledge of \$5,000.
 57. For an interesting thank-you letter from Mary S. Anthony, Susan's sister, see Anthony to Annie Bidwell, 13 August 1905, Box 3, Part I, Annie E. K. Bidwell Papers, Bancroft Library.
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- versity, Wichita, Kansas, for autobiographical remarks. See his letter to Lester Will dated February 19, 1955, in Box 5 for another important autobiographical discussion. Most subsequent references to these papers will include names of correspondents, specific dates, and box numbers, followed by the letters GP. The author is particularly indebted to Professor William H. Richardson, a native Californian, for information provided about the historical and economic background of the area that Congressman Gubser represented.
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30. Gubser to K. Daly, July 31, 1957, Box 15, GP.
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DAILY "Lone Woman," pp. 36-41.

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Museum of Natural History. Linguistic comparisons were made with the help of Michael Krauss, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and his colleague Jeff Leer. The Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1010 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara, California is to be thanked for its continued support of research concerning the California Channel Islands.

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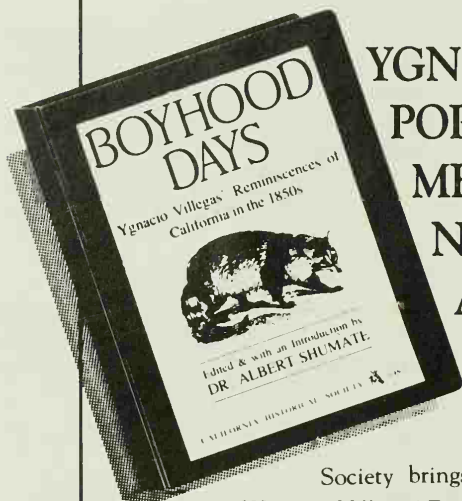
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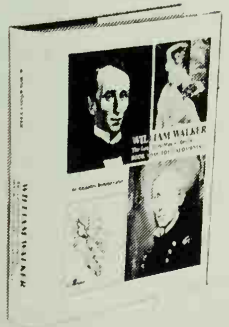
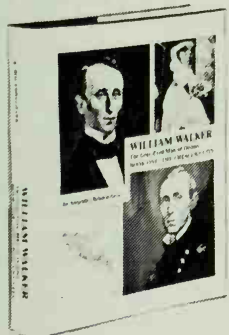
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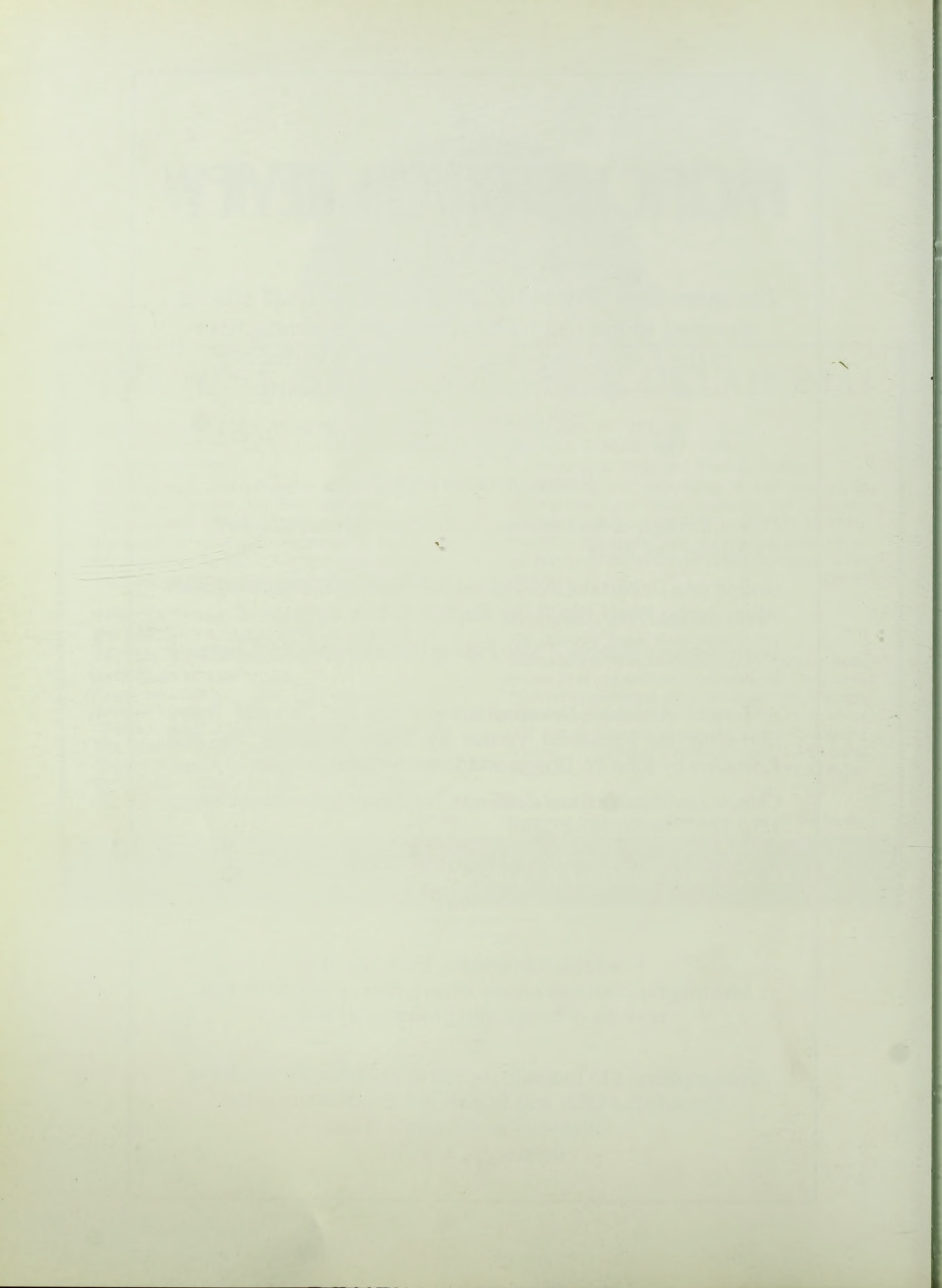
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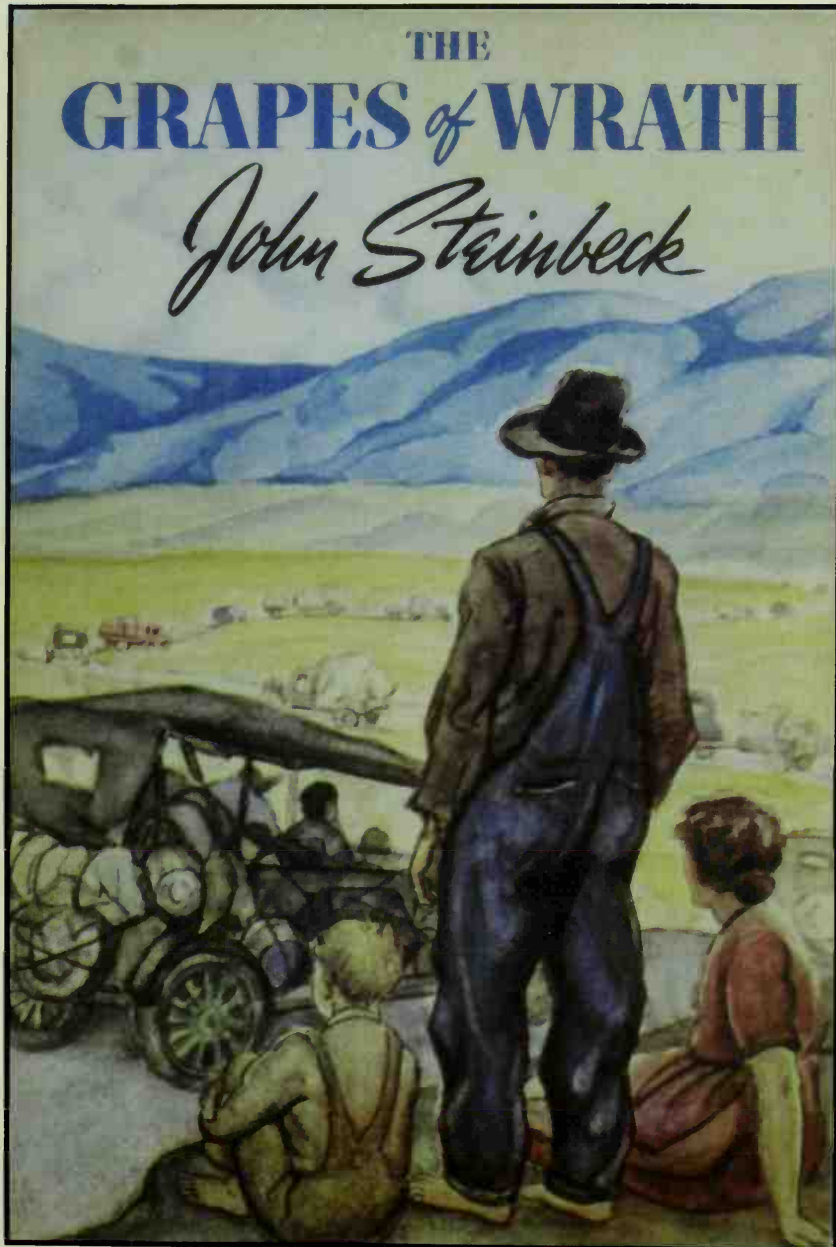
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CALIFORNIA HISTORY



Milestones in California History—The Grapes of Wrath: Fifty Years After



John Steinbeck. Courtesy Bancroft Library.

To the red country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth.

With these words John Steinbeck began the novel that would change forever the way Americans thought about the Great Depression. The Dust Bowl conditions of the 1930s destroyed crops in the Southwest and impoverished many farmers. At the same time, low crop prices made small family farming unprofitable and led to mass foreclosures throughout the region. These conditions sent hundreds of thousands of people west in search of a new life. The American agrarian dream was in crisis. California photographer Dorothea Lange and her colleagues had etched unforgettable images of this rural collapse into America's visual memory through their Farm Security Administration photographs. With the appearance of *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, the displaced and dispossessed finally had a voice.

The agricultural impact of the Depression had been evident in California for several years. Because much of the state's farming was done on large tracts, and not on family farms, migrant laborers worked the fields. The Southwest immigrants replaced Mexicans as the primary field laborers. While working on the farms, the "Okies" (as they became known) lived in huts, with no running water and inadequate sanitary facilities. Their presence in the thousands drove down wages and weakened farm labor unions, and their difference from the local population kept them outcasts, travelling from farm to farm, toiling for meager wages when they could find work, living from hand to mouth. These conditions had been reported since 1935, and were the subject of Steinbeck's 1936 San Francisco News articles, collected into *Their Blood is Strong* (1938). It had even become an issue in the 1938 election of Governor Olson.

The Grapes of Wrath brought the Okies and their voices to life. Steinbeck used plain words to create the Joad family. He reported their failure in Oklahoma and their migration to the "new golden west." He portrayed the lock-outs, the wretched living conditions, and the forced field labor imposed on workers by the large farmers throughout California's Central Valley. He revealed the powerful feelings of community in the Joads' extended family and among the larger society of unfortunates. The novel's vivid pictures made millions of Americans intimately aware of the migrant life and the people who lived it.

One example of the novel's impact was its immediate transfer to film. Directed by John Ford, the movie appeared in January, 1940, less than a year after the book's release. Featuring an extraordinary cast led by Henry Fonda as Tom Joad, "*The Grapes of Wrath*" has been acclaimed since its release as one of America's greatest motion pictures.

There would be other attempts to tell the stories of the downtrodden rural poor. In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, James Agee and Walker Evans would capture the hill people who stayed behind in the South. Carey McWilliams would put his investigative reporting into the dramatic monograph *Factories in the Fields*, at once a history and an indictment of California agriculture. But these would come later, after Steinbeck's novel had seared the nation's awareness.

The Grapes of Wrath was an extraordinary book in an extraordinary year. Amid the preparations for war in Europe and the continuing economic woes, it touched a deep chord that still vibrates in the American spirit.

FREDERICK ISAAC,
Editorial Assistant for California History.

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DUST BOWL LEGACIES:

The Okie Impact on California, 1939-1989

by James N. Gregory

It became one of those rare books that not only records history but makes history. Even as the first copies of *The Grapes of Wrath* rolled off the presses in the spring of 1939, it was clear that the novel was going to have an extraordinary impact. John Steinbeck's story of a dispossessed Oklahoma farm family struggling to survive among the fields of plenty in California touched the conscience of a nation. Steinbeck was not the first to write about the Dust Bowl migrants and their plight. For the better part of four years the story had been earning newspaper headlines, especially in California, where by 1939 the public was in the midst of a massive debate over the "Okie crisis." But Steinbeck did something that the journalists, photographers, and politicians could not do: he made sure that the Okies would never be forgotten. *The Grapes of Wrath* turned the Dust Bowl migrants into one of the enduring symbols of the Great Depression. Ever since 1939, Americans of various generations have found in the tragic heroism of the Joad family a metaphor for the nation's depression-era experience.

And what has become of the real Dust Bowl migrants, the Oklahomans, Arkansans, Texans, and Missourians who were the models for Steinbeck's book? On this fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*, it is fitting that we update the story. Steinbeck never did. It is too bad, for he would have been quite surprised. The history of the Dust Bowl migrants in the past five decades has defied many of the understandings and expectations that governed his 1939 portrait.

The Grapes of Wrath foresaw a difficult future for the Okies and Arkies. Steinbeck was not at all sure

that California could or would provide an adequate home, and he thought a great deal depended upon important changes in the structure of California agriculture. In the novel, and even more clearly in a sequence of newspaper articles he wrote in 1936 and 1938, he linked the migrants' future to the success of farm labor unions. Only when the power of organized agriculture had been curbed and minimum living standards imposed would California's newest and poorest residents stand a chance.¹

Steinbeck seemed to think as well that the Dust Bowl migrants had a great deal to learn about the standards of modern life in California. For all of the book's rural romanticism, its tremendous empathy for the simple, honest way of life represented by the Joads, *The Grapes of Wrath* casts them as backward, barely educated, even premodern. The scenes in the government camp and the portrayals of religious activities reveal Steinbeck's assumptions. The migrants were going to have to learn how to live in an organized community and give up anachronistic attachments to enthusiastic religion.

Time has proved the inadequacy of each of these expectations. The Dust Bowl migrants had nothing like the long-term difficulties that Steinbeck (and many others) foresaw, and deliverance had nothing to do with labor unions or any dismantling of California agribusiness. Equally, Steinbeck was wrong about the terms of the cultural negotiation that the Dust Bowl migrants would conduct with California. The issue, it turned out, was not modern culture versus rural backwardness, but rather one regional culture versus another. And the Okies were not the only ones to change. In ways that



A sharecropper and his family stalled in the desert as they enter California. Dorothea Lange, who took this photograph, is the best-known chronicler of the Okies in California. *Courtesy Bancroft Library.*



California had not been kind to this family. An infant died of exposure during the winter. Photo by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy Bancroft Library.

Steinbeck could not have imagined in 1939, the Dust Bowl migrants managed to imprint many of their own values and outlooks on California.

First some background and some clarifications. Partly because of the novel, Americans today hold some misleading images of the Dust Bowl migrants. That label itself is confusing. There was no migration of any consequence from the actual Dust Bowl, because few people lived in the parts of the southern plains that were devastated by the dramatic dust storms of the mid-1930s. Thousands of people did leave the broader region formed by Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, and Missouri, an area we can call the Southwest or better still the western South.²

Furthermore, migration from this region was not just a 1930s phenomenon. Southwesterners had been coming to California in large numbers since World War I. About a quarter of a million had settled in the state in the 1920s; during the depression another 350-400,000 came. But the biggest influx came during World War II, when defense work lured between 600-700,000 more Southwesterners to California. Migration continued at a somewhat reduced pace in the 1950s, until the sunbelt oil boom of the 1960s turned Texas and Oklahoma into job-rich, population-importing states. By 1960,

there were more than 1.7 million Oklahomans, Texans, Arkansans, and Missourians living in California, constituting one-eighth of the state population. The vast majority of them were whites.³

Standard impressions of the social composition of the migration are also too limited. Even in the 1930s phase, the migrants included many Southwesterners who were neither farmers nor poor people. Surveys show that about half came from rural areas, and half from towns and cities. The region suffered terribly from the depression, and that was a reason for much of the migration, but those leaving included a substantial representation of white collar families and industrial workers, as well as the stereotypic tenant farmers.⁴

Nor did they all head for California's agricultural valleys. In the 1930s, half of all Southwesterners moving to California settled in Los Angeles, the Bay Area, or San Diego—and a still larger percentage did so in the 1940s. This was not just a rural to rural migration of farm folk. The joads, in other words, were not necessarily typical.⁵

Finally, it is important to modify impressions of what awaited them. Even in areas like the San Joaquin Valley, the conditions that the newcomers encountered were not uniformly horrible. Stories of hardship were real enough. Some people lived in tents, endured long stretches of unemployment,

and suffered from shortages of various kinds. There were cases of malnutrition, disease, and even death. But severe difficulties were not typical. Most people found what they were looking for—work and a better standard of living—and that is why they stayed.

The tragic images of this migration have been overblown. The experience was often tough, certainly by the standards of white middle-class society. But the challenge cannot be compared to the pioneer migrations of the nineteenth century, nor with the refugee migrations that occur with such frequency in the third world. The Latin Americans who continue to cross international boundaries in pursuit of an uncertain future in the United States know at least as much about risk, hardship, and struggle as the Dust Bowl migrants of the 1930s.

If Steinbeck's contemporary assessments were sometimes skewed, his reading of the future was more so. It could hardly have been otherwise. His anxiety about the migrants' place in California reflected the moods and conditions of 1939. He had no way of knowing how much the world around him would change, or how quickly.

There are two stories to be told about the Dust Bowl migrants' experience since the publication of

The Grapes of Wrath. The economic story is the most straightforward. The past five decades have meant considerable improvements in the social position and standard of living for the migrants and their descendants.

The changing occupational and income profiles of white Southwesterners can be followed in the Public Use Microdata samples recently issued by the U.S. Census Bureau. The starting point is the 1940 census, taken just one year after publication of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Southwesterners who had arrived in the previous decade were predictably concentrated at the low end of the socioeconomic scale. This was true in the Los Angeles and the Bay Area, where their rates of unemployment exceeded other whites and where almost three-quarters of those employed worked in blue-collar positions. It was much more true in the San Joaquin Valley, where in 1940, well over two-thirds of Southwestern males worked as unskilled laborers, mostly as farm workers. A similar percentage of the recently settled families in turn earned less than the \$790 annual income that experts termed a "subsistence" budget.⁶

Ten years later much had changed. World War II had restarted the economy, creating unprecedented



World War II provided California's Okies with steady jobs in industries such as the Kaiser Shipyard in Richmond, photographed here in 1943. One result was a trend toward integration into the existing and newly-forming urban communities, and a lessening of the Oakies' isolation. Photo by Dorothea Lange, © 1982. Courtesy Oakland Museum.

job opportunities both in the coastal areas, where the shipyards and aircraft factories were located, and in the valleys, where revitalized demand for agricultural products meant all sorts of new commercial and service jobs. By 1950, Southwesterners in both settings were rapidly working their way up the occupational and income scale. To take the San Joaquin Valley case, most Southwestern males were no longer doing farm work; now, instead of employing 58% of them, the fields provided a living for only 25%. The majority had moved into blue-collar trades, many working in construction, the oil industry, and transportation. Standards of living were also way up; family incomes had increased an amazing 276% in just one decade, although one quarter of that went to inflation.⁷

By 1970, the work careers of many of the Dust Bowl and defense era migrants were coming to an end. Some had already retired, but by tracing the occupations of men aged 40-62, we get some idea of the final economic position of that initial generation. The record shows further progress. Some were wealthy, a number having made fortunes in real estate, oil, or farming. Some were still poor. In the San Joaquin Valley, 14% continued to earn a living through agricultural labor, 10% reported incomes that fell below the 1970 poverty line, and 6% collected welfare payments. The majority were in between. Not too many had found their way into white-collar occupations, only 24% compared to 45% of other whites living in the valley. Most were closing out their working lives in blue-collar respectability. In the metropolitan areas, more had attained white-collar positions, but the general pattern was similar. Compared to the rest of the white population, Southwesterners of that first generation were more apt to be found in the lower-middle class.⁸

Unfortunately, there is no similar data on their children, who nowadays are middle-aged adults. There are indications that the second generation was less likely to go to college than other segments of the white population, but apart from that the evidence points to further socioeconomic progress. A large part of this generation found its way into white-collar and professional jobs.

How one sums up the issue of economic progress depends upon the point of reference. Relative to the expectations of John Steinbeck and most other 1930s witnesses, this has been a remarkable story. But in 1939 no one could predict the structural economic changes that over the course of the next generation would lift almost all white Ameri-

cans out of poverty. Seen in this newer context, there was nothing spectacular about the improvements registered by the migrants in California. With some notable exceptions, theirs has not been a rags-to-riches tale. Rather it is a story of modest, steady economic improvement, decade by decade, generation by generation—a story very similar to that of most white Americans of these age groups. One final perspective may be helpful. The economies of the Southwestern states also changed over these decades, and so did the fortunes of most residents. Whatever their economic success in California, it seems to be the case that the migrants would have had relatively similar chances had they remained in their home states.

Economic progress is the issue that has always attracted the most attention, but the Dust Bowl migration is ultimately more important to California because of its cultural impact. This is where the update gets interesting. The place to begin to understand the cultural legacy of the Dust Bowl migration is the San Joaquin Valley, particularly its southern end near Bakersfield, where John Steinbeck settled the Joad family. In all of California, this is where white Southwesterners gained the highest concentration in the overall population. In 1950, one out of every four adults in the San Joaquin Valley was an Oklahoman, Texan, Arkansan, or Missourian; and the ratio was closer to one in three in Kern County. The proportion is much reduced these days because migration from the Southwest slowed in the 1960s, even while the valley's growth continued from other sources. On the other hand, there are also many second- and third-generation Okies in the valley, though the census provides no count.⁹

The San Joaquin Valley is and always has been a complex, multi-cultural society, settled by all sorts of European and Asian groups, along with migrants from various parts of the United States. But nowadays visitors are apt to miss much of that. Especially in the southern counties, two cultural styles seem to dominate. The Latino influence is easily recognized, and serves notice that Hispanics are the fastest-growing group in the area. The other influence is confusing unless one knows something about American regional cultures. Coastal Californians notice the pickup trucks, the cowboy hats, the folksy mannerisms, the different ways that people talk, and assume that these are rural standards, that the valley is dominated by country folk. That is not quite right. The valley is not even

remotely a rural society. The vast majority of residents live in cities and have nothing to do with farms. The style of life there is not rooted in the land, it is rather a function of the cultural heritages of the people and the way those have been negotiated and modified over the last half century.¹⁰

The clues are there if one takes the time to look. Visit some of the coffee shops and notice the menus. Chicken-fried steak, chili, grits, and biscuits and gravy are favorites in the valley, just as they are in the western South. This is also Dr. Pepper country; Coke and Pepsi face the same sort of competition they find in the Dallas-based bottler's home region.

The churches offer other clues. For one thing, there are so many of them. Bakersfield and its surrounding area have more churches than San Francisco, with only a third the population. And notice the denominations: most are Southern Baptist and Pentecostal. Evangelical Protestantism dominates the religious life of the valley these days. This is California's bible belt.¹¹

It is also home to a particular commercial medium. To turn on the radio is to choose between three types of stations: Spanish language, religious broadcasts, and country music, lots of country music.

All of these institutions and symbols derive from a particular regional heritage, from the Southwest, or more broadly from the white South. If you listen closely to the people, you hear other clues. The accents are not rural; they are Southwestern. Most whites in the valley have picked up a bit of the diphthongal vowels characteristic of Oklahoma or Texas.¹²

The area's politics and social values are telling too. This is one of the most conservative sections of California. Only recently has voting registration shifted towards the Republican party, but the San Joaquin Valley has been voting conservative for some time. Racism is also a problem. Blacks in Bakersfield face difficulties not common in many other parts of California, and there is conflict as well between whites and Hispanics. Cesar Chavez and the UFW are decidedly unpopular in most Anglo circles.¹³

Much has changed in this part of California since the 1930s. A former Oklahoman who came to California as a child more than fifty years ago summarized the transformation. "I think that we won," he told an interviewer. "By that I mean, we took over . . . By moving into the cities and moving into the towns, the society got

changed by us. When I go there [he no longer lives in the Valley] I feel I am in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas."

How did this happen? How did a despised and economically impaired group become so influential? Numbers are part of the answer, but only part. The large representation of Southwesterners in this section of California clearly makes this possible. But there is more to it than that. A lot of Americans from different regions have poured into California over the years without leaving such an imprint. Usually they become quickly Californiaized, more or less fitting into California society on California's terms.

Two additional factors help explain the Southwestern cultural influence. One is the prejudice and hostility that the migrants faced in the 1930s. Calling the newcomers "Okies," a label which initially had the pejorative connotations of "poor white trash," Californians in effect created a minority group. Facing social rejection, many Southwesterners—particularly in the San Joaquin Valley where the tensions were greatest—pulled together defensively. Treated as outsiders, they fashioned a separate group mentality, and that in turn encouraged them to maintain some of the distinguishing cultural traditions of their region of birth.

The other factor has to do with the nature of those cultural resources. Southwestern influences have been successfully transferred to California via a discrete set of institutions, and as a result only a particular version of Southwestern culture has taken root. This is the way subcultures often establish themselves. A migrating group does not just come into an already settled society and then recreate its old way of life. The host society leaves only certain limited venues for independent community life. With towns, schools, political parties, and media institutions already well established, there was not much room for Southwesterners to build their own infrastructure. On the other hand, sometimes the newcomer group brings with it institutions or commitments that are new and that have some potentially wider role to play in the host society. Examples can be seen in the experiences of other ethnic groups. The Irish found such an institution in the Catholic church; Jews something similar in the garment industry and Hollywood; African-Americans have likewise gained both legitimacy and influence through a century of contributions to the world of music. My argument is that the key to Okie cultural authority in California is to

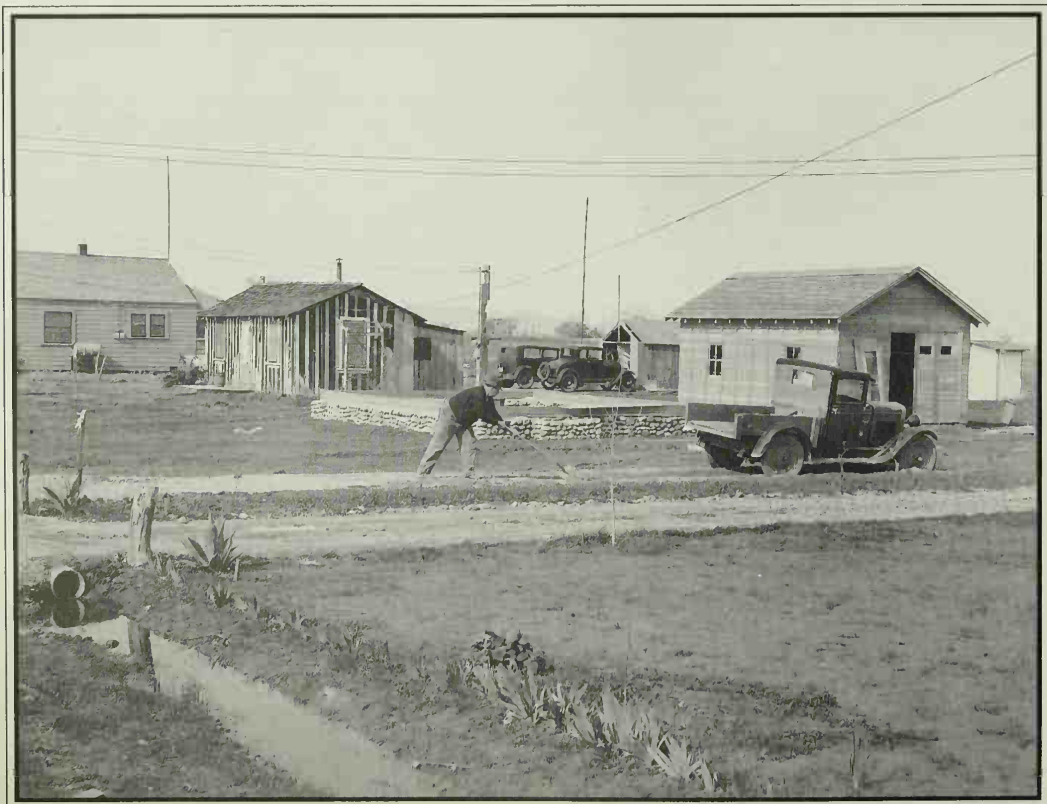
be found in two similar structures—evangelical Protestantism and country music.¹⁴

There is room only for a few words about the religious institutions. California, which had been largely settled by Northeasterners, Midwesterners, and European Catholics (that is after the Mexicans and Indians had been pushed aside), knew relatively little about the fervent, fundamentalist side of Protestantism. Southwesterners brought the Southern Baptist faith with them, and were also the primary constituency for the holiness and pentecostal movements. Initially in the 1930s and 1940s, these churches were small, insulated institutions, catering solely to congregations of poor and still despised Okies. But in the decades that followed, as many Americans turned to organized religion, and as evangelical Protestantism gained legitimacy and stature throughout the country, these became the fastest growing churches in California. Today, the Southern Baptists are the state's

second largest Protestant denomination, and the more diffuse pentecostal movement gains converts even within the mainline churches. For their Okie proprietors, the success of these institutions has brought validation and feelings of pride. The churches have served as centers for maintaining Southwestern culture and identity, and also, as they grow more and more popular, for spreading aspects of that regional culture.¹⁵

Country music has worked in much the same way, and its role warrants a closer look. Country music is both one of the Southwest's gifts to California and a medium for the infusion of other aspects of Southwestern culture. The music has inspired regional loyalty among transplanted Southwesterners and their children, while also inspiring interest in certain values and outlooks among wider groups of Californians. It is, I argue elsewhere, the essential language of the Okie subculture.¹⁶

When country music emerged as a commercial medium with the spread of radio in the 1920s, its



The Oakies, refused by many towns, established their own communities. One of these was Olivehurst, in Yuba County. Land was cheap, and many of the migrants built their own modest homes. *Photo by Dorothea Lange, © 1982. Courtesy Oakland Museum.*



Sunday school pick-up near a labor camp in Kern County, 1938. Within a generation, Southwesterners would help make evangelicalism the fastest-growing force in California Protestantism. Photo by Dorothea Lange. Courtesy Bancroft Library.

major markets became the South and the rural Midwest. Californians showed but slight initial interest. A few hillbilly and cowboy singers could be heard on California radio stations prior to the mid-1930s, but most Californians regarded that sort of music as rustic and unsophisticated and left it to a marginal audience of senior citizens and newcomers from regions where it was more popular.¹⁷

As it happened, the California market began to grow just about the time that migration from the Southwest reached major proportions. This was only partly due to the newcomers; the advent of Gene Autry and Hollywood's new fascination with singing cowboys also created a wider demand among Californians. But the timing enabled Okies effectively to take charge of the medium, doing so both as performers and audience.¹⁸

Southwesterners dominated the production of country music in California for obvious reasons. It had been Texans and Oklahomans who had pioneered the cowboy styles just then becoming popular. And in recognition of that fact Hollywood began importing professional musicians from the Southwest. By the early 1940s, Gene Autry headed a list of Southwestern-born film and radio stars which included Tex Ritter, Stuart Hamblen, Bob Wills, Patsy Montana, Jimmy Wakely, Spade Cooley, Tim Spencer, Eddy Dean, and Elton Britt—Roy Rogers, an Ohioan, was a major exception.¹⁹

Many of these performers had made names for themselves before moving West, but the singing cowboy craze also provided opportunities for migrants who had initially come to California with different purposes in mind. Arriving in Los Angeles in 1937, Oklahoman Woody Guthrie found his relatives busy trying to capitalize on the Gene Autry phenomenon. Cousin Jack Guthrie had outfitted himself in cowboy gear and was trying to talk his way into auditions with local radio stations. Several other relatives had also formed a band and were hoping to get into the movies. The band went nowhere, but Jack got his audition, invited Woody to become his singing sidekick, and launched two musical careers, one of them legendary.²⁰

The same sort of aspirations registered in the valley, where the growing migrant population was attracting the attention of radio station managers, dance promoters, and tavern owners. When folklorists Charles Todd and Charles Sonkin visited the migrant labor camps operated by the Farm Security Administration in the summers of 1940 and 1941, they found more musical talent than they had time to record. Young men and women stepped forth to showcase their talents, claiming that they were "goin' on the air soon."²¹

Rose Maddox started her career in that formative period when California was beginning to listen to country music. Eleven years old, she sang her first audition for a Modesto radio station in 1937, accom-



Western Swing started among the migrants, but gained a large and enthusiastic audience. The Dude Martin band was popular in the San Francisco Bay area during the War. *Photo by Dorothea Lange © 1982. Courtesy Oakland Museum.*

panied by her four brothers. The manager liked their sound, and within a few years the Maddox Brothers and Rose had a recording contract and a nationwide following.²²

For those who were not performers, the music served other purposes. Apart from the obvious pleasure it provided listeners, it became for Southwesterners something of a group enterprise. They were initially its chief fans and took pride in the music's expanding popularity. Even as audiences grew, the music belonged to Okies in many symbolic ways.

For one thing, country music of the 1930s and 1940s was loaded down with Southwestern references. Many of the most popular songs of the period utilized the landscapes, folk heroes, and place names of the region. Texas, for obvious reasons, figured prominently as a setting for cowboy songs. Compositions like "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "By the Silvery Rio Grande," and "Red River Valley" appeared in endless number. Songs about Oklahoma were fewer but included some of the most popular tunes of the period: Bob Wills' "Take Me Back to Tulsa," Spade Cooley's "Oklahoma Stomp," and Woody and Jack Guthrie's "Oklahoma Hills."

The connection to the Southwest was also established in the names of bands. In addition to Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, bands performing in California included Don Churchill and his Texas Mavericks, Jerry Irby and his Texas Ranchers, Merle Lindsay and his Oklahoma Nightriders, a female singing group called The Oklahoma Sweethearts, and "T" Texas Tyler, who with his Oklahoma Melody Boys, managed to identify with both states.

The naming practices suggest a two-way relationship between audience and performer. Musicians catered closely to their core audience, and many Southwesterners in turn invested great loyalty in this medium and its stars. What Frank Sinatra was to Italians, and Paul Robeson was for blacks, Gene Autry and Bob Wills were to Okies: standard bearers for a group looking for symbols of success and pride.

Bob Wills was the real favorite. He drew enormous crowds of transplanted Southwesterners wherever he appeared. Future country star Merle Haggard was too young to attend the dances, but when Wills came to Bakersfield in the late 1940s, Haggard and his friends would stand outside the hall absorbing the excitement. These periodic appearances were events of communal significance

for the area's Southwesterners, particularly for the younger generation. "We needed a hero," Haggard recalls, "and Bob was certainly that and more . . . it was like he brought some of home with him."²³ Oklahoma-born Ken Griffis speaks in similar terms of Wills' effect on Southwesterners living in Los Angeles. Wills, he insists, "was very important to people like myself . . . He was one of us Okies and Arkies. People would say 'That's old Bob, that's our boy' . . . We were on that stage with Bob Wills."²⁴

This was audience involvement of a special kind, and with it went a great deal of potential influence. Country music played a role in the adjustment experiences of Southwesterners in California, providing symbols and ideas that shaped a group identity while preserving commitments to ways of life that people had known back home. The music, for example, was an obvious factor in the retention of Southwestern speech patterns into the second and subsequent generations. Here was a powerful counterweight to the admonitions of school teachers who tried to teach young people the benefits of a California accent. What did they know? If radio heroes like Ernest Tubb and Lefty Frizzell could stretch their vowels, if Bob Wills could carry on in his high-pitched Texas twang, why should young people be ashamed of a Southwestern accent?

Songs and performers also helped the migrants establish some of the social and political perspectives that have become emblematic of the Okie presence in California. The Okie subculture has important ideological dimensions that have made it an influential force in California's complex political system, and country music has been intimately involved.

Coming from a region with historic links to the South, many of the migrants brought with them elements of a political culture that is best labeled "plain-folk Americanism." Derived from principles once widely held throughout Protestant America, the perspective enjoys its most consistent constituency among rural and working class whites in the greater South. It blends several elements: first an egalitarian ethos, a populist commitment to ordinary folks as the bone and sinew of American society, but a commitment that in practice worries more about elitist styles than actual disparities of wealth and power. Second, an ethnocentric impulse that at times manifests itself through racism, at other times through patriotic or nativistic fervor. And third, a celebration of toughness and

individualism, a belief in hard-jawed individualistic solutions to most problems.²⁵

Country music helped promote these values, both reinforcing them for resettled Southwesterners and introducing them to a wider audience of Californians. Much about the medium has changed over the years, but not its populist flavor, its down-home allegiance to ordinary people, especially ordinary white people. Highly didactic, with songs that often narrate a partial story—usually one that explores important personal problems—the medium has generally stressed some combination of traditionalism and heroic individualism. Whether the symbols are the brave cowboys and sweet mountain homes of the 1930s or the truck drivers and warmly remembered mamas of recent years, the dualism blends toughness and independence with moral and sometimes political conservatism.

The 1960s witnessed a dramatic expansion of both country music and the political culture that it supported. Disturbed by the social upheaval of that decade—by Civil Rights measures, anti-war protests, and counter-cultural rejection of traditional morality—many white Americans, particularly in the lower-middle class, embraced populist-conservative formulas that previously had belonged mostly to the white South. Country music helped with the diffusion. As sociologists Richard Peterson and Paul Di Maggio have shown, its locus had by then shifted "from region to class." Country was now the favorite medium of lower-middle-class Americans. Its audience was almost entirely white, mostly blue-collar, over thirty, and increasingly conservative.²⁶

Okies had quite a lot to do with these changes in California. One Okie in particular became the nation's foremost symbol of blue-collar conservatism and country music's tough new patriotic populism. Merle Haggard was born near Bakersfield in 1937. His parents had left Oklahoma a year and a half earlier, heading to California like so many others to find a better life. Their initial years out west were tough but not the stuff of the Joad family. Merle's father found work with the Santa Fe railroad not long after arriving. The family's first California home sounds worse than it was, an old converted box car. Sometime later, they moved to Oildale, a Kern county community consisting almost entirely of fellow Southwesterners.²⁷

Tragedy struck when Merle was nine years old. His father died suddenly, and although his mother was able to support the family working as a book-



Merle Haggard, "The Okie from Muskogee," in a recent photograph. *Randee St. Nicholas, Courtesy CBS Records.*

keeper, the loss made a huge impact on the young boy. Restless and troubled, he fell in with that portion of the younger generation who got more out of toughness and juvenile delinquency than school. At age ten he hopped his first freight train and turned up in Fresno. At fourteen he hitchhiked to Texas, bought his first cowboy boots, and spent his first week in jail, an adult jail. Juvenile arrests had started earlier, for truancy, theft, fighting, and drinking. In and out of reform school more often than he could count, he was every inch the rebel he later sang about in songs like "Mama Tried."

It was a road that finally led to San Quentin. He "turned twenty-one in prison," to quote another song, serving almost three years for burglary and attempted escape. But the experience had its desired effect. When they released him in 1960, he was ready to change his ways.

He had always loved music, learning that apparently from his fiddle-playing father, and at an early age became good with the guitar. When not up to some wildness, he made a few dollars singing in the dives and honky tonks that sprinkled Kern County. By the time he got out of prison, Bakers-

field had developed a reputation as an up and coming center for country music. Big name performers rolled through town on their western tours, and the area supported a variety of radio programs, a daily country music television show, and a couple of fledgling record labels. Most important, Bakersfield was just then producing its first genuine star, a sandy-haired former Texan named Buck Owens, who over the next decade would build the city a reputation as "Nashville West."²⁸

Merle Haggard followed in his footsteps. He made his first record in 1962, hit the charts in 1964, signed with a major label in 1965, and then caught on with a string of number one and top ten hits. Most of this early material featured themes from his rough and rowdy youth, mostly remorseful convict songs like "Sing Me Back Home," "Branded Man," and "Mama Tried." He thus quickly became identified with the social realist perspective that was changing the tone of country music in the late 1960s, turning the medium in more topical and political directions.²⁹

His next song-writing phase established him as the leader of this movement. With songs like "Working Man's Blues," "I Take a Lot of Pride in What I Am," and "The Fighting Side of Me," he gave voice to the angry, conservative populism that was sweeping lower-middle-class white America and which had come to him by way of his upbringing in California's Okie communities. By 1969 the press was calling him "the poet laureate of the hard hats," song-writer to the Silent Majority. The composition that really fixed this reputation was the one he wrote with Roy Burris twenty years ago, "Okie from Muskogee." Catchy, semi-humorous, but ultimately quite serious, the lyric that began "we don't smoke marijuana in Muskogee" spoke for millions of white Americans worried about Vietnam protests, campus radicalism, and "hippies out in San Francisco."³⁰

Haggard's influence was nationwide in those years, but nowhere was the impact more profound than in California. The songs that he sang and the public recognition that he received helped bring about an important change in the relationship of former Southwesterners to California. His songs kindled a major outpouring of Okie pride. "Okie from Muskogee," though it said nothing about the Dust Bowl migration, offered California's Southwesterners a compelling slogan. "I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee" became something of a rallying cry.

And that was not Haggard's only contribution to the Okie renaissance. Even before his blockbuster hit, Haggard had begun writing songs specifically about the Dust Bowl migrant experience, songs that eventually included "Mama's Hungry Eyes," "Cotton Fields," "Tulare Dust," "They're Tearing the Labor Camps Down," and "The Roots of My Raising." Here he resurrected stories of hardship and struggle that had received little attention in almost a generation. The Okie experience—largely forgotten since the Depression, except by those who lived personally with the memories—now was being celebrated and reaffirmed.

Former Southwesterners and their children and sometimes grandchildren responded enthusiastically. By the mid-1970s an Okie pride movement was in full flower. Other musicians, like Buck Owens, Tommy Collins, and Larry Hosgood, turned out additional Okie pride songs. A literary circle led by writers Gerald Haslam and James Houston began to publish the poetry and fiction of a dozen or so second-generation Okie authors. Newspapers caught the spirit and commissioned a new round of "where are they now?" articles about the Dust Bowl migrants. Colleges, libraries, and city administrations in the San Joaquin Valley sponsored programs to celebrate or study the Okie experience, and one or two high schools and colleges experimented with Okie Studies programs.³¹

All this attended a more far-reaching change at a personal level. For the first time it had become acceptable, almost fashionable, to be an Okie. A proliferation of "Okie Pride" bumper stickers, belt-buckles, and trucker caps heralded the change. First and second generation Okies, some of whom had spent the better part of a lifetime hiding from that label, now embraced it. For Frank Manies, who had at times passed himself off as an Arizonian, for Peggy Staggs, who had spent her formative years becoming a perfect Californian, for Ernest Martin, who as a young man had fled the valley so as not to be "associated with the 'Okie' image," these years brought a new reckoning with what had been a troublesome background.³²

Haggard, it must be understood, was the catalyst, not really the cause. His songs reflected a search for roots which blossomed in many corners of America during the 1960s and 1970s. His quest and the response to it rested on recent changes in the way Americans thought about ethnicity and cultural differentiation. Okie pride was closely tied to the new ethnic consciousness that swept the

country in the wake of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. The "new ethnicity" made it socially acceptable to be an Okie, just as it made it safe to be Jewish, Italian, Chicano, and so on. In an era that was uniquely and genuinely celebrating pluralism, many Americans were thinking in new ways about their backgrounds.³³

But it was no accident that country music provided the medium for the reconstruction of Okie consciousness. All along, that industry had helped to define the migrants' changing relationship with California. A group project that paid dividends of recognition and validation as it became more and more popular, it was also a fluid cultural system that again and again conveyed symbols of great meaning to the group.

John Steinbeck predicted none of this. How could he? In 1939 he looked at the Southwesterners settling in his state and saw mostly tragedy and injustice. How could he know that a generation later these victims, these scorned newcomers, would be presiding over important changes in California's religious and political values? How could he have known that the San Joaquin Valley, site of so much antagonism and hostility in his day, would, a few decades later, bear the clear imprint of an Okie subculture? How could he know that Kern County, where in 1939 public hysteria had culminated in the removal of *The Grapes of Wrath* from schools and libraries, would one day regard a guitar-playing second-generation Okie as its most illustrious citizen? How could he possibly understand the transforming historical processes that would years later allow Bakersfield's mayor to conclude that Merle Haggard's songs speak for Kern County. "Merle Haggard summed up our philosophy here," Mayor Donald S. Hart announced not long ago. "We respect and love America, its flags and symbols. We believe in paternalism, a strong family . . . and the merits of good old hard work. That's all —nothin' very sophisticated about it?"³⁴ CRIS

See notes beginning on page 146.

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BIDDY MASON'S LOS ANGELES 1856-1891

by Dolores Hayden

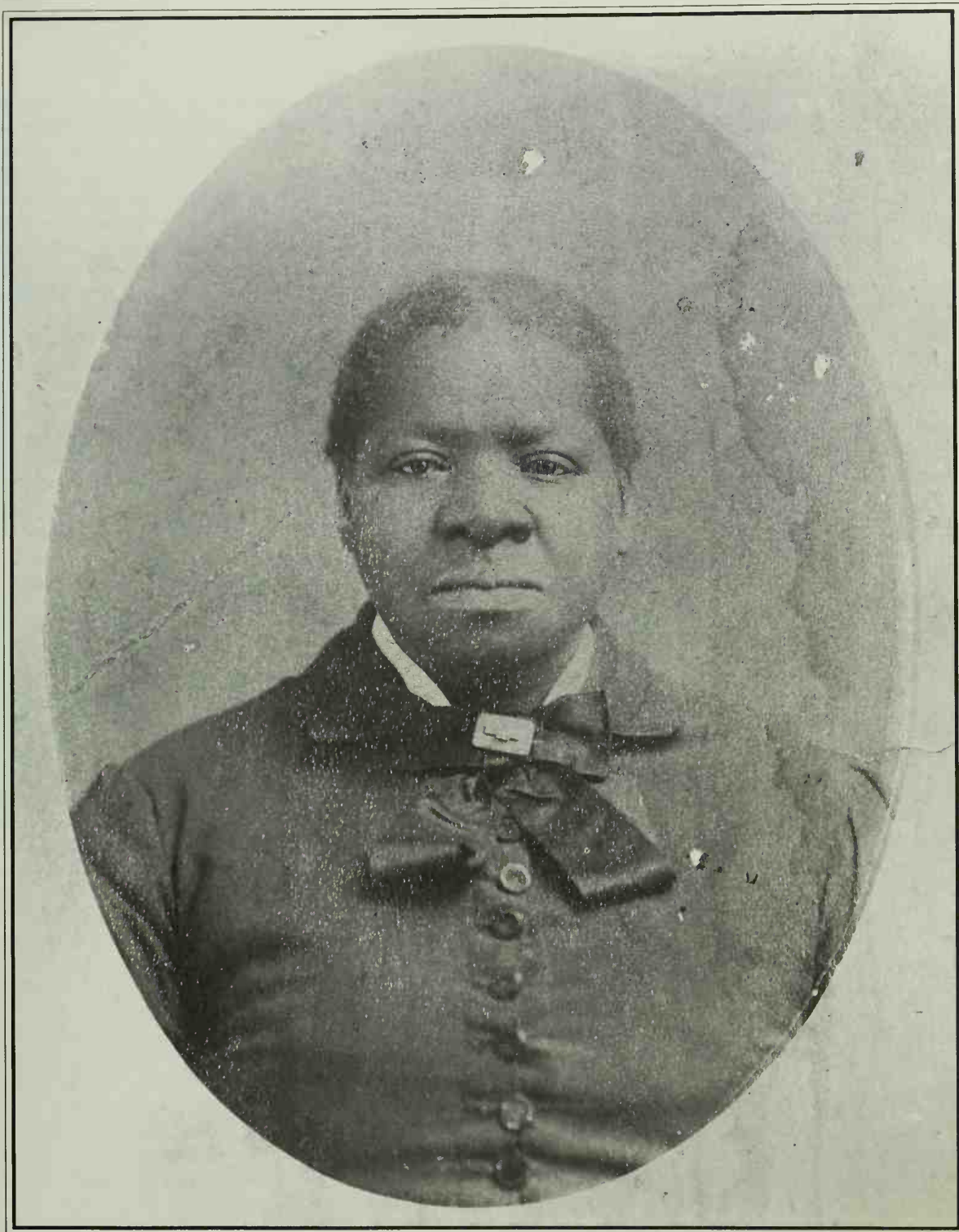
One pioneer's life cannot tell the whole story of building a city. Yet the record of a single citizen's struggle to raise a family, earn a living, and contribute to a city's professional, social, and religious activities, can suggest how a city develops over time. This is especially true if the person is Biddy Mason. Her experiences as a citizen of Los Angeles were typical—as a family head, homeowner, and churchgoer. Yet they were also unusual—since gender, race, and status as a slave increased her burdens. She arrived in southern California in 1851 as the lifelong slave of a master from Mississippi and won freedom for herself and thirteen others in court in 1856. Her case gave Los Angeles' Judge Benjamin Hayes a chance to make a decision against slavery, in favor of California's new constitution. When Biddy Mason won her case and chose to settle in Los Angeles as part of the small Black community there, her special medical skills, learned as a slave midwife and nurse, provided entry for her into many households, rich and poor, of every race and ethnicity.¹ She lived and worked in the city until her death on January 15, 1891, when her grandsons were forced to turn away from her door lines of her fellow citizens awaiting her assistance.²

Historians have noted that published work on Black women in the West is "sparse," partly because there were so few Black women in the West, especially in the nineteenth century.³ Many brief accounts of Biddy Mason's life exist, including some anecdotal ones, privately published in the Black community, that dwell on her role as a pious "good woman" or as a rich woman who accumulated valuable real estate.⁴ But no one has attempted a

detailed interpretation of her life, including her pioneering travels on foot from Mississippi to Los Angeles, her legal battles, her practice as a midwife, and her success in establishing a homestead as a resource for her family and for a set of community organizations she helped to build, including the Los Angeles branch of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1988 the FAME Church honored Mason with a celebration, and the California Afro-American Museum included her in their "Black Angelenos" exhibit. In 1989, The Power of Place, a non-profit corporation, installed a major new public art project—"Biddy Mason's Place: A Passage in Time"—on the site of her old Spring Street homestead. Soon, the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles will unveil "Biddy Mason Park" on Broadway. Nearly a century after her death, a detailed history of this Angelena and her era is long overdue.

When Biddy Mason arrived in California in 1851, the city of Los Angeles housed about 1,600 people, half of them under 20 years old. About a dozen were Blacks.⁵ Some accounts portray Los Angeles just after mid-century as a tough cow town, a violent place with 62 saloons by 1872, and a bad record for rough justice, shooting, lynching, and tarring and feathering.⁶ Yet by the 1880s, it was a place that increasingly attracted immigrants who wanted to settle down as homeowners and churchgoing Protestants. And by the 1890s, Los Angeles was a city of over 50,000, including more than 1,200 Blacks, with a thriving oil field, a growing financial center, and expanding industries.⁷ In most accounts of these decades, one reads of railroads and land booms, of white male "Anglo" immigrants from



Biddy Mason, ca. 1870's. *Courtesy UCLA Special Collections.*

the East and the Midwest creating a new urban prosperity. There were other pioneers, including men and women of color, and this essay traces urban life as created and experienced by Bidly Mason and people like her. Between 1856 and 1891, she changed Los Angeles, as she became one of its leading citizens, and at the same time, the city changed around her, achieving urbanity, diversity, and density earlier residents had barely imagined. While Bidly Mason's own recorded words are few, legal history, medical history, and the history of the built environment can give glimpses of the urban world Bidly Mason struggled to create.

FROM MISSISSIPPI TO CALIFORNIA:
A BLACK PIONEER SLAVE

On August 15, 1818, a slave named Bridget was born in the deep South, probably in Georgia.⁸ Most of her life people called her Bidly. She was forbidden to learn to read or write, as were most slaves, but she managed to gain a good knowledge of livestock, herbal medicine, nursing, and midwifery, skills that were useful to her owners and that would later enable her to earn her living.

Bidly became the property of Robert Marion Smith and his wife, Rebecca Crosby Smith, owners of a plantation in Mississippi. The Smiths had six children, whose births Bidly probably attended, and Rebecca Crosby Smith often needed nursing care, which Bidly later told relatives and friends she provided.⁹ It is likely Bidly was also required to do heavier work in the cotton fields and with livestock. In addition, Bidly added to her master's wealth by bearing children who became slaves. Bidly's first, Ellen, was born October 15, 1838, when Bidly was twenty; her second, Ann, about six years later; and her third, Harriet, four years later.¹⁰

By 1847, Robert M. Smith, who had become a convert to the Mormon religion, wanted to migrate to the Utah territory to help to build up the Kingdom of the Saints in Salt Lake City.¹¹ On March 10, 1848, Smith joined a party of Mississippi Mormons who gathered with ox teams in Fulton, in the northeastern part of the state, and headed north and west to the Salt Lake Basin, traveling by wagon and riverboat. Smith's party included nine white persons and ten slaves, in three wagons, plus two yoke of oxen, eight mules, seven milch cows, and one horse. There were fifty-six whites and thirty-four slaves in the larger Mississippi party, according

to John Brown, a Mormon guide whose autobiography detailed the arduous trip.¹² In rain, hurricane, and drought, Brown led the pioneers north through Lexington and Paris, Tennessee, and Fort Mayfield and Paducah, Kentucky. Catching the National Road, they journeyed west to St. Louis, Warrenton, Keytesville, and Plattsburgh, Missouri, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Grand Island, Nebraska, and then on to Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, and finally Deseret (Salt Lake), where they arrived in late November 1847. The party rushed to complete log shelters, so they could move into them as December snows began to fall.

On this journey, Bidly was in charge of herding the livestock behind the wagons. With a ten-year-old daughter, a four-year-old daughter, and a baby daughter on the breast, she walked these thousands of miles in about seven months. Her family demands and the demands of the livestock may have been supplemented by calls for her services as a midwife. Another slave in Smith's household, a woman named Hannah, who was four years younger than Bidly, was pregnant about the time the journey took place.¹³ Three white women in Bidly's party also gave birth to sons on the journey, according to John Brown, and there may have been other births of daughters, as well as births to the slaves.

Brown's accounts of the deliveries convey the atmosphere a competent midwife would have struggled against: "[The boat] . . . ran aground and stuck fast and the river was falling . . . they finally threw some 12 of the animals overboard, after which the boat floated . . . John Bankhead's wife [gave] . . . birth to a fine son on board the boat." Or ". . . we reached the Black Hills, where we found little or no feed, and our cattle began to die. Within a few miles of the La Prele River my ox-wagon broke down, where it remained all night. Next morning, August 29th, my wife gave birth to a fine son. . . ." ¹⁴ Whether or not Bidly was in attendance as a midwife at these births on this journey, her trip surely ranks as one of the most demanding a pioneer could be asked to make, since she was a single parent, a nursing mother, and a slave expected to work for her keep and to walk behind the animals while others rode.

Between 1848 and 1851, Smith's household, including his slaves, settled in Utah in the Salt Lake Basin.¹⁵ The Mormons were generally outspoken in their belief in the inferiority of Blacks and women. Bidly and Hannah were not recog-

nized as independent family heads, but remained with Smith's household as slaves. Given the Mormon practice of polygamy, Black women's status as slaves or indentured servants of a Southern master not only remained low, but there was also a religious justification for any sexual exploitation a master wished to enforce.¹⁶

Fortunately for Biddy and her family, the Salt Lake Basin was not Smith's final stopping place. Three years after their arrival, a Mormon wagon train of 150 wagons left Utah to establish a new outpost in California at San Bernardino. This settlement was intended to become a way station for Mormons coming by ship around the Horn to San Pedro, and then journeying overland to Salt Lake.¹⁷ Robert Smith joined the San Bernardino pioneers, along with his slaves, who now included Biddy, Hannah, and their eight children.¹⁸ Again Biddy herded livestock behind the wagons.

FREEDOM

During their time in the San Bernardino area, Biddy got to know not only Mormons but also a number of free Blacks who had settled there after California was admitted to the Union as a free state in 1850. Among them were Elizabeth Flake Rowan and her husband, Charles H. Rowan, who were also in the caravan from Salt Lake arriving in June 1851.¹⁹ The status of the Black slaves in Smith's household—by 1855, Hannah and Biddy, their ten children, and one grandchild of Hannah's—must have been discussed with the free Blacks, since the slaves' legal position was much strengthened by California's statehood. After the Mexican War, a California constitution was drafted in 1849, forbidding slavery. The next two years passed with endless bickering in Congress between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions until California was admitted to the Union as a free state in September, 1850. Congress' passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in the same year was a concession to Southern slaveowners. Thus, the years when Biddy trekked across the continent, 1848 to 1851, were years of transition from Mexican rule, to military rule, and to statehood in California, with all three types of law administered simultaneously and in confusion. Courts were generally more sympathetic to whites than people of color, and to slaveholders rather than slaves.²⁰

Although California's state constitution prohibited slavery after September 1850, slave owners

who had arrived before that date were permitted to keep their slaves as indentured servants. Other slaveowners simply remained unchallenged, or won their cases in court.²¹ Because the Fugitive Slave Act made it easy for masters to recapture escaped slaves, bounty hunters seeking runaway slaves advertised openly in local papers such as the Los Angeles *Star* through the 1850s. Former slaves who had been freed by their masters were also subject to harassment. According to the *Alta California* of April 20, 1853, "a person by the name of Brown attempted to have a Negro girl arrested in our town a few days since as a fugitive slave, but was taken all a-back by the girl's lawyer, F.W. Thomas, producing her Freedom Papers. Brown's father set the girl at liberty in 1851, and it is thought by many that the son knew the fact, and thought to catch the girl without her Freedom Papers but fortunately for her he did not."²²

Despite the legal and administrative confusion, sentiment in California against slavery grew after 1850. Robert Smith became concerned, and late in 1855, he began to make preparations to depart for Texas, a slave state, taking Biddy and the rest of her family. Hannah, large with child, was about to deliver her eighth baby. Most of the members of Smith's household camped in a canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains, readying themselves for the trip, waiting until Hannah was ready to travel. Possibly Smith was hiding from those who wished to stop him.

Two free Black men of Los Angeles, Charles Owens and Manuel Pepper, wanted to prevent Smith's departure, because Charles was in love with Biddy's seventeen-year-old daughter Ellen, and Manuel was in love with Hannah's seventeen-year-old daughter Ann.²³ Biddy Mason had confided to Charles Owens that she was extremely worried about Smith's plans to take them to Texas, and Charles told his father, a formidable character who decided to intervene. Bob Owens, a well-known Black citizen of Los Angeles, was a trader in horses and mules who had crossed from Texas by ox team in 1850. He ran a flourishing corral on San Pedro Street, where he and the ten *vaqueros* who worked for him broke wild animals supplied by ranchos near San Diego and sold them to new settlers. (According to his grandson, "Many a mule half-broken to the saddle returned to the ranch after dumping its rider," perhaps to be resold to the next newcomer disembarking from the San Francisco steamer, *Orizaba*, looking for a place to buy an

outfit.)²⁴ Bob Owens was also the owner of real estate, and in him Bidy found a respected ally, a free Black businessman who was also a cowboy not afraid of a good fight. Another free Black who showed her concern was Elizabeth Flake Rowan of San Bernardino.

Between them, Robert Owens and Elizabeth Rowan were able to get the law in both Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County interested in the case. One or two sheriffs, plus Robert Owens and his *vaqueros*, swooped down on the camp in the mountains and challenged Smith's right to take his slaves out of California. The challenge took the form of a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus* by Bidy and her family. Most of the members of Bidy's family were put "under charge of the Sheriff of this county for their protection" in Los Angeles.²⁵

Bidy and her family were stationed at the County Jail, under the eye of "Turnkey" Frank Carpenter, who later gave evidence at the trial of their fear of their master.²⁶ Benjamin Hayes, Judge of the District Court of the First Judicial District, State of California, County of Los Angeles, presided over the case from January 19 to January 21, 1856, and summarized the issues in his disposition of the case, quoted in an article for the *Los Angeles Star*: "the said Robert Smith is persuading and enticing and seducing said persons of color to go out of the State of California."²⁷ He noted that none of the slaves could read or write, and all were ignorant of the differences between the laws of California and of Texas. While slaves in California were free by law, it was impossible to be free and Black in Texas, since Texas law forbade the importation of free Blacks into the state, and Texans would have regarded them as slaves.²⁸

The petitioners stated that they were free. The defendant, Robert Smith, represented in court by Alonzo Thomas, argued that the petitioners were members of his family, that they "left Mississippi with their own consent, rather than remain there, and he has supported them ever since, subjecting them to no greater control than his own children, and not holding them as slaves; it is his intention to remove to Texas and take them with him." Furthermore, he argued that "Hannah and her children are well disposed to remain with him, and the petition was filed without their knowledge and consent." He added, "It is understood, between said Smith and said persons that they will return to said State of Texas with him voluntarily, as a portion of his family."²⁹

Judge Hayes knew that the law of California was perfectly clear: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crimes, shall ever be tolerated in this State."³⁰ Hayes noted, "Although, then there ought to be no difficulty in the matter in hand, it is not to be disguised that, in some vague manner, a sort of right is claimed over, at least, a portion of these petitioners. It is styled a guardianship, likened to 'patriarchal' rule, and by a few strenuously insisted upon:—so much so, as to incommode and obstruct a public officer in the discharge of his duty."³¹ This refers to Smith's claims to legal guardianship, as well as the attempts of one Hartwell Cottrell, a member of Smith's party, perhaps his overseer, to get two of the Black children to go to Texas during the court proceedings. Described as "unscrupulous" by the judge, who saw him as a kidnapper, Cottrell took off for Texas one step ahead of the law.³²

There was a hint of Mormonism in Smith's advocacy of patriarchal guardianship, and possibly a use of the concept of plural wives from Utah to justify Smith's position. The *Los Angeles Star* described Hannah as Bidy's sister and also as ". . . a woman nearly white, whose children are all nearly so, one of whose daughters (of eight years) cannot easily be distinguished from the white race."³³ In addition to being Smith's slaves, some of Hannah's children may indeed have been his own offspring, or perhaps Cottrell's. The judge observed: ". . . the said Robert Smith from his past relation to them as members of his family does possess and exercise over them an undue influence in respect to the matter of their said removal insofar that they have been in duress and not in possession and exercise of their free will so as to give a binding consent to any engagement or arrangement with him."³⁴

To understand Bidy's courage in going to court against her master, it is first necessary to think of her lifetime in Mississippi, her complete immersion in the culture of the southern plantation, where physical torments such as whipping and being hosed down in brine would have been common punishment for both male and female slaves' minor infractions. Even pregnant slaves were routinely whipped, but in special pits to protect the fetus.³⁵ Any slave's loved ones could be put on the block—husband, wife, child—and sold, never to be seen again. In this context, all slaves' courage in risking a public test of white men's justice is striking. It is also important to note that after 1850, California law prohibited Blacks, Mulattoes, and

Indians from testifying against white persons in either criminal or civil cases. They were present in court as petitioners, but had to remain silent.³⁶

Biddy served as head of the extended family throughout the trial. Although she could not speak in court, when questioned by the Judge in his private chambers, with Abel Stearns and Dr. J.B. Winston present as two disinterested "gentlemen witnesses," she said, "I have always done what I have been told to do; I always feared this trip to Texas, since I first heard of it. Mr. Smith told me I would be just as free in Texas as here." Hannah's daughter Ann, questioned apart from Biddy, also asked the judge, "Will I be as free in Texas as here?" a question the legal experts found a poignant response to Smith's bluster that all would travel willingly.³⁷ "No man of any experience in life will believe that it was ever true, or ever intended to be realized—this pleasant prospect of freedom in Texas," the judge concluded. He observed that Smith had only "\$500 and an outfit," that he had "his own white family to take care of," and seemed to have no reason to transport fourteen slaves so far—unless he intended to sell them.³⁸

The biggest mistake Smith and his lawyer made was bribing the lawyer for Biddy and the other petitioners, offering him \$100 to quit the case on the second morning of the trial without telling his clients. Possibly threats were uttered as well. The lawyer (unnamed in the *Star* article) slipped a note to Judge Hayes and to the opposing counsel saying he was off the case. Biddy and the children, abandoned in the courtroom without any idea of what was going on, aroused the sympathy of the judge: "I was pained by an occurrence not to be passed by unnoticed. There was a motion to dismiss the proceedings, based on a note from the petitioners' attorney to the attorney on the opposite side, in these words: 'I, as attorney for the petitioners, being no longer authorized to prosecute the writ, and being discharged by the same and the partner who are responsible to me, decline further to prosecute the matter.'"³⁹ The judge then subpoenaed and examined the attorney, and denounced his lack of legal propriety.

Accounts of the trial suggest that Smith probably threatened both Biddy and Hannah, as well as their lawyer. Judge Hayes tried to establish whether or not any of the slaves consented to Smith's wish to go to Texas. Ultimately he decided that the "speaking silence of the petitioners" must be listened to, and that Hannah, in particular, had probably been the subject of threats. "Nothing else—except

force—can account rationally for a favorable disposition in Hannah, if she has had any."⁴⁰ The Judge decided ". . . as to the immediate cause of her hesitance—not her silence (for her very hesitation spoke a volume)—she is entitled to be listened to when, breathing freer, she declares she never wished to leave, and prays for protection."⁴¹ The judge saw Biddy as the leader of the group and noted: "It is remarkable that the defendant does not pretend that Biddy and her three children are 'well-disposed' to remain with him."⁴² Hayes believed that Biddy had Hannah's consent from the beginning in seeking freedom for the whole group. Ultimately the Judge decided that "all of the said persons of color are entitled to their freedom and are free forever."⁴³

Court costs were to be paid by Robert Smith, who, on Monday, January 21, 1856, failed to appear, and this concluded the legal side of the proceedings. Smith could have appealed this local verdict to the California Supreme Court, where it is likely he would have won the support of conservative justices, such as Hugh C. Murray. However, presumably because of his bribery of the opposing council, and Cottrell's attempted kidnapping of the children, Smith left town. Biddy Mason and her family were delivered from slavery, unlike other slaves in this decade who struggled with the courts and lost.

This escape was based on Judge Hayes' straightforward interpretation of the California constitution in 1856, a year before the U.S. Supreme Court would have invalidated Biddy's right to protest in court at all. In 1857, in the Dred Scott decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled a slave was not a person, but property, and a slave's residence in free territory did not make that slave free.⁴⁴ So Biddy Mason and her thirteen family members won a timely escape from bondage. At the end of their trial, what remained was, in the words of Judge Hayes, for the "petitioners to become settled and go to work for themselves—in peace and without fear."⁴⁵

"IN DEMAND AS A MIDWIFE"

Once her freedom was secure, Biddy accepted Robert Owens' invitation to remain in Los Angeles and stay with his family. She became known as Biddy Mason—a name which Barbara Jackson has suggested may have been chosen in homage to the trailfinder, Amasa Mason Lyman, who had led the Mormon wagons to Deseret and to San



Women of the Owens and Mason families on the porch of the Owens house, Los Angeles, early 1870's. Courtesy UCLA Special Collections.

Bernardino.⁴⁶ A friend of Owens, Dr. John Strother Griffin, offered her employment as a midwife and nurse. Soon Biddy Mason earned a reputation as a medical practitioner of outstanding skills. Griffin's office as a physician and surgeon was located on Main Street, and he was also appointed as official doctor for the County Jail and County Hospital in 1859.⁴⁷ Working for Griffin, Biddy Mason tended the sick in both those places. The County Jail would have had a special meaning for her as the place where she was held for her own protection during the trial, a place where she and Hannah prayed for their deliverance. Revisiting the jail again and again, she distinguished herself among the prisoners as a kindly woman. She became known for her courage after nursing many through a smallpox epidemic in the early 1860s, at the risk of her own life.⁴⁸

Most important, she became famous as a midwife. Between 1856 and 1891 she delivered hundreds of babies, children of Los Angeles' leading

families as well as children of the impoverished. Ludwig Salvator, in *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies*, recalled that "she was in demand as a midwife and as such brought into the world many of the children of the early pioneer families."⁴⁹ Her work would have taken her into all kinds of dwellings in Los Angeles, from the spacious old adobes of the wealthy *californios* near the Plaza, to the smaller, painted wooden structures of more recent Anglo immigrants, and the crowded shacks of Native American laborers in the wineries and citrus groves.

Biddy Mason's medical knowledge was no doubt the result of training by older midwives and slave doctors on the plantation where she grew up. While some planters did not provide medical care for their slaves, the extensive medical knowledge other planters encouraged slave doctors to acquire is documented by medical historian Martia Graham Goodson, who quotes a Mississippi planter in 1851: "I have a large and comfortable hospital provided

for my negroes when they are sick; to this is attached a nurse's room, and when a negro complains of being too unwell to work, he is at once sent to the hospital and put under the charge of a very experienced and careful negro woman, who administers the medicine and attends to his diet and where they remain until they are able to work again."⁵⁰

Many slave doctors knew African, Caribbean, and American southern herbal medicines. Goodson quotes two slave doctors, Easter Wells and Liza Smith, who explained that they always made their own medicines, using herbs and roots, and that when a slave got sick, the master would send out for the plants, and one of the slaves who knew how to cook and mix them for medicinal uses would give the doses.⁵¹ For example, they used Jerusalem oak for worms, asafetida for asthma and whooping cough, cotton root tea as an abortifacient, snake-root and boneset for malaria, and many other substances that remain in use as vegetable drugs around the world.⁵² As Goodson shows, white doctors interested in botany, such as Francis Porcher of South Carolina, born in 1824, based their own medical careers on the publication of herbal knowledge first taught them by African slaves.⁵³

In addition to preparing herbal medicines and administering them, Goodson notes, "Slave women routinely cared for the obstetrics cases that were a part of slave life."⁵⁴ Slave midwives usually learned through direct experience assisting an older midwife. Using minimal intervention during labor and delivery, midwives let nature take its course, sometimes with the aid of herbs, exercise, and perineal massage, sometimes incorporating birth practices based on African traditions.⁵⁵ An experienced midwife skilled at "catching" babies would be much in demand on a plantation. And, as the example of Bidy Mason demonstrates, she could easily translate these skills to practice for pay in a town, where she might charge less than half a doctor's fee and provide services not offered by physicians. In addition to attending the mother and newborn, a midwife helped the entire household by cleaning, preparing meals, and looking after other children in the family for a number of days after the delivery.⁵⁶ It is difficult to say how much Bidy Mason earned. One source reports that Dr. Griffin paid Mason \$2.50 per day for her work as a midwife, a good sum in that era, when many midwives might have asked that amount for an entire case and Black women in general commanded considerably lower wages.⁵⁷ It is more likely that Bidy Mason was

paid sometimes in cash and sometimes in kind (bread, vegetables, and chickens were common), and was sometimes left without any financial compensation.⁵⁸

As late as 1910, at least half of all the births in the United States were assisted by midwives. When childbirth came increasingly under the domain of the medical profession, white, educated writers often criticized midwives as ignorant and superstitious. Yet recent medical historians have come to respect the "outstanding maternal and infant mortality/morbidity records" of experienced granny midwives, records better than those of many medically-trained obstetricians.⁵⁹ Today's obstetrics once again emphasizes the nineteenth-century midwives' reliance on natural childbirth, with diet, exercise, and non-intervention. In the nineteenth century, certainly some midwives continued African or Caribbean rituals to celebrate a birth, such as painting a shutter blue on the outside of a house; scattering mustard seed or hanging a sieve over the door; driving three new nails into the threshold; nailing a new board up over the door; laying a new sill; or taking down a door and turning it around, to symbolize a new order.⁶⁰ Such rituals would not have hindered their medical success, but might have attracted scorn from whites who did not share their special meanings.

Since Bidy Mason had a busy practice as a midwife in Los Angeles, among families of all classes, it seems certain she had a good record of medical success with her patients. As a woman of medical knowledge, she would have earned the title "Grandma" or "Aunt" for her skills. She would have gone to tend her cases, walking through the dusty, unpaved streets of Los Angeles in the 1850s, carrying a midwife's characteristic large black bag. As one woman remembered her grandmother in Texas, an ex-slave midwife in the 1860s: "Every white man or black man born in that county that's my age, my grandma *caught him*. They called it *catch em* Grandma kept . . . a black bag, just like a doctor did, she kept it. And we wasn't allowed to touch it. We couldn't even look at it too hard, cause everything she needed was there. She had her scissors and her thread that she cut the baby's cord, and she had it right there Grandma had big number eight white spools of thread, and she kept it in this bag She caught everybody in that country, white or black. You better know she did. She had a name for herself. She was good and she was recognized."⁶¹ While this is a contempo-



Black midwives with their medical bags, early 1930's, Penn School, Frogmore, South Carolina. *Courtesy Waring Historical Library of the Medical University of South Carolina.*

rary of Bidly Mason's in another state, the description of the level of skill fits Bidly as well.

In her practice as a successful midwife and nurse, Bidly Mason found a way to enter Los Angeles' labor market with skills developed on a plantation in the rural South, skills with African antecedents. Mason may have sharpened her medical knowledge when she lived among the Mormons, or shared her own skills, because Mormon women in Utah were often encouraged to learn midwifery in order to minister to Native Americans, as well as their own women.⁶² In Los Angeles, Mason may have learned from Mexican-American *curanderas* and Native American herbalists.⁶³ Many women of different cultures found midwifery, herbal medicine, and nursing salable skills in both rural and urban settings throughout the nineteenth century. Bidly Mason was typical of such women healers, who were skilled, but without formal training. Not until 1918 did Los Angeles County Hospital admit Black women to nurses' training, and de Graaf notes this was "in the face of a threatened strike by white nurses."⁶⁴

As a single mother, Mason was not unusual in Los Angeles, since at the time she arrived in the 1850s, many Mexican-American families had been disrupted by the war, and female-headed households were common.⁶⁵ However, as a Black woman with three daughters, Mason was a rarity in California. In 1850, of the 962 Blacks noted in the Census, only 90 were females. In 1860 in Los Angeles, there were 45 Black males and 21 females, and as late as 1900, de Graaf reports that in Los Angeles, single Black women were still "so scarce that Black men 'inspected' incoming trains for possible mates."⁶⁶

Mason's skills raised her a bit above the economic level of most wage-earning Los Angeles Black women, who were more likely to be domestic servants or boarding-house keepers, and made her more equal to Black men, who were likely to be small farmers, livery stable keepers, blacksmiths, or barbers, such as the men of the Owens family who befriended her, or Peter Biggs, a Los Angeles barber. Bidly Mason's occupation was one with more predictable demand than the Black men's

trades; they might have to turn to less skilled work if their small businesses failed, a problem she never faced. Bidly Mason's success as a wage-earner and her prudent way of life meant that ultimately her family was able to gain a stake in Los Angeles as urban landowners.

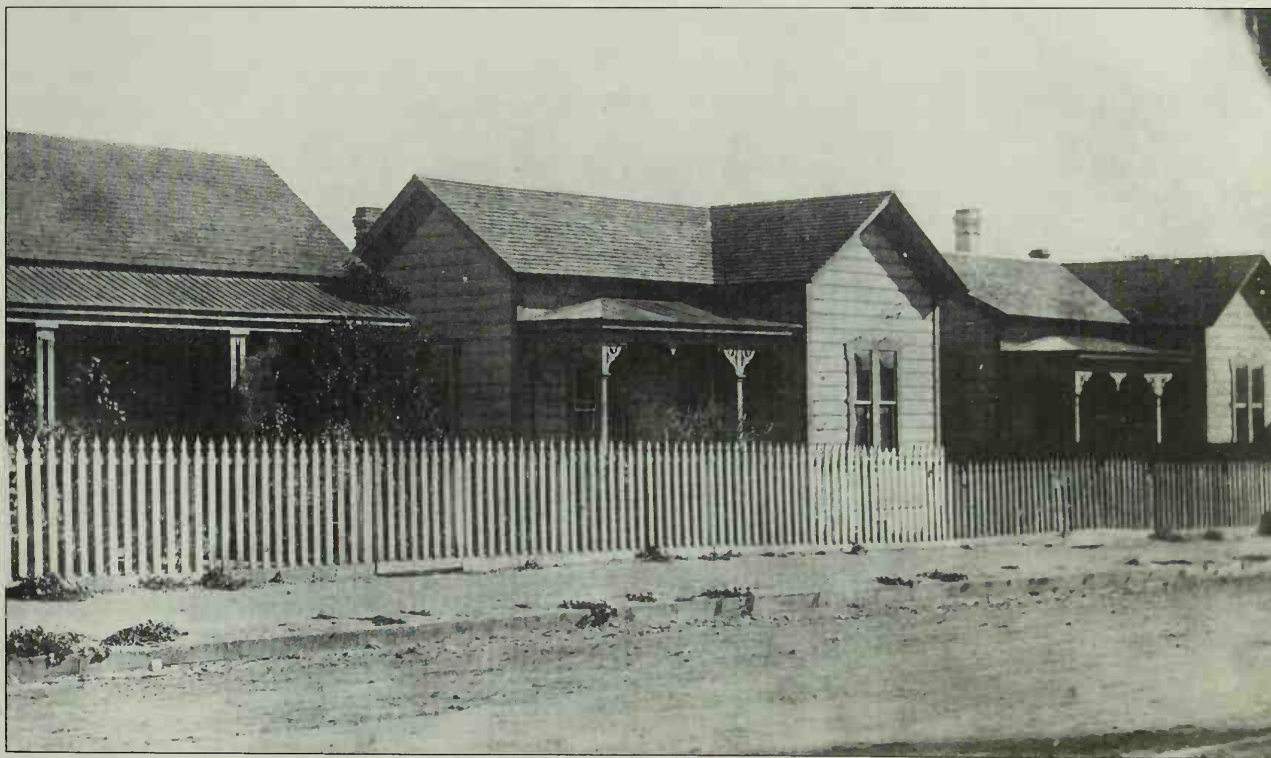
THE HOMESTEAD

After ten years of work as a midwife, Bidly Mason had saved \$250 to purchase land and establish a homestead for herself and her family. One of the first Black women to own property in her own right in Los Angeles, she selected a site a bit out of town on Spring Street. Her homestead was a place to unite her family and nurture her extended family, a place to earn some income from additional activities as the town grew into a city. The history of her property reveals how one landowner dealt with urban development.

Immediately after the court proceedings in 1856, Robert Owens, with his wife Winnie and his children Charles, Sarah Jane, and Martha, invited

Bidly Mason and her daughters to live with them temporarily.⁶⁷ The strong connections between these two families, visualized in the photograph of the Mason and Owens women on the front porch, culminated in the marriage of Charles and Ellen soon after the trial, and the birth of Bidly's grandsons, Robert Curry Owens and Henry L. Owens.⁶⁸ For much of their lives, these four lived close to Bidly, even though the two boys and their mother moved to Oakland to receive some years of schooling unavailable to them in Los Angeles.⁶⁹ Hannah's daughter Ann also married her sweetheart, Manuel Pepper, and lived nearby for many years. A photograph from the 1870s shows the modest wooden cottage Bidly Mason lived in as a renter, very close to the Owens' house.⁷⁰

When Bidly Mason arrived in Los Angeles in 1856, it was a small town. Before the land speculators started arriving by the trainload, a few local people were already acquiring land, among them Robert Owens and Dr. Griffin. Both of them would have been familiar with the Ord survey of 1849, done by Lieutenant Edward Ord, a map showing



Residence of Bidly Mason, First Street below Main, near the Owens home, early 1870's. *Courtesy UCLA Special Collections.*



Detail of “City of Los Angeles,” lithograph by Britton and Rey, 1871, showing the block where Bidley Mason’s homestead was located, with three small wooden houses. Mason’s land cut through the center of the block. The area has the feel of an out-of-town district with gardens and unpaved streets. *Courtesy UCLA Special Collections.*

the vineyards and groves of Los Angeles giving way to a new commercial grid. Perhaps they advised Bidley to look over the lots for sale and put her savings in land. Owens, who began his land purchases in 1854, at one point owned an entire block in the Ord survey (between Olive, Charity, Sixth, and Seventh Streets), as well as his livery stable on Main Street extending to Los Angeles Street (called the “Government Corral” during the Civil War because of his Federal contracts) and several other tracts. Griffin took enough time off from doctoring (or delegating patients to Bidley) to open a tract in East Los Angeles and to join Solomon Lazard and Prudent Beaudry in the water business. They formed the Los Angeles City Water Company, negotiated a thirty-year lease to sell water to the city in 1868, built the water system, and ultimately resold it (and the services of the engineer, William Mulholland) back to the city for \$2 million.⁷¹

Bidley Mason, unlike Owens and Griffin, was not a speculator. She was a forty-eight-year-old working woman who wanted a home for her family,

and had to save for ten years to get it. She purchased lots 3 and 8 in Block 7 of the Ord Survey on November 28, 1866, from William M. Buffum and James F. Burns for \$250.⁷² Her property ran between Spring Street and Fort Street (later Broadway) in the block between Third and Fourth Streets. According to Delilah Beasley, Bidley Mason “told her children that this was always to remain as their homestead, and it mattered not what their circumstances, they were always to retain this homestead.”⁷³ Bidley Mason’s use of this property shows that the way a Black, employed woman defined “homestead”—as an urban, economic base for her family’s activities—contrasts with the more common rural meaning—a small owner-inhabited farm.

The land she bought in 1866 was considered to be a bit out of town, in an area of unpaved streets, interspersed with vineyards, groves, and vegetable gardens. Charles Pierce’s panoramic photo of 1869 (not shown here) shows Spring Street and Broadway as wide, dusty streets with a collection of small one- and two-story buildings, large yards, and open spaces. Bidley’s piece was described as

having "a ditch of water" (irrigation from the *zanjas*) and a "willow fence." A midwife might be expected to have planted a garden of medicinal herbs as well. The Germain Seed and Plant Company's view of Los Angeles in 1872 (not shown here) shows the city as a greener and more blossoming place, with Bidley's block bearing several small wooden houses with peaked roofs. She may have erected a small wooden house or two here for rental income. It seems likely she held at least part of her land vacant while she saved more money to build a substantial commercial structure. City directories show that Bidley Mason lived in modest rental accommodations until eighteen years after her purchase, when she finally moved onto her own land.⁷⁴ By that time she was sixty-six, and the building could support her in her old age, as well as her descendants.

Before 1870 the streets of the town were mostly unpaved, "dirty and dusty during the dry summer months and muddy when the rains made rivers of the rutted streets."⁷⁵ One reporter noted that "little bare-legged urchins hire out as pilots through the mud on Alameda and Aliso Streets."⁷⁶ A sixteen-year-old boy on horseback rode around at dusk to light the city's gas lamps, which had replaced lanterns over the doors of private houses in 1870. The city could only afford one gas lamp per intersection, and staggered them on the northeast and southwest corners of alternate blocks.⁷⁷ Houses without numbers and some streets without names remained, but the first Los Angeles City and County directory of 1872 attempted to give exact addresses in a growing place.⁷⁸

By the 1880s, the built environment of Bidley's block was dense and growing denser, changing from residential to commercial uses, and from frame to brick buildings. By 1884 she had sold one part of her land for \$1,500 and had built an urban commercial building, with storerooms on the ground floor for rental and living space for her family above.⁷⁹ The building came to the sidewalk, brick-faced on the first floor, wood on the second.⁸⁰ She lived above the ground floor there, in a neighborhood of small businesses, including a nursery, bakeries, restaurants, furniture and carpet stores, offices, boarding houses, and grocery stores.⁸¹ It was an ethnically diverse area, similar to the ones she had lived in as a renter. By the late 1880s and early 1890s, the main financial district of Los Angeles was located on Spring, just south of her block, between Fourth and Seventh. Other land-

marks such as the Bradbury Building were located on Broadway between Third and Fourth, close to the back of her lot in the 1890s.

In 1885, Mason offered her grandsons the chance to establish a livery stable on her property, and in 1890, the venture having proved a success, she deeded them a part of her property, "in consideration of the sum of love and affection and ten dollars."⁸² For Robert, the livery stable was the backup to an already successful career in politics, with a sideline in real estate. For career guidance, he recalled, "My Grandmother (Aunt Bidley) as she was known by every citizen, proved my salvation. She told my father that he could not make a farmer or a blacksmith out of a boy who wanted to be a politician, and she was right."⁸³ Clearly she understood the direction Los Angeles was taking, and wanted her descendants to prosper in the bustling urban center.

Employed by various families around the growing city, Bidley Mason surely gained her insights about urban jobs from observing the struggles of many rural migrants to Los Angeles in the second half of the nineteenth century, not just members of the Black community. Often whole families of men, women, and children toiled to gain a foothold in the city: Native Americans in the vineyards; Chinese-Americans, Japanese-Americans, and Mexican-Americans in the groves and truck farms; Japanese-Americans in the flower fields.⁸⁴ Some brought agricultural and horticultural skills, but these skills were not usually well-paid ones. Those who prospered expanded their original skills into commercial, urban ventures like produce or flower markets. Others who were not able to earn enough to purchase land or to educate the next generation for more urban occupations remained low-paid agricultural workers, or left the city for more rural areas. This was not the legacy Bidley Mason wished for her children and grandchildren.

COMMUNITY BUILDER

Bidley Mason used her homestead as a place to nurture her family and to encourage their activities. She also created many other networks that centered on her home. Together with Charles Owens, she gathered a group of people to form the Los Angeles branch of the First African Methodist Episcopal Church, and at a meeting in her home in 1872, the church was officially organized. Mason was described by many as a woman whose com-



Los Angeles, Spring Street looking south from Third Street, 1900. Bidy Mason's building is at lower right center, two stories high, on this side of "Niles Pease, Furniture . . . Carpets" sign. This is the same block pictured in "City of Los Angeles," lithograph, 1871, less than three decades later. *Courtesy UCLA Special Collections.*

mon sense was as strong as her religious faith, and one historian has noted that from her own pocket she paid the taxes for the church property, as well as the calling for the minister, the Reverend Jesse Hamilton. Nevertheless, she continued to attend the largely white Fort Street M.E. Church, across the street from her homestead.⁸⁵

In addition to her homestead Bidy Mason did purchase for \$375 four lots in the block bounded by Olive and Charity Streets. This may have been the same block owned earlier by Robert Owens, since she acquired this land from Charles Owens and Martha Hall.⁸⁶ On April 7, 1884, she sold one of these lots (lot 8) for \$2,800, a sum that probably enabled her to increase her work as a philanthropist, since about that time she gave orders to a small grocery in her own neighborhood to open accounts for any needy families made homeless by seasonal floods.⁸⁷

Because she became known as a benefactor of the poor, "a frequent visitor to the jail," and a resource for settlers of all races, Bidy Mason was

approached by many who wanted help: "Her home at No. 331 South Spring Street in later years became a refuge for stranded and needy settlers. As she grew more feeble it became necessary for her grandson to stand at the gate each morning and turn away the line which had formed awaiting her assistance." When she died on January 15, 1891, many in Los Angeles mourned her. After a service at the Fort Street M.E. Church,⁸⁸ she was buried without much fuss or expense in Evergreen Cemetery, in Boyle Heights. In 1988 the First African Methodist Episcopal church erected a headstone for her there as a founding member of the first Black church in the city, a church which is still one of its largest and most influential, especially in the area of social activism in the community.

THE OPEN HAND

The legacies of Bidy Mason were legal, material, social, and spiritual. She has been celebrated in the past in a superficial way as a "good woman,"

and a pious woman, and a slave who won her freedom. But she should be seen as a female head of a group of fourteen slaves, a woman whose intelligence and skill enabled her to provide for her family during arduous cross-country travels. She continued providing for them during her transition from rural life as a slave to independent survival in the city, at a time when women of color did not find it easy to enter the labor market and earn an adequate living.

Because of her special medical skills as a midwife and nurse, Bidy Mason succeeded. Some have characterized her medical career as an extension of her stereotyped image as a "good woman." Other historians such as de Graaf have classified her employment as a nurse as unskilled domestic service, but in fact the training and experience she received on plantations in the south, where female slave doctors and midwives were responsible for the health of many slave communities, were what made her exceptional in Los Angeles.⁸⁹ When white male residents and visitors passing through Los Angeles observed that Mason was "in demand" as a midwife, they were pointing to a person of high reputation for medical skill who was a founder of the professions of nursing and midwifery in the city, a medical worker who was also prepared to risk her own life nursing those with a contagious disease during an urban epidemic.

Mason's acquisition of a homestead and some other property have in the past been acclaimed because she was one of the first Black women to own property in Los Angeles, and the growth of the city made that property valuable to her heirs. But Mason's homestead was for her, first of all, a place for gathering her family, helping the poor, and for building social networks like the FAME Church. And second, it was a place for helping family members earn a living, with ventures like the livery stable. In this attitude about real estate, she differed from her descendants. Mason was a woman who lived very modestly. Her children, and especially her grandchildren, put much more distance between themselves and ordinary workers of every race in Los Angeles.

As Lonnie Bunch has demonstrated in *Black Angelenos*, in the years between 1890 and 1930, despite its growing white majority, Los Angeles had a small, prosperous Black elite, and the descendants of the Mason and Owens families were prominent in this group.⁹⁰ To the average Black family scraping by on wages from a job in domestic

service, a livery stable, or laying streetcar track, the grandchildren of Bidy Mason must have seemed people out of an impossible dream of ease and wealth, people wearing elaborate Victorian dresses with lace collars, or suits with stiff collars and ties, and looking much like the white members of the business elite. Her descendants did face increasing racial segregation in the city's public places and residential areas, yet they maintained a genteel life style. Their property was considerable—they consolidated Robert Owens' land purchases, beginning in the 1850s, with Bidy's holdings—and Robert C. Owens, who became a real estate developer and political figure, tried to maximize its potential.

Mason might have been uneasy, rather than excited, had she lived to read the Los Angeles *Times* coverage in 1905 of the plans of her grandson Robert C. Owens to build a six-story building on the Broadway frontage of her homestead for \$250,000. The *Times* described him as the "Richest Negro in Los Angeles," and reported that he and his mother had been feuding with his Aunt Harriet in and out of court for years.⁹¹ In 1905, Owens planned a memorial to his grandmother Bidy in his new building, an institute run on the lines of Tuskegee, but the memorial was never built. Perhaps this was just as well—the *Times* said the new institute would assist "Los Angeles negro young men," and never mentioned young women. Owens eventually suffered financial reverses in the Depression and came to a tragic end.⁹² Bidy Mason herself had a much more lasting idea about legacies, about giving and getting in the context of a growing town. Her great-granddaughter, Gladys Owens Smith, remembers a saying the family attributed to Bidy: "If you hold your hand closed, Gladys, nothing good can come in. The open hand is blessed, for it gives in abundance, even as it receives."⁹³

CHS

See notes beginning on page 147.

Dolores Hayden, author of Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975 and The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities, is Professor at the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA, and director of The Power of Place's public art project in downtown Los Angeles, "Bidy Mason's Place—A Passage in Time."

Ethnic Solidarity Turned To New Activism In A California Enclave: THE JAPANESE AMERICANS OF "DELTA"

by Richard K. Beardsley*

Edited, and with an introduction,
by Lane Ryo Hirabayashi

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The late Dr. Richard K. Beardsley was an eminent anthropologist who specialized in Japanese studies. It is not as widely known, however, that Dr. Beardsley—a professor at the University of Michigan—also engaged in Japanese American studies during the course of his distinguished career. In fact, from 1957 through the early 1970s, Beardsley conducted a long-term fieldwork project focusing on Japanese American communities in the Sacramento Delta.

Although no formal publications resulted from his efforts, Professor Beardsley presented a summary of his research at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association, November 20, 1970. This presentation, entitled "Japanese Solidarity Turned to New Activism in a California Enclave," was one of a series of papers in the two-part panel, "Symposium on the Overseas Japanese: Patterns of Emigration and Immigrant Adaptation." Unfortunately, Dr. Beardsley died in 1978 before he was able to publish his research. It seems likely that, had he lived, Beardsley would have written a formal monograph; the University of Michigan reports that over 1,000 pages of material in Beardsley's papers, donated to and held in the University's library, are devoted to his research project on Japanese Americans.

When a mimeographed copy of Beardsley's AAA presentation came to my attention in the early 1980s, I was impressed by the story of an anonymous Japanese American community he chose to call "Delta." Having studied Beardsley's other writings, I became curious about how the Japanese American research fit into his larger academic biography.

This brief introduction provides such a context for the following article. It also specifies why Beardsley's research remains of great interest today, almost twenty years after it was originally written.

RICHARD K. BEARDSLEY ANTHROPOLOGIST AND JAPAN SPECIALIST

Richard King Beardsley was born in Colorado in 1918 and was brought up in San Francisco. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1939 and, after a four-year stint in the armed services, returned to Berkeley to pursue doctoral studies there. Beardsley received his Ph.D. in 1947, after completing a dissertation on California archaeology.

Beardsley, however, had developed a strong interest in Japanese language and culture during the Second World War, in the context of his duties as a language officer for the U.S. military. Following up on this interest, he decided to accept an appointment in 1947 at the newly-formed Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan.

Subsequently, Beardsley made many visits to Japan. He conducted fieldwork on the Japanese island of Honshu that resulted in a major ethnographic study, *Village Japan* (1959), co-authored with two other specialists. Only six years later, Beardsley helped edit a classic textbook on Japanese society and culture, *Twelve Doors To Japan*, which was widely studied in both the United States and, in translation, in Japan. Throughout his life, Professor Beardsley remained an active and well-respected scholar.

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Richard K. Beardsley interviewing an informant during a research trip to Japan, 1974. Courtesy Grace Beardsley.

THE "DELTA" PROJECT: BACKGROUND

From his academic base in Michigan, Professor Beardsley began visiting the Sacramento area primarily because his brother, who was not well at the time, was living there. Beardsley stayed with his brother on a number of occasions and, in the process, found the Japanese American communities around Sacramento interesting and worthy of study.

The Japanese American phase of Beardsley's research began in 1957. He initiated his formal fieldwork in "Delta" with the assistance of two University of Michigan graduate students, both of whom were fluent in Japanese. They were the late Professor Hiroshi Wagatsuma, formerly at U.C.L.A., and Professor Harumi Befu, who has been a Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University for many years. Subsequently, this same team returned to the area in the summer, 1958, to carry out additional fieldwork.

Beardsley returned to the Sacramento Delta again in 1963 with another University of Michigan student, Miss Ellen Samuelson, who worked as his research assistant.

Thereafter, Beardsley made additional visits in 1968 and 1970, and continued to collect data even after giving his "Japanese Solidarity Turned to New Activism in a California Enclave" paper at the AAA meetings in 1970.

NOTE ON METHOD

Beardsley's brief description of the different research methods he and his students utilized in studying "Delta" merits further commentary. As Beardsley points out in his first footnote, data for the larger project were collected utilizing two complementary approaches: synchronic and diachronic.

It is also interesting to note that data collection, spanning more than a decade, involved a variety of kinds of researchers: Beardsley himself; a Japanese graduate student studying in the United States; a *kibei* [i.e., a Nisei, born in the United States, who was sent back to be socialized and educated in Japan before the Second World War]; as well as a Caucasian woman.

In short, this methodological approach ensured that Beardsley had access to a wide range of information, involving Japanese and English language interviews and materials, about a number of different Japanese American communities, gathered by both men and women. In this fashion, data from different assistants, collected over time, could be cross-checked, as well as checked against Beardsley's own observations, as a test of their validity and reliability.

These methodological dimensions to the "Delta" fieldwork seem less surprising when put in the following context: Beardsley was a world-renowned innovator of community

research techniques. His pioneering contributions in this regard are exemplified by the interdisciplinary team approach utilized in the Village Japan study. A range of similar techniques, then, were used in the "Delta" project.

ASSESSING BEARDSLEY'S RESEARCH TODAY

Beardsley's "Delta" fieldwork remains significant today for three primary reasons. First of all, the rural dimensions of the pre-1940s Japanese American experience have been neglected in the Asian American studies literature. By doing careful, sustained ethnographic research, Beardsley and his associates produced data that contribute a great deal to the understanding of the history of the Japanese American farming communities in the Sacramento Delta.

Second, this study is unusual because it presents information about the social organization of both the pre-war and the post-war "Delta" community. In this sense, it is one of only a handful of Japanese American community studies that provide a sense of the long-term effects of mass incarceration on community groups and on social solidarity in the resettlement period following the war.

Third, Beardsley's research documents that "Delta's" Japanese American residents were able to organize themselves in order to resist exploitative rent hikes during the 1960s.

Given the rural, conservative ambience of "Delta," it is somewhat surprising that a rent strike could have transpired in the post-World War Two Japanese American community. In fact, according to Beardsley, such an ambience was even more pronounced after the war, since those who returned to "Delta"

were the older, more traditional inhabitants, who were unable or unwilling to pursue other alternatives. How could such a group effectively organize, engage in, and eventually win a sustained strike against "Delta's" landowners?

Beardsley draws from the anthropological concept of "acculturation" in order to fashion a socio-cultural interpretation of the rent strike. His approach was quite innovative for its time because—rather than viewing Japanese Americans as the passive subjects of their cultural traditions—Beardsley correctly inferred that: ". . . people can change an old strategy for new and use it to force circumstances their way, to reshape the larger society to accommodate them better."

In summary, even though it is probable that Beardsley considered "Ethnic Solidarity Turned to New Activism in a California Enclave" to be a work in progress, it is definitely an important contribution to Japanese American studies. Since it is rich, both in terms of its historical perspective, as well as in its treatment of social issues, it certainly deserves a wider audience than it has previously had.

For these same reasons, and because it is an historical document in its own right, editorial changes in the original text have been kept to a minimum. In consultation with Mrs. Beardsley, and Professors Harumi Befu and Richard Orsi, small portions of text were removed or slightly altered, so as to correspond with the present state of scholarship.

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INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Central California, the old River Road connecting the San Francisco Bay area with Sacramento offers a leisurely, winding drive through the Delta region. The road finds its way around the sharp bends of the Sacramento River and its tributaries and sloughs, or occasionally cuts across farmland of pool-table flatness. This is rich farm country, made productive by levees that marshal the water into channels and sloughs, creating large islands of fertile black silt. Farmers established in self-contented, ingrown Delta society judge each other's standing by how many hundreds of acres each has owned for how many generations; even though most of these large farmers also have outside business interests, land is their prime gauge of worth. White society of the Delta is surprisingly wealthy. Some members are absentee owners who now live elsewhere in Central California, but many remain in modest homes inconspicuously set in the shelter of levees and directly manage properties ranging in value from a quarter million to several millions of dollars.

Where small towns and hamlets cluster in the shadow of a levee, one notes that the people of substance are equaled in number by a population of varied ethnic derivation: Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, and some Negro. What is known as Delta society excludes them. These polyglot people were first drawn to the Delta region to work as "stoop labor" on vegetable crops: asparagus, tomatoes, and others. Many have remained, even while crops have been shifting and machinery has been taking over. They man many of the small retail stores and service jobs in their hamlets and towns, but a good number find only casual and seasonal work at best. Their average income is very low. One-third of all families in three rural census districts up and down the Sacramento River in 1968 had income of less than \$4,000 per family, and half of all housing in these three tracts is rated unsound. By far the largest part of this poverty-level income and poor housing occurs among the non-white population, who make up about half of the total. Thus, by Office of Economic Opportunity estimate, two-thirds or more of them are near or

below the poverty level. Their segregated sections of the small Delta hamlets resemble marginalized rural enclaves.

This paper, examining the Japanese American community in one such Delta setting, considers the circumstances that have made their community what it is and analyzes their reactions to conditions over the years. It also considers the question of acculturation. I will suggest that what we call acculturation does not just happen to people, but, rather, their strategy for living and coping governs how they express features of their native culture or that of the host society.

In terms of the latter, it must also be recognized that a good many characteristics are imposed by the dominant Delta socioeconomic system into which the Delta Japanese are articulated through employment, property ownership, consumer needs, and social exchanges. These are situational or circumstantial characteristics (Liebow 1967, Chapter VII).^{*} Beyond this, however, the larger context has evoked responses which can be viewed as integral elements of a culturally transmitted design for living.

In short, not only does culture evolve as the situational pressures change (as is true of cultural traits, as well) but the converse also is true. That is, people can change an old strategy for new and use it to force circumstances their way, to reshape the larger society to accommodate them better. The following study of the Japanese American community in "Delta" provides an excellent example of this phenomenon.¹

**EDITOR'S NOTE:* In order to preserve the integrity of Beardsley's paper, his original system of documentation, which was in keeping with standard style for social scientists, has been retained for this article. These textual notes in parentheses refer to sources listed alphabetically at the beginning of the Notes section. Beardsley also included a few numbered citations elaborating on his methodology, which he apparently intended to be footnotes. These appear in this article as end notes in the Notes section. Likewise retained has been Beardsley's use of the word "Japanese" to refer collectively to immigrants from Japan, along with their descendants.

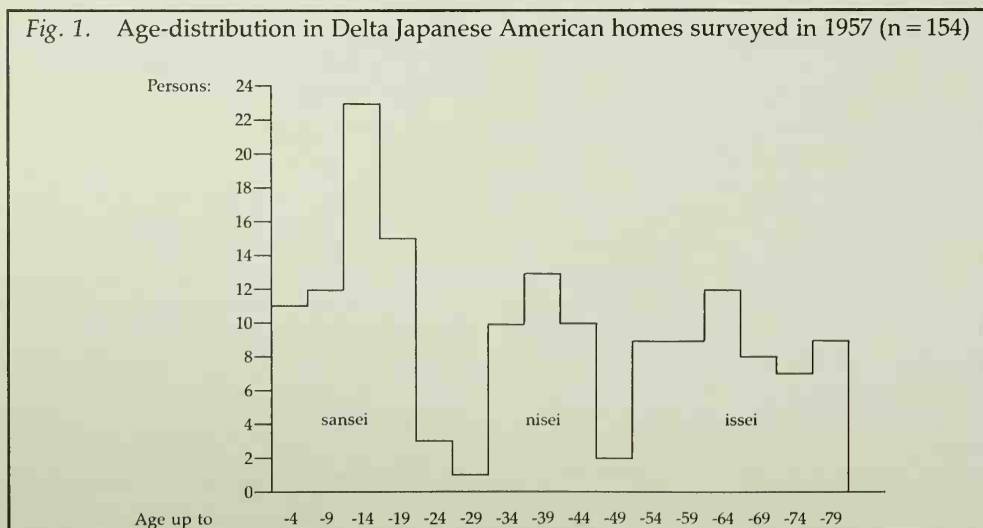
HISTORY AND POPULATION OF THE JAPANESE AMERICANS IN DELTA

The major flow of Japanese migrants to the Pacific Coast states occurred after 1900, was curtailed by the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, and was abruptly halted in 1924 after the passage of the Immigration Act excluding migrants from the Orient. Before 1920, women could filter through the immigration barrier as wives, by the expedient of performing a wedding in Japan with a proxy to represent the migrant bridegroom absent in America. Most *issei* (first generation) women entered the country married, many joining stranger-husbands in this fashion.

A consequence is that the three generations of Japanese in America have a sharply clustered age-structure with little overlap: *issei* are now almost all quite elderly, *nisei* (second generation) are usually middle aged, and *sansei* (third generation) are in college or lower schools. Moreover, the *issei* wife, married at long distance to a migrant whose unexpectedly long stay in America made him over-aged as a groom, is 11 years junior to her husband on the average. The families of Japanese who settled in the Delta community fit this demographic pattern. It is true that most of them briefly lived elsewhere in California before ending up in Delta, and true

that their generation ratios were distorted after World War II, but until the war they seem to have been demographically typical. Even now the usual generational structure is evident. (See Fig. 1)

The community of Delta has never incorporated as a governmental entity; it is under county administration, though it supports its own volunteer fire brigade and water, sewage, and street lighting facilities. It now [1970] numbers about 2,000 persons in homes on each side of the Sacramento River's main channel, clustered near a River Road drawbridge. Already in the nineteenth century a hotel of sorts on the east bank housed seasonal workers, and a community of "stoop labor" farm hands were permanent residents from about that time. Chinese and Filipino workers preceded the Japanese, settling to the north or upstream from the white homes and hotel. Japanese at first lived intermingled with other field hands, but, in the rebuilding that followed a conflagration near 1910, the community was segregated into ethnic blocs. Whites were downstream from the bridge, while the Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese "quarters," comprising homes and rooming houses, were grouped in order upstream. Small stores, service shops, restaurants, and bars developed among these ethnic clusters, as well as at the edge of the River Road along the crest of the levee. Across the

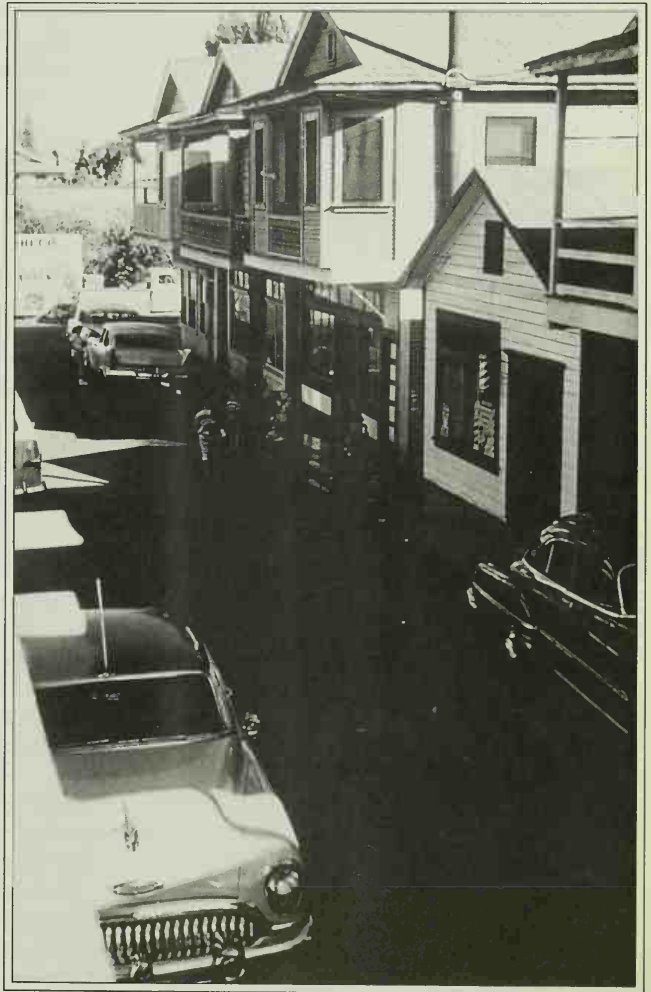


river, in the late 1930s, whites built a small subdivision of modern, solid homes of suburban type. Their social center of gravity is presently in that subdivision, though they come across the river to shop or go to the bank or post office.

The rise of this separate White subdivision across the river marks a miniature "flight to the suburbs" from the older section of town which, under pressure from events in the larger outside society, acquired a gamy, deteriorated flavor in the 1920s and 1930s. During the Prohibition period of the 1920s, river towns in the Delta region between urban Sacramento and the urban Bay Area were wide open for drinking, gambling, and prostitution. Liquor and money flowed freely, there being no policing except from county sheriff's departments. The "Jazz Era" was an era of boom times for Delta, which probably then reached a population peak.

Delta and other river towns housed a large number of semi-itinerant unmarried farm laborers of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese origin, who filled large rooming houses managed by their fellow countrymen. Many of them—not excepting Japanese—were insufficiently bilingual to escape from minimally paid on-and-off employment as "stoop labor." Bilingual foremen would gather up a gang, supervise their work and provide keep through a harvest, then receive a contract sum to be parceled out as wages. Men without families would come back to their barren rooming houses with a still unbridged gap between the cash jingling in their pocket and what they needed to escape homeward from this lonesome country. Not a few took refuge in living it up for a day or two, drinking or gambling in their rooms, or joining the horde of more affluent visitors from the cities in the dives next door. Thus they wound up leading a hand-to-mouth existence. In the same period others, to be sure, got a firmer economic footing, acquired brides from Japan, and commenced to rear families. But theirs was a less apparent contribution to the atmosphere of the community.

Then came the Depression of the 1930s, the first of two shattering events in American society at large that left Delta a much more sober and destitute place to live. The Depression drove a great



The *OMOTE*, or front part of town, as seen from a second-story window. This and all subsequent photos are from Richard K. Beardsley's field study in "Delta". Courtesy Grace Beardsley, © 1978.

many California farms into receivership. Farmhand work was scarce and at a vanishing wage level. A reshuffling of ethnic groups among river communities occurred, involving dynamics that are not entirely clear to us without wider information. Presumably using one or another survival strategy that dictated clumping into larger groups of fellow-countrymen, many Filipinos and Chinese left Delta. Some Chinese went to San Francisco's or Sacramento's Chinatown; others shifted a mere mile upstream to a hamlet that is now ninety percent Chinese. Delta's Japanese population became by far the most numerous non-white element, though in diminished numbers. Thus the old section of town had a partly deserted, boarded-up look, and its residents were last to feel any gains from a reviving economy. It was under these conditions that a white subdivision emerged across the river.

The second sobering event, after the outbreak of World War II, was the forced evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast, by presidential proclamation. From 1942 to 1945 all of Delta's Japanese and their children were huddled in concentration camps (Relocation Centers) in interior states of the West (Thomas 1952, Thomas and Nishimoto 1946). At the end of this ordeal, most Japanese returned to the Pacific Coast; but a good portion of the former residents of Delta never returned there. The Japanese community was reduced to about 100 families.

Reasons for choosing to return to Delta or go elsewhere are important to our understanding of the Japanese social system and its setting there. Above all, it is vital to know that none of the Asian field hands of Delta had ever been able to buy land, not even a small lot on which to build a home. Many nonetheless did build houses or a store or rooming house, owning the structure but paying rent on the land by verbal agreement with the owner, who could terminate it at any time. Owners had begun this arrangement to keep a labor force conveniently at hand but, being farmers, had never permitted themselves to forget that the cluster of homes on their parcel of four or five acres were occupying potential cropland.² All the built-up older section of Delta belongs to five owners or the estates formed at their deaths. This uncertain

arrangement about land lay like quicksand under any otherwise firm plan by a Japanese or his children for their future in Delta. Those who were ready to commit their future to America tended to move away, leaving behind them the people who were resistant to putting down roots in America and so could endure this instability in their lives with equanimity. Until war broke out, most *issei* were of the latter sort and, while their children were young, *issei* views predominated. So a prevalent, basic assumption of the Japanese community in Delta put a spotlight on the eventual return to Japan and suppressed the painful question whether cutting asparagus or picking fruit would ever bring enough wealth to fulfill this dream.

For those determined to be sojourners rather than permanent immigrants it was logical to hold on to Japanese contacts and to Japanese culture. Delta was widely known among Japanese in California for its single-mindedness in following Japanese ways and familiarizing U.S.-born children with Japanese language and customs, for its warm courting of the Japanese consul and its active support of the Japanese Association, which worked to keep expatriate Japanese in touch with Imperial Japan.

A sojourner frame of mind was by no means unique to Delta. Most Japanese *issei* elsewhere, however, were at least more ambivalent, especially as they saw their U.S.-born children approach maturity with a more or less strong identity as Americans. Their uncertainty ended as the war swept to its close with Japan's utter defeat. One might suppose that virulent anti-Japanese sentiments displayed all around them during the war, added to the indignity and financial damage they suffered in being incarcerated in camps, should have embittered both *issei* and *nisei* generations. But, whatever their resentment toward America and its bigotry, it was submerged or even washed out by their revulsion against Japan's naked militarism and the Japanese leaders' betrayal of their overseas citizens. Moreover, no good news came out of defeated Japan, in turmoil and depression and under American control; return to this homeland held no further attraction. So the former residents of Delta, much like other Japanese sojourning

in America, concluded that their only reasonable plan must be to spend the rest of their lives in this country.

Why, then, did anyone return to this little hamlet by the Sacramento River, which gave so little encouragement to permanence? The fact is that a good many did go elsewhere, including, for example, a numerous group of members of the Methodist Church, who, in converting to Christianity, had already taken a significant step away from strict Japanese tradition. Those who did return were moved, in some degree, by the desire to reclaim their homes, which were a tangible, if humble, stake in life in America. A very few had other possessions or funds that had survived attrition during their wartime absence. But, beyond material ties, great or small, Delta offered a refuge for those, especially *issei*, whose earlier fidelity to Japanese ways made them now feel quite unfit to cope, at middle age, with a more purely American environment. They sought solace and retreat for themselves where the stuff of everyday life—food, utensils, reading matter, neighborly contacts—would be as Japanese as possible. A good many also tended to mistrust their own ability in unfamiliar, non-Japanese settings and so were not eager to break away. Their children, though fully or nearly adult, felt obliged to support their parents. Thus the post-war situation selected for cultural conservatism in restoring the Japanese population of Delta. The postwar Japanese community totaled about 250 persons, down to a third or less of its size shortly before the war.

Though *nisei* upon marriage could set up separate residence if their parents were hale or had someone to look after them, our survey a dozen years later, in 1957, showed that households without any *issei* member comprised only 16% of all cases. The scarcity of new households and of persons in the *nisei* age range reflects a drifting away of younger persons, usually to work in Sacramento. Youngsters willing to settle for hard labor in the fields found such jobs disappearing under advancing mechanization. A new under-class of immigrant laborers who would accept very low wages—Mexicans, Filipinos, and Negroes—had moved into the area. Less than twelve young men were

able to work in a family grocery, cafe, or shoe store, or earn a living at such services as barber, beautician, cobbler, or TV repairman. Nearby canneries were principal employers until 1965, but wanted to hire only women at women's wages. A few *nisei* women found salaried work at the bank or post office.

In short, in the post-war period there has been a chronic work shortage for all Japanese in the near vicinity of Delta. Social security checks for the old and welfare money or aid for dependent children have provided a large proportion of total income. These outside funds are supplemented by considerable contributions from sons and daughters who live and work in Sacramento or who commute there—an hour each way. But all this barely relieves the general fact of impoverishment in a majority of homes.

This is not to say that there is no opportunity in the area, now or prospectively. On the contrary, though not a great deal of change took place between 1957 and 1968, by 1970 the shape of a new future for the Delta region was beginning to emerge. California's booming population and thousands of tourists are discovering recreation potential in the Delta. Water skiing, sports fishing, and house boating have drawn increasing numbers of outsiders every year from the early 1950s to the present time. A north-south freeway to be completed by 1972 and joined by a feeder route from the Delta drawbridge five minutes away will put Delta within twenty minutes' commuting distance of fast-growing Sacramento. This highway alone is bound to encourage suburban growth somewhere nearby, and it is apt to be drawn to this particular locality by development of a state park, with parking for 5,000 autos, which is planned on the north, reaching the outskirts of Delta. Appropriation for the park allegedly waits only on an upturn in the economy. Private plans have been announced to set up an old-time locomotive and train for a tourist excursion railroad down the levee from Sacramento as far as Delta; and a similar plan exists for a tourist ferryboat upriver from the Bay Area as far as Delta. Even if recreation and tourist business prospects remain a mirage for some time, Sacramento County is committed to developing its

southern limits to relieve the poverty there, and has just completed an extension County Building to supplement the post office and bank as principal public ornaments of Delta.

Needless to say, the well-to-do farmers of Delta society, with few exceptions, contemplate these prospective changes with considerable dismay. They have not yet sought to enlist ecologists on their side, or gathered in open opposition, for this is not their style in this small world they have had under their control. Until now they have worked with state officials through quiet influence rather than public outcry. But they foresee no benefit for themselves in the prospects ahead.

For the Japanese, the question is whether such situational changes can alter their own economic constraints. Most whites, while professing much affection for "our Japanese here," perceive them only as field hands who are now mostly superfluous. Whether Japanese (and other ethnic groups) stay or disappear from the scene seems irrelevant to the future of the Delta community as such. Presumably, should all Japanese vanish from Delta, some equivalent group will turn up, as has always happened, to run the local stores and services—or else shopping by auto will make up for their loss. Whites do not see in the local Japanese any individuals or groups that might help Delta cope positively with new situations.

To better evaluate this assessment, however, we must know something of their capacity for organization, which we have not yet discussed. Accordingly, we should now examine the internal organization and stance of the Delta Japanese to date.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND ORIENTATIONS

The Pre-War Era

In pre-war days when the Japanese adult community of Delta consisted of *issei*, long-term residents (in household units) were apt to hold membership in three sorts of formal organizations, and those who had a stake in business belonged to a fourth. The available organizations were the Japanese Association, the Buddhist Church of America or the Methodist Church, and a set of prefectural clubs or

associations (*kenjinkai*). Business people formed a Town-kai. All were designed for membership by Japanese alone. Our inquiry found no instance of cross-ties to the white quarter of Delta. No Japanese was ever invited or permitted into the white civic or social organizations.

The Japanese Association was non-local; it existed wherever Japanese in pre-war time were numerous in America, and maintained offices in major cities of the Pacific Coast. It was a voluntary-membership organization that linked Japanese citizens overseas to their homeland by providing liaison and expertise in reporting or dealing with birth, marriage, and death in the home community in Japan, or when an immigrant would send for relatives or a picture bride. Members could also get quasi-legal help in this country on business contracts, dealings with employers, business licensing, or intercession in brushes with the police. For immigrants with little capacity in English and limited schooling, this Association contributed greatly to their sense of security. Delta Japanese elected a board of directors for their local branch, which enthusiastically received rather frequent visits of the Japanese consul from San Francisco.

A Buddhist church was not built in Delta until the late 1920s, but the sponsoring sect, Jōdō Shinshū, may have been active earlier. In its organization and the character of its religious services, the church in America is vastly unlike Buddhist temples and sects in Japan but follows the forms of Christian churches. A congregation assembles on Sunday, sings hymns ("Buddha loves me, this I know") set to Protestant tunes, hears a sermon, recites sutras, and takes up a collection. Notwithstanding such accommodations, however, this institution has provided a major link to the mother country for immigrants. As one example in Delta, the church guards cremated remains of deceased members in a small fireproof building (of postwar construction) for eventual transfer back to a family cemetery in Japan. The associated lay organization of members, discussed below, has been vitally important to the integration and self-government of the community.

Together with members of the pre-war Methodist Church, the Buddhist Church congregation sup-

ported a Japanese language school for *nisei* children of the vicinity. Regular attendance ran high, even more so than in most such schools. Coupled with the fact that everyday vernacular in the community was mostly Japanese, *nisei* children of Delta tended to learn Japanese before they learned English, and, even though their everyday school work in the Delta Grammar School (segregated before the war but with White teachers) and outside contacts eventually tipped the balance in favor of English, the *nisei* of Delta are widely known for their familiarity with Japanese.

A Methodist church built also in the 1920s in Delta claimed a pre-war congregation about equal to that of the Buddhist church. The congregation paid a full-time minister and gathered for Sunday services and other church activities. Among Japanese in the United States, Methodism claims by far the largest number of converts to Christianity, so this congregation did not make Delta unusual among Japanese communities. Yet its existence in Delta suggests that the pre-war attitude was not vigorously resistant to decisions in favor of acculturation, even though Delta's daily life remained more than usually Japanese.

Perhaps the most personal commitment of many Delta *issei* was to their *kenjinkai*. Immigrants everywhere in the West tended to follow neighbors or to settle with people from the same home district in Japan; in Delta, the people from Aichi, Kumamoto, and Hiroshima prefectures were numerous, although Fukuoka, Yamaguchi, and Okayama were also represented. Each sufficiently numerous group of common origin banded together in a prefectural association, which often was leagued into a loose network of associations from the same prefecture elsewhere in Central California. The principal functions were local, however; fellow *kenjin* took the place of kinsmen in work-sharing or in crises over money, illness, and death. To some extent, these organizations can be considered divisive, for they perpetuated provincial prejudices against persons of other districts that were still rife in Japan, even here where varied accents were thrown together in common need. When a foreman would round up a work gang, his preference would be first for friends and then for persons of similar speech, and the

kenjinkai tended to make these identical.

Finally, for self-protection (especially in the rowdy 1920s era) in the absence of an outside police force, as well as for civic functions and the promotion of commerce, the Japanese who had opened businesses in the streets near the levee supported an organization they named (with typical bilingual impartiality) the Town-kai (Town Association). Founded in 1920, the Town-kai behaved much like a self-managed Japanese shopping-street association of merchants. It installed street lighting, instituted a periodic night watch, and organized a fire-brigade. To guard against fire and, incidentally, provide drinking water, it installed a pumphouse in the Japanese quarter. Its quasi-governmental functions were rounded out by its serving as the principal liaison between its members and the white community or the agencies of county, state, and federal government.

These were the pre-war organizations among the Japanese of Delta. Except for the Town-kai, they more or less duplicated organizational structure in any Japanese American community of importance, providing for needs in most areas of life. Differences from elsewhere were mostly those of nuance: apparently affiliation was a bit tighter in Delta, non-Japanese phrasings that might have crept in elsewhere were absent here, and there was less success in Delta than in some localities in attempts to form cross ties outside the ethnic group.

To be sure, outside contacts were indispensable. However, owing partly to language barriers, partly to inclination, they were channeled through a very few persons. There were work foremen who, after contracting with farmers, gathered a crew for as many days as they were needed to work on a crop. There was some contact through the local bank president, who was also one of the white owners of land where the Japanese quarter was built; he seems to have served as principal culture broker for the white community. But the Japanese had their own culture brokers, in particular a now elderly insurance agent whose outside contacts, experience with business and legal affairs, and inclination to do favors—more for prestige than for the business he might get—combined to encour-



The Japanese American shared a love of baseball. The father-son game in "Delta" brought out whole families.

Courtesy Grace Beardsley, © 1978.

age the practice of going to him for advice or assistance. Perhaps, before the war, his broker role was less important than that of the directors of the Japanese Association described above, which was instituted as a sort of interface mechanism in the meeting of societies. For business people, as just mentioned, and for various others on occasion, the Town-kai had a local culture-broker function. Of the small group of businessmen, some certainly did half or more of their business with outsiders; but these momentary contacts cumulated in nothing more than friendly feelings with a few customers. In all the foregoing we see few openly acculturative forces, as is perhaps expectable among people committed to impermanence. Nor were any organizations serving importantly as channels of communication or association across the social boundaries surrounding the Japanese; Delta farm society hemmed them in and virtually no government agency included them in its mission. So the response was to develop self-sufficiency and security through internal organization.

The Post-War Era to 1966

The first Japanese returning to Delta faced a menacing crowd, partly composed of squatters liv-

ing in their now dilapidated homes and stores; but police were present and one white ally, a friendly former customer, interceded and helped to dilute the bad taste of this incident, which was no more than other returnees were experiencing in their former communities. Before long, the Japanese resumed their old place in Delta, though in reduced numbers, as previously explained. For the first twenty years after the war, however, youngsters reaching working age tended to leave either for jobs or for higher education, and the Japanese quarter more and more took on the look of a retirement community, where vigorous adults stayed mainly to care for grandparents.³

Under these circumstances, even though compromises were made, few changes were attempted that were unwelcome to or opposed by a considerable number of *issei*. The organizational character of the Japanese community took on a defensive, withdrawn quality. Affairs were managed mainly on a day-to-day basis, with little long-range planning.

A brief review of the roster of organizations illustrates this point. The pre-war Japanese Association had served the Japanese as sojourners, not as permanent residents; it was tainted with Japan's defeat and disappeared. Too few Methodists re-

turned to Delta to permit reopening the Methodist Church there. The *kenjinkai* were not revived. As time went on, elderly persons in business retired or died, and the Town-kai became moribund, though it continued to exist. By attrition, therefore, only the Buddhist church survived as a well-supported and active organization from among the pre-war roster.

One new organization that appeared just after return from exile in the camps was the Downstream Housing Union (Kawashimo Jūtaku Kumiai), to improve the residential streets now that people were going to remain indefinitely. This Union raised money to install street lights, spread gravel over the dirt roads, and raise street signs. It continued to exist in order to justify a monthly get-together of its members, more than to continue public works, and in this almost purely social function paralleled the Town-kai's main post-war function for the other half of the Japanese community. Both were subordinate in importance to the Buddhist Church.

An organization conspicuous for its absence in Delta has been the Japanese American Citizens League. The JAACL, founded in 1930 and guided mainly by *nisei*, lobbied strenuously in Washington after the war for various ethnic causes, such as admitting aliens to citizenship, compensating claims for wartime losses, and other matters. It strove to assert positive leadership. Its chapters in medium to large Japanese communities throughout the country had a rather JCC [Junior Chamber of Commerce] flavor, doing good works and promoting social and recreational events to improve the Japanese American image among members of the majority society. This outgoing quality, combined with a rather conspicuously patriotic stance, was effective in opening relationships across social boundaries in many localities. It tended, however, to put off persons of each generation who favored presenting a low profile; and not a few *issei* were permanently disenchanted early in the war when the JAACL adopted a stance of wholehearted cooperation in the forced evacuation debacle. No JAACL chapter was established, or even attempted, by the *nisei* in Delta, where the general mood of *issei* was more or less shared by all.

A local equivalent, of sorts, to the JAACL did develop about 1960, however. This was the Delta Japanese

Community Association. It took over funds left in the account of the pre-war Japanese Association and, under a joint directorate of *issei* and *nisei*, joined the Buddhist Church in support of the Japanese language school for *sansei*. It also managed one of four annual occasions when the post-war Japanese have made themselves visible to outsiders: a spring picnic featuring Japanese foods (to which delicacies of other ethnic groups were added after 1968).

In two decades after the war, contacts with the non-Japanese world had varied slightly, but without perceptible broadening. In the absence of a Japanese Association and a vigorous Town-kai, interface functions were performed by individual culture brokers, who now included several newer persons of prestige, whose services were called on by various *nisei*, as well as by their monolingual parents. Somewhat repeated attempts to get cross ties with the white community were made by two or three persons. A token Japanese family moved to the white subdivision west of the river about 1962. During the war, a shortage of teachers had prompted desegregation of the public schools, which have stayed desegregated; the PTA of the grammar and junior high schools have had up to two Japanese American officers at once, and one ran successfully for the Board of Education. One Japanese American leader at a time has been a token member of the otherwise white volunteer firemen. One Japanese was admitted to Rotary Club in 1963, but none has broken into Kiwanis or other civic clubs. Below the adult level, however, Japanese children are together with white children not only in school but also in the community pool, built (with contributions from all) on the white side of the river.

The Delta Japanese's major community organization, within the Buddhist Church, deserves some description. In a manner strikingly reminiscent of all-purpose rural hamlet associations (*kōjū*, *miyaza*, *buraku-kai*, etc.) in Japan, the community's work is done through a layman's organization called the Buddhist Association. This organization is described as follows (Befu 1965, 214):

Church organization is age-graded to accommodate all ages except the very youngest. The Board of Directors, the decision-making group, is made up of *Issei* men. *Issei* women form the *Fujinkai*, or



As late as 1970, the Japanese residential area of "Delta" remained unpaved. *Courtesy Grace Beardsley, c. 1978.*

the Ladies Association. Married Nisei men are organized into the Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA) and their wives into the Junior *Fujinkai*. Although the Board is the decision-making body, other organizations implement the decisions. The Sansei boys and girls mostly in their teens, are members of the Young Buddhist Association (YBA). Younger YBA members and still younger members are in Sunday School.

As Befu remarks, the church "has achieved monolithic dominance over the entire community." Its religious services are rather poorly attended (being in Japanese except on infrequent occasions, they gather mainly *issei* women); but its lay organization reaches and mobilizes everyone, and so serves well as a planning and implementing organization for all forms of social activity and community effort. Not only do sections of the lay organization arrange funerals, memorial and Sunday services, and weddings; they also plan ball games, film showings, and dance parties.

Greatest effort of this church organization, however, goes into three annual occasions that make the Japanese visible outside and are coordinated with similar functions in Japanese communities

over a fifty-mile radius. These occasions are New Year, Bon, and the Fall Bazaar. The Bazaar, especially, is a considerable investment and [an] enterprise designed to make money for other activities, and requires detailed planning . . . *

**EDITOR'S NOTE:* In the original text, Beardsley added the following observation. "A bit of intensity that involves *issei* directors as well as the YABA work staff in planning sessions may be conveyed by an excerpt from the loud discussion in one session concerning previous experience with bingo cards:

- A. Ne, 'bout four-five people yakamashii alla time. Cards ga nai, kara, ne. [You know, about 4 or 5 people complain all the time. Because they don't get cards, you know].
- B. Da ga, ne, whole set de, 'bout 200 cards, so mawasu 'em 'n everyone should get one, deshō. Shikashi, this one he want ni mai, ne, yaru both same time. [But there's 200 cards in a set, so if you pass them around, everyone should get one, you know. But some guys want two cards, you know, to play both at the same time].
- A. Kondo tarinakattara, you'd better get more. But iranai deshō. [If you don't have enough this time, you'd better get more. But you probably don't need to].

This translation, which is not a literal translation but focuses more on the meaning of the conversation, was provided by James A. Hirabayashi. He notes that the dialogue involves a mixture of both Japanese and English vocabulary and grammatical structures. As such, the vernacular speech of Delta's older residents is an interesting bilingual, bicultural illustration of the adaptational process.

The central thrust of this Buddhist organization has been centripetal, toward integrating and holding on to members in a rather explicitly closed community. The same was true of virtually every other aspect of the community as it appeared in 1957. For all that the four seasonal community activities—New Year, Spring picnic, Bon, and Fall carnival—welcomed outsiders; for all that some members of the church traveled to Japanese Buddhist conventions elsewhere in California; and for all that certain token links had been formed with the white community, which did much of its casual shopping in the Japanese stores, Delta's remaining Japanese were turned inward and holding on, resigned, seldom willing to speculate ahead in the face of continual attrition of their best, most vigorous youth. An air of suspicion rather stronger than in the usual country town hovered around anyone from the outside who lingered, except in one of the stores. Japanese ways became a point of pride. More than half of the movies brought to town, for instance, were Japanese, though *sansei* teenagers could hardly follow their dialog. Customers were still numerous for the town's public Japanese bath, paying over 25 cents each night to enjoy what may have been the only public Japanese bath in California.

The Post-War Era, 1966-1970

A principal weakness of the Delta Japanese community, as we have noted, was the insecurity of month-to-month rental of house lots, whose owners would not agree to sell. Several incidents, beginning in 1966, brought this problem to a head.

Delta had never had a sewage system. The county ordered all owners to cease polluting the river in 1966. To defray sewage system costs, land owners and managers (of two estates that pay an annual dividend to as many as 18 absentee heirs of the deceased owners) approached Japanese residents, who agreed to foot the costs of connecting their respective houses to a new main sewer rather than pay higher rent. But, as soon as the sewer was complete, rents went up. A final vexation was the capricious individual variation of rent rises, added to the capricious differences of rent in the first place.

About this time, in 1967, an Office of Economic Opportunity had been opened in the Delta region. The Grassroots Council it sponsored, manned mostly by whites, had set a first priority on getting government assistance to build low-cost housing for field workers then commuting from larger towns. The Japanese participant was unable to bring Japanese problems under scrutiny, and, since low-cost housing for outsiders was more apt to intensify than to resolve Japanese difficulties, he quietly dropped out. But an air of militancy that had been imported by OEO organizers left an impression, and it was not long until two of Delta's Japanese leaders encouraged forty householders (all renting from one company) of the Downstream Housing Union to join a new organization, the Delta Japanese's Development Association, and begin a rent strike. They assessed all members to raise \$2,000 for a lawyer's retainer, got legal assistance from the Legal Aid Office in Sacramento, put each month's rent money in escrow, and offered to negotiate toward purchase of the land for \$35,000. The estate's first negative response, made out of habit, shifted to an asking price of \$75,000. But the Japanese and their lawyer had done their homework. Negotiations ended in May 1970 with sale of the land for \$57,500. Payment was made through an interest-free government loan of 80% of the price. In two years of waiting under pressure, only one member had backed out, asking to be excused so he could move out of town to a son's home.

Sale was made *en bloc* to the Association, which first assessed its members a small fee to incorporate as a non-profit association and then sold lots at cost to each shareholder. This device made it possible for one elderly widow, living on welfare, to rent her lot rather than purchase it from the Association; and it insured that there would be group control over future transactions over the land. It is interesting to note that, while the Association took a five-year purchase contract for its lots, every member managed to pay the entire purchase price within four months—sometimes out of savings, more often from funds furnished by absent children. Although none of the other blocs of Japanese in Delta has yet copied this successful strategy, this mildly militant organization remains alive as a new

element of Delta organization, should new problems or opportunities arise.

What may be in prospect? Two city planning studies of Delta were done in 1967-68, one by a firm of consultants, the other by a landscape architecture department. The first study saw Delta's future as a mirror image of its past: a farm community with some additional shopping and public facilities. The landscape architecture group, however, though studying only the older community east of the river, foresaw possibility of Delta's becoming a tourist stopping place. Since prospects discussed above now point even more strongly toward a rising flow of vacationers and tourists, the views expressed by this group deserve notice. Their architectural discipline made them sensitive to the distinctive quality of Delta architecture, with its ingredient of Japanese craftsmanship. But, they complained, the town shows a notable lack of civic spirit; for instance, it has no paved roads in the Japanese residential area and no street signs. They suggest community projects—e.g., installing planter boxes along sidewalks—to develop sense of organization. If a civic sense of unity emerges, larger projects become possible. Without waiting for government financing

the wealthier members of the community might purchase the supplies while the poorer members might donate their labor. Neighbors could help neighbors. The town might sponsor several community work days. The town could raise money by sponsoring bazaars or fairs . . . The community of (Delta) must realize that success depends upon the amount of involvement and energy that they contribute. (Then) the vacationers in the Delta area will be impressed with the town's new look. Tourists will stop in town instead of driving by. Their dollars will benefit the merchants of (Delta) and in turn the town will prosper.⁴

This analysis appears to impress the white sponsors of the study as accurate. It does not so impress us. We concur in the conclusion, but not in the premises, of this syllogism. We see no lack of organization, but quite the contrary, however few the street signs in Delta. The community needs an end to the social barriers around it and an influential and informed friend or two with status outside. It

needs access to capital. And it needs new leadership. The first small material gain, made at last in 1970, may have exhausted the three present main Japanese leaders, who range from 55 to over 70. Perhaps the habit of short-range thinking, low posture, and waiting will not be so ingrained in others as to inhibit new leadership rising from within the community. But it may be that, unless a foresighted outsider, of which the white community boasts several, opens channels for Japanese organization to maneuver through and galvanizes the organized community to action in capturing, controlling, and captivating the potential numbers of vacationers and tourists with what Japanese and other resident ethnic groups can offer, more run-of-the-mill exploiters will occupy the strategic ground with drearily familiar burger stands, post card palaces, and coyote zoos.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that a Japanese community not notably out of character with other communities of first-generation migrants from Japan relapsed, when repopulated after the war, into a relatively depressed rural enclave. Post-war Delta was marked by poverty. It was regressive, unhelpful, ingrown, suspicious. It was outstandingly unacculturated in respect to observable behavior. Its members, having no access to outside sources of support and affluence except by fleeing the community, developed mechanisms of mutual succor and cooperation. However, in Delta in the post-war era, crime and antisocial activity were memories rather than actuality. Its family structure was lopsided in numbers of elderly women. This, however, only coincidentally resembled the female-centered, poverty-linked family type, even though, because of losses sustained during World War II, many in the community were dependent on welfare, unemployment compensation, and social security old-age payments.

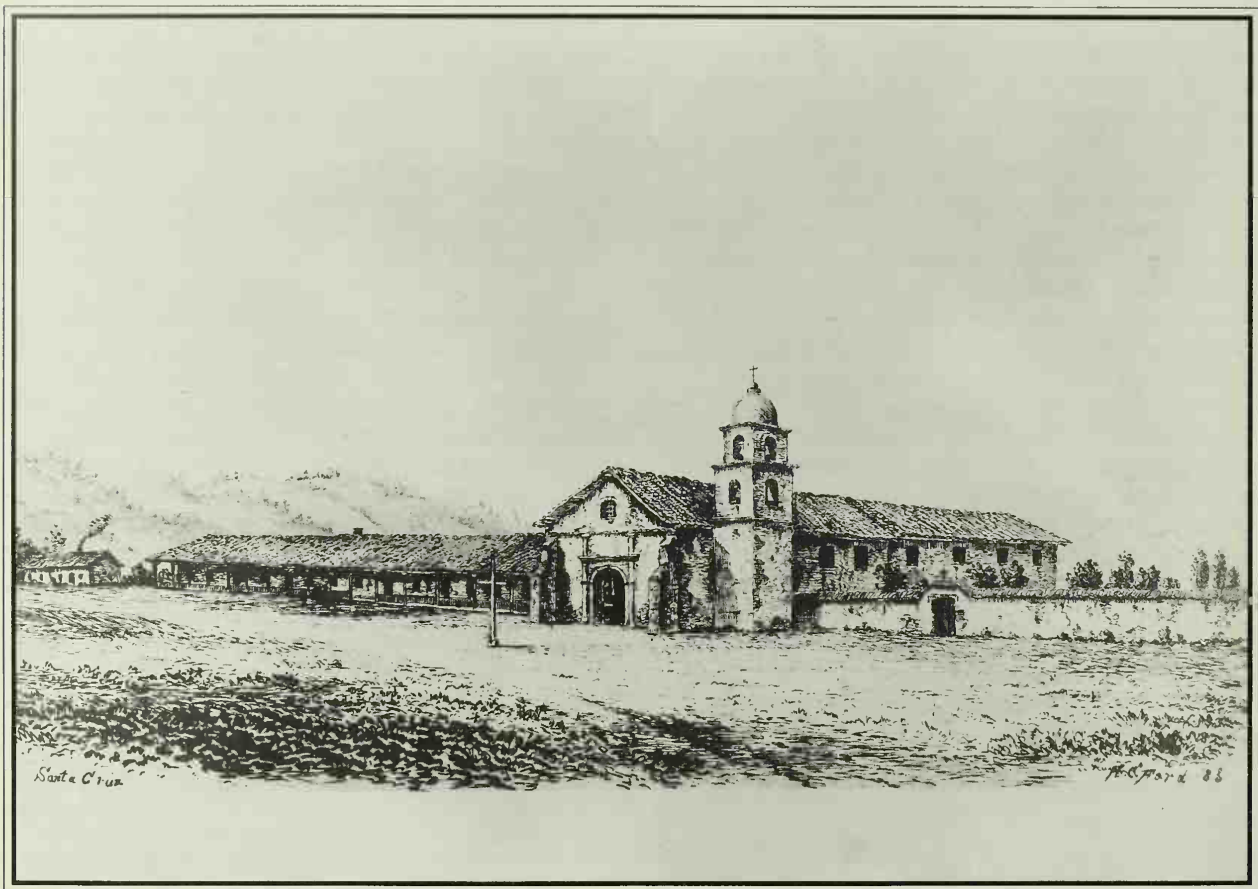
Moreover, despite various poverty characteristics just mentioned, these families were knit together in remarkably comprehensive and solidary community organization. We can recognize this capacity for neighborly organization as a continuing

heritage from their Japanese tradition; even though they are unmistakably adapted to the American scene in form and style, the organizations have equally unmistakable Japanese prototypes. Thanks to this organizing/coordinating capacity and to a readiness to resume long-range vision, an outside stimulus (of the civil rights era, if not directly from the OEO organizers) and outside legal help enabled a sizeable portion of the community, by buying land, to stabilize their present condition and prepare to adapt to new circumstances that may lie ahead.

Given the outcome to date, one is bound to recognize that resignation and torpor—engendered by the war and characteristic of Delta for the last twenty years—may still be a detriment under changing conditions. It is easy to see, however, that almost impermeable barriers inhibited a more vigorous and productive life style, and it is hazard-

ous to predict that as these barriers are breached the habits they engendered will persist. One undeniable advantage of the Delta Japanese has been their sociocultural heritage, seen both as a positive conditioning experienced in their own lives and as a potentially inspiring awareness of what effort, organization, and persistence has accomplished in their homeland. But this fact makes possible one final observation: that apparently retarded acculturation, enforced by isolation, may under Delta's prospective circumstances pay handsome dividends in a culturally pluralistic setting that may be just what the tourists on old-fashioned trains and ferries from Sacramento and San Francisco want as souvenirs of memory. CHS

See references and notes beginning on page 149.



This H. C. Ford drawing of Mission Santa Cruz, done in 1883, was reproduced by Los Angeles photographer C. C. Pierce in his studio. *CHS Library, San Francisco.*

DOCUMENT

The Assassination of Padre Andrés Quintana by the Indians of Mission Santa Cruz in 1812: THE NARRATIVE OF LORENZO ASISARA

Translated, Edited, and Introduced by
Edward D. Castillo*

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Historical literature on the California Indians in the Franciscan mission system has been decidedly unbalanced. For nearly a century the Franciscan historians and many like-minded writers who have dominated the literature developed a theory of history that seeks to rationalize the mission's destruction of thousands of natives in order to convert or assimilate them. These works generally approve of European colonization and the triumph of Christianity over "pagans" and their natural world. Some, like Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., have reflected the outright bigotry that for years typified the stereotypical views of whites about American natives. At one point Engelhardt characterized native Californians as "among the most stupid, brutish, filthy, lazy, and improvident of the aborigines of Americas."¹ To these authors, native society was little more than anarchy; the absence of materialism was indolence; Indian religion was devil worship; Indian cultures and languages were little more than obstacles to native absorption into the Spanish empire as loyal hardworking subjects.

The other camp of mission historiography approached the Hispanic colonization of California from a more culturally neutral position that includes a native point of view. Beginning with the pioneering demographic work of Sherburne F. Cook, these authors have not relied entirely upon self-serving missionary sources of data to explain the destruction of native societies and the catastrophic population decline during the mission period in California history.² Such non-missionary sources include foreign visitors to missions, as well as early non-Hispanic immigrants to the West Coast. Perhaps the most significant development has been the use of ethnographic data in the reconstruction of California's colonial history. The few scholars who have been able to use both traditional historical

sources and ethnographic data concerning this era have provided a new dimension to our understanding.³ It is hoped that the following will in a small way contribute to that greater understanding.

Few native eyewitness accounts of life under Franciscan authority are known. Pablo Tac's account of Franciscan conversion at Mission San Luis Rey is the earliest.⁴ Tac's account viewed Franciscan colonization favorably. His narrative was written under the careful tutelage of church authorities who were educating him at the College of Propaganda in Rome. Another Luiseño neophyte had his life history recorded by Hubert Howe Bancroft's field historian, Thomas Savage, in 1879.⁵ Most recently an account of mission life among the Chumash by Francisco Librado (Kitsepawit) has emerged. This was accomplished by teasing the information from a series of interviews Librado did with the Smithsonian Institution's anthropologist, John P. Harrington, between 1912 and 1915.⁶ These native accounts present striking differences to those most frequently consulted as authorities on mission life in California.

Despite the persistence of romantic interpretations, the California missions were authoritarian institutions whose foundation rested upon a military occupation and forced native labor. In full operation, they resembled the classic Caribbean plantations or European feudal estates. The colonization of Alta California was the result of organized cooperation between the Spanish crown and the Franciscan order. The idea was to seize native land, gather the Indians into the missions, and train them to be both good Catholics and loyal subjects of the

*I wish to acknowledge translation assistance of Robert Jackson, and Susan and Frank Lobo.

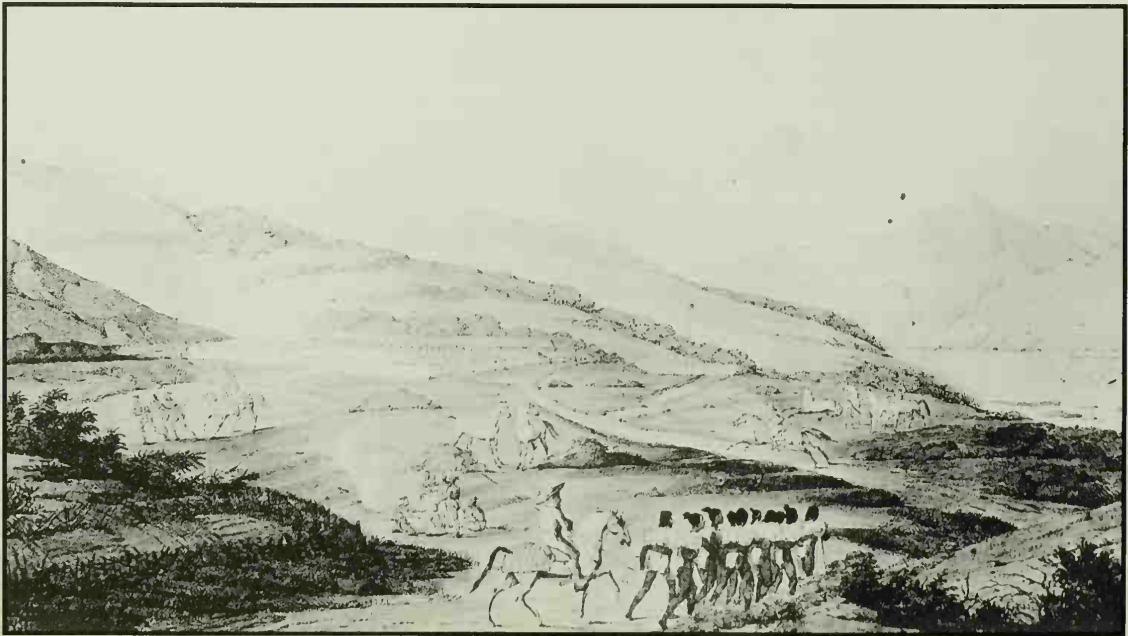
Spanish crown. The natives were expected to forsake their freedom, resources, and culture, and to learn a new language and skills, in exchange for the dubious status of inferior subjects of the Spanish crown.⁷ One cannot truly comprehend the nature of these institutions without realizing that, once the natives were brought into missions, they were not free to leave. Failure to conform to the daily regimen of manual labor and Christian worship resulted in beatings, incarceration, and sometimes worse. Rapidly, these colonial outposts were ravaged with devastating waves of European-introduced epidemic diseases that killed thousands. Soon, disenchanted neophytes began to flee to the interior, bringing with them tales of the Franciscan "reign of terror" on the coast.⁸

Native resistance to Spanish colonialism took many forms including fugitivism, stock raiding, and eventually a type of guerilla warfare which became common throughout areas of mission influence. Many neophyte revolts attempted to kill Franciscans as part of a general uprising.⁹ Less frequent was assassination not associated with outright revolt. There were, however, a few. In 1801 soldiers surrounded the neophyte rancheria at Mission San Carlos and arrested three Indians for plotting to kill the padre.¹⁰ That same year three missionaries were poisoned by neophytes at Mission San Miguel; one missionary died.¹¹ A San Diego neophyte fatally poisoned Padre Panto for his extreme cruelty in 1811.¹² Perhaps the most sensational assassination in this early colonial period was the

killing of Padre Andrés Quintana. The motivation for this assassination was the sadistic cruelty of Quintana's rule. In fact, native accounts of neophyte existence typically emphasized the coercive, authoritarian nature of the Franciscan regime. Engelhardt countered that such punishment was mild, and he further charged that "malevolent writers, as well as malevolent Indians, have frequently endeavored to fasten the reproach of cruelty upon the missionaries."¹³

The following account of the events surrounding the assassination of Padre Andrés Quintana are taken from the memoirs of the ex-Santa Cruz neophyte called Lorenzo Asisara. Lorenzo's story, transcribed by Bancroft's historian Thomas Savage, is perhaps the most detailed account we have of the motivations, plot, and acts surrounding a neophyte political assassination in Spanish California.

The interview took place on the San Andres Ranch, near Santa Cruz, on July 10, 1877. It was part of a widespread oral history project undertaken by Bancroft's history company. Most likely, it was done while Savage was interviewing Mexican colonist José María Amador in nearby Whiskey Hill. In fact, Lorenzo's story is found in two different places within Amador's narrative, where both informants struck common stories.¹⁴ What is translated here is the first half of Lorenzo's story, in which he recounts his father's eyewitness account of the revenge killing of Padre Quintana in 1812. Lorenzo's reliability as an informant is strengthened by supportive evidence found in the



The Presidio of San Francisco. Testifying to the climate of force which dominated Indian-colonial relations in Hispanic California, Indians in this 1816-era illustration by Louis Choris are being herded to work. CHS Library, San Francisco.

notes accompanying the account. Without a doubt, he offers us an exciting inside story that has remained obscure.

Lorenzo is unique in that he was again interviewed concerning mission Indian life by E.L. Williams in 1890. This later interview, occurring when Lorenzo was 70 years old, adds more details of his life, as well as corroborates his earlier testimony.¹⁵

From various sources we can piece together the following biographical data concerning our informant.¹⁶ Lorenzo was born August 10, 1820, at the Mission Santa Cruz, the twelfth such institution established in Alta California. Founded in the fall of 1791 on a hill overlooking the San Lorenzo River,¹⁷ the mission was built next to the local native village called Aulintac.¹⁸ The Spaniards called these people *costaños*. Speaking a language identified as part of the Penutian linguistic stock, they were peaceful people practicing the classical California hunting and collecting culture.¹⁹ Lorenzo was the son of neophyte Venancio Llenco of Cotony and Manuela Liuhatme of the Chalahua rancheria.²⁰ Lorenzo had a brother called Jacinto, whose fate is unknown. Lorenzo spoke his father's language,²¹ as well as Spanish, the language in which the interview was conducted. As a youth he sang in the choir. He remained at Santa Cruz until the winter of 1833, when he was sent by Padre Antonio Real to Monterey, where he learned to play the clarinet and worked for the new governor, General José Figueroa. He remained at the Mission Carmelo near Monterey for perhaps as long as a year. Lorenzo then returned to Santa Cruz, where Real taught him to read and write Spanish. He became the sacristan and played in the choir. We know Lorenzo witnessed the secularization of Mission Santa Cruz and remained there working as a drover. He married, but by 1845 he was a widower, still living at Santa Cruz.²² In 1846 Lorenzo went to Yerba Buena [San Francisco], where he was

employed by the *alcalde*. He was serving as an unarmed soldier with other Indians at the San Francisco Presidio when it surrendered to the Americans during the Mexican-American War. Thereafter, Lorenzo returned to Santa Cruz because, he recalled, "there were too many people in San Francisco for me."²³ Lorenzo said he spent three years in San Jose, but it is not clear whether this was before or after the war. Apparently, Lorenzo received no land after the secularization and was forced to work as a ranch hand the rest of his life.

Like Justiniano Roxas,²⁴ another ex-neophyte of Santa Cruz, Lorenzo was seen later in his life as a historical curiosity by Anglos now flooding his homeland. Bancroft's recognition of his significance led to the 1877 interview. Although not allowed to speak himself, Lorenzo shared the speakers' platform at the Mission Santa Cruz centennial celebration in 1891.²⁵ We know nothing of his death, but like Roxas before him, we may presume he died a landless pauper.

Several considerations make this document especially important. First, it offers historians and anthropologists a rare native insight into the actual structure and functioning of Indian groups undergoing the stress of Franciscan-orchestrated acculturation. Furthermore, it clearly documents the terror caused by the beatings administered by the Franciscans upon those neophytes who failed to please the priests. Importantly, it also demonstrates that neophytes reacted variously to different priests. The lax security and relative autonomy of trusted neophytes are also noteworthy. Incidentally, Lorenzo's narrative illustrates the sexual tension resulting from the methods of incarcerating masses of young Indian men and women that the Franciscans practiced at Santa Cruz and other missions. Perhaps more than any other known neophyte account of life under Franciscan authority, Lorenzo's narrative is rich in detail and comprehensive in its chronology.



P. Frenzeny's etching of California mission Indians making baskets and rope. The illustration appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in October 1877. CHS Library, San Francisco.

LORENZO'S NARRATIVE: "THE DEATH OF PADRE ANDRÉS QUINTANA"

The following story which I shall convey was told to me by my dear father in 1818.²⁶ He was a neophyte of the Mission of Santa Cruz. He was one of the original founders of that mission. He was an Indian from the rancharia of *Asar*²⁷ on the *Jarro*²⁸ coast, up beyond Santa Cruz. He was one of the first neophytes baptized at the founding, being about 20 years of age. He was called Venancio Asar, and was the gardener of the Mission of Santa Cruz.²⁹

My father was a witness to the happenings which follow. He was one of the conspirators who planned to kill Father Quintana.³⁰ When the conspirators were planning to kill Father Quintana, they gathered in the house of Julian the gardener (the one who made the pretense of being ill). The man who worked inside the plaza of the mission, named Donato, was punished by Father Quintana with a whip with wire. With each blow it cut his buttocks.³¹ Then the same man, Donato, wanted vengeance. He was the one who organized a gathering of 14

men, among them were the cook and the pages serving the Father. The cook was named Antonio, the eldest page named Lino, the others named Vicente and Miguel Antonio. All of them gathered in the house of Julian to plan how they could avoid the cruel punishments of Father Quintana.³² One man present, Lino, who was more capable and wiser than the others, said, "The first thing we should do today is to see that the Padre no longer punishes the people in that manner. We aren't animals. He [Quintana] says in his sermons that God does not command these [punishments]—but only examples and doctrine.³³ Tell me now, what shall we do with the Padre? We cannot chase him away, nor accuse him before the judge, because we do not know who commands him to do with us as he does." To this, Andrés, father of Lino the page, answered, "Let's kill the Padre without anyone being aware, not the servants, nor anyone, except us that are here present." (This Lino was pure-blooded Indian, but as white as a Spaniard and man of natural abilities.) And then Julian the gardener said, "What shall we do in order to kill him?" His wife responded, "You, who are always

getting sick—only this way can it be possible—think if it is good this way.”³⁴ Lino approved the plan and asked that all present also approve it. “In that case, we shall do it tomorrow night.” That was Saturday. It should be noted that the Padre wished all the people to gather in the plaza on the following Sunday in order to test the whip that he had made with pieces of wire to see if it was to his liking.

All of the conspirators present at the meeting concurred that it should be done as Lino had recommended.

On the evening of Saturday at about six o'clock [October 12] of 1812, they went to tell the Padre that the gardener was dying. The Indians were already posted between two trees on both sides so that they could grab Father when he passed. The Padre arrived at the house of Julian, who pretended to be in agony. The Padre helped him, thinking that he was really sick and about to die. When the Padre was returning to his house, he passed close to where the Indians were posted. They didn't have the courage to grab him and they allowed him to pass. The moribund gardener was behind him, but the Padre arrived at his house. Within an hour the wife of Julian arrived [again] to tell him [the Father] that her husband was dying. With this news the Padre returned to the orchard, the woman following behind crying and lamenting. He saw that the sick man was dying. The Padre took the man's hand in order to take his pulse. He felt the pulse and could find nothing amiss. The pulse showed there was nothing wrong with Julian. Not knowing what it could be, the Padre returned to pray for him. It was night when the Padre left. Julian arose and washed away the sacraments [oil] that he [the Padre] had administered, and he followed behind to join the others and see what his companions had done. Upon arriving at the place where they were stationed, Lino lifted his head and looked in all directions to see if they were coming out to grab the Father. The Father passed and they didn't take him. The Father arrived at his house.

Later, when the Father was at his table dining, the conspirators had already gathered at the house of the alleged sick man to ascertain why they hadn't seized Father Quintana. Julian complained that the Padre had placed herbs on his ears, and because of them, now he was really going to die. Then the wife of Julian said, “Yes, you all did not carry

through with your promised plans; I am going to accuse you all, and I will not go back to the house.” They all answered her, “All right, now, in this trip go and speak to the Father.” The woman again left to fetch Father Quintana, who was at supper. He got up immediately and went where he found the supposedly sick man. This time he took with him three pages, two who walked ahead lighting his way with lanterns and behind him followed his Mayordomo Lino.³⁵ The other two were Vincente and Miguel Antonio. The Father arrived at the gardener's house and found him unconscious. He couldn't speak. The Father prayed the last orations without administering the oils, and said to the wife, “Now your husband is prepared to live or die. Don't come to look for me again.” Then the Father left with his pages to return to his house. Julian followed him. Arriving at the place where the two trees were (since the Father was not paying attention to his surroundings, but only in the path in front of him), Lino grabbed him from behind saying these words, “Stop here, Father, you must speak for a moment.” When the other two pages who carried the lanterns turned around and saw the other men come out to attack the Father, they fled with their lanterns. The Father said to Lino, “Oh, my Son, what are you going to do to me?” Lino answered, “Your assassins will tell you.”

“What have I done to you children, for which you would kill me?”

“Because you have made a *cuarta de hierro* [a horse whip tipped with iron] . . .,” Andrés answered him. Then the Father retorted, “Oh, children, leave me, so that I can go from here now, at this moment.” Andrés asked him why he had made this *cuarta de hierro*. Quintana said that it was only for transgressors. Then someone shouted, “Well, you are in the hands of those evil ones, make your peace with God.” Many of those present (seeing the Father in his affliction) cried and pitied his fate, but could do nothing to help him because they were themselves compromised. He pleaded much, promising to leave the mission immediately if they would only let him.

“Now you won't be going to any part of the earth from here, Father, you are going to heaven.” This was the last plea of the Father. Some of them, not having been able to lay hands on Father, reprimanded the others because they talked too much, demanding that they kill him immediately. They then covered the Father's mouth with his own cape

to strangle him. They had his arms tightly secured. After the Father had been strangled, they took a testicle [*grano de los companonez*] so that it would not be suspected that he had been beaten, and in a moment Padre expired. Then Lino and the others took him to his house and put him in his bed.³⁶

When the two little pages, Vicente and Miguel Antonio, arrived at the house, the former wanted to tell the guard, but the other dissuaded him by saying, "No, they, the soldiers, will also kill your mother, father, all of the others and you yourself and me. Let them, the conspirators, do what they want." The two hid themselves. After the Indians had put the Father in his bed, Lino looked for the two pages, and he found them hidden. They undressed the body of Father Quintana and placed him in the bed as if he were going to sleep. All of the conspirators, including Julian's wife, were present. Andrés asked Lino for the keys to the store-room. He handed them over saying, "What do you want?" And they said silver and beads. Among the group there were three Indians from the Santa Clara mission. These proposed that they investigate to see how much money there was. Lino opened the box and showed them the accumulated gold and silver.³⁷ The three Indians from Santa Clara took as much as they could carry to their mission. (I don't know what they have done with that money.) The others took their portions as they saw fit.

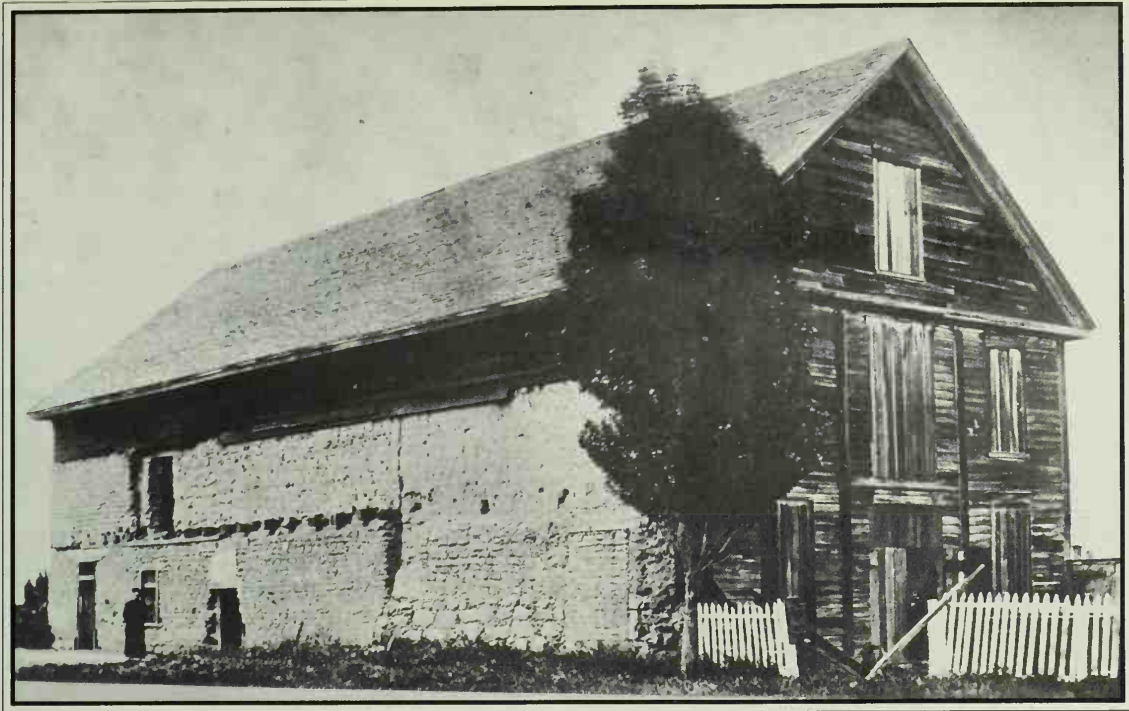
Then they asked for the keys to the convent or the nunnery.³⁸ Lino gave the keys to the *jayunte*,³⁹ or barracks of the single men, to one of them in order to free them and gather them together below in the orchard with the unmarried women. They gathered in the orchard so that neither the people in the plaza nor in the rancheria⁴⁰ nor in the guard-house would hear them. The single men left and without a sound gathered in the orchard at the same place where the Father was assassinated. There was a man there cautioning them not to make any noise, that they were going to have a good time. After a short time the young unmarried women arrived in order to spend the night there. The young people of both sexes got together and had their pleasure. At midnight Lino, being in the Padre's living room with one of the girls from the single women's dormitory, entered the Father's room in order to see if he was really dead. He found him reviving. He was already on the point of arising. Lino went to look for his accomplices to

tell them that the Padre was coming to. The Indians returned and they crushed the Father's other testicle. This last act put an end to the life of Father Quintana. Donato, the one who had been whipped, walked around the room with the plural results of his operation in hand saying, "I shall bury these in the outdoor privy."

Donato told Lino that they should close the treasure chest with these words, "Close the trunk with the colored silver (that is the name that the Indians gave to gold) and let's see where we shall bury it." The eight men carried it down to the orchard and buried it secretly without the others knowing.

At about two o'clock in the morning, the young girls returned to their convent and the single men to their *jayunte* without making any noise. The assassins gathered once more after everything had occurred in order to hear the plans of Lino and Donato. Some wanted to flee, and others asked, "What for? No one except us knows." Lino asked them what they wanted to take to their houses, sugar, *panocha* [a sugar loaf], honey, or any other things, and suggested that they lay down to sleep for a while. Finally everything was ready. Donato proposed to return to where the Father was to check on him. They found him not only lifeless, but completely cold and stiff. Lino then showed them the new whip that the Padre was planning to use for the first time the next day, assuring them that he [Father Quintana] would not use it. He sent them to their houses to rest, remaining in the house with the keys. He asked them to be very careful. He arranged the room and the Bible in the manner in which the Father was accustomed to doing before retiring, telling them that he was not going to toll the bells in the morning until the Mayordomo and Corporal of the guard came and he had talked to them. All went through the orchard very silently.

This same morning (Sunday) the bells should have been rung at about eight o'clock. At that hour the people from the villa de Branciforte began to arrive in order to attend the mass.⁴¹ The Mayordomo, Carlos Castro, saw that the bells were not being rung and went to ask Lino, who was the first assistant of the Father, in order to ask why the Padre had not ordered him [to toll the bells]. Lino was in the outer room feigning innocence and answered the Mayordomo that he couldn't tell him anything about the Father because he was still inside sleeping or praying, and that the Mayordomo should wait until he should speak to him first. The



The simple lines of the 1793-4 church at Mission Santa Cruz are visible in this 1884 photograph showing the wooden façade that replaced the original that collapsed along with part of the side walls in 1857. No known illustration depicts the detail of the church's original façade. *Courtesy Santa Cruz Public Library.*

Mayordomo returned home. Soon the Corporal of the guard arrived and Lino told him the same as to the Mayordomo. The Mayordomo returned to join in the conversation. They decided to wait a little while longer. Finally Lino told them that in their presence he would knock on the door of the room, observing, "If he is angry with me, you will stand up for me." And so he did, calling to the Father. As he didn't hear noise inside, the Mayordomo and Corporal asked Lino to knock again, but he refused. They then left, encharging him to call the Father again because the hour was growing late. All of the servants were busy at their jobs as always, in order not to cause any suspicion. The Mayordomo returned after ten o'clock and asked Lino to call the Padre to see what was wrong. Lino, with the keys in his pocket, knocked at the door. Finally the Mayordomo insisted that Lino enter the room, but Lino refused. At this moment, the Corporal, who was old Nazario Galindo, arrived.⁴² Lino (although he had the key to the door in his pocket) said, "Well, I am going to see if I can get the door open," and he pretended to look for a key to open the door. He returned with a ring of keys but he didn't find one that opened the lock. The Mayordomo and the Corporal left to talk to some men who were there. Later, Lino took the key that opened the door, saying that it was for the kitchen. He opened another door that opened into the plaza (the key

opened three doors), and through there he entered. Then he opened the main door from inside in front of which the others waited. Lino came out screaming and crying, and carrying on in an uncontrolled manner and saying that the Padre was dead. They asked him if he was certain and he responded, "As this light that illuminates us. By God, I'm going to toll the bells." The three entered, the Corporal, the Mayordomo, and Lino. He didn't allow anyone else to enter. The Corporal and the Mayordomo and the other people wrote to the other missions and to Monterey to Father Marcelino Marquinez.⁴³ (This Marquinez was an expert horseman and a good friend.) The poor elderly neophytes, and many other Indians who never suspected that the Father was killed, thought that he had died suddenly. They cried bitterly.⁴⁴ Lino was roaring inside the Father's house like a bear.

The Fathers from Santa Clara and from other missions came and they held the Father's funeral, all believing that he had died a natural death, but not before examining the corpse in the entrance room, and had opened the stomach in order to be certain that the Padre had not been poisoned.⁴⁵ Officials, sergeants, and many others participated in these acts but nothing was discovered. Finally, by chance, one of those present noted that the testicles were missing, and they were convinced that this had been the cause of death. Through

modesty they did not reveal the fact and buried the body with everyone convinced that the death had been a natural one.⁴⁶

A number of years after the death, Emiliana, the wife of Lino, and Maria Tata, the wife of the cook Antonio, became mutually jealous. They were both seamstresses and they were at work. This was around August at the time of the lentil harvest.⁴⁷ Carlos Castro⁴⁸ was with his men working in the cornfields. Shortly before eleven o'clock he returned to his house for the meal. He was a man who understood well the language of the Indians. Returning from the cornfields, he passed behind one of the plaza walls near where these women were sewing and heard one tell the other that she was secretly eating *panocha*. Castro stopped and heard the second woman reply to the first, "How is it that you have so much money?" The first replied, "You also have it, because your husband killed the Father." Then the second accused the husband of the first woman of the same crime. The war of words continued, and Castro was convinced that Father Quintana had been assassinated, and he went to tell Father Ramon Olbés, who was the missionary at Santa Cruz, what he had heard.⁴⁹ Father Ramon went to tell Padre Marquez. The latter sent one of his pages to the orchard to warn Julian and his accomplices that they were going to be caught.⁵⁰ At noon, at about the time of the midday meal, Father Olbés spoke to Lino and asked him to send for his wife to come there and also to cut some pieces of cloth. Emiliana arrived, and Father Olbés placed her in a room where there was clothing and gave her some scissors with which to cut some pieces, telling her, "you will eat here." Then he sent a page to bring Maria Tata to take some dirty clothing out of the church to wash. The Mayordomo was observing the maneuverings of the Father. He made Maria Tata stay to eat there. He placed her in another room in order to cut some suits for the pages. The Mayordomo and the two Fathers went to eat. After the meal, and when the two women had also eaten, Father Olbés said to Emiliana, "Do you know who eats a lot of white sugar?" She answered that it was Maria Tata, "because her husband had killed Father Quintana." The Father made her return to the room and called for Maria Tata. The Father asked her, "Tell me if you know who it was that killed Padre Quintana; tell me the truth so that nothing will happen to you." Lino and Antonio often took their meals in

the kitchen. Maria Tata replied, "Lino, Father." Father Olbés then sent them to their houses to rest, offering them a present. Then the Father sent for the Corporal Nazario Galindo to arrest the assassins. They began with the orchard workers and the cook, without telling them why they were under arrest. Antonio was the first prisoner. Put in jail, they asked him who his accomplice was. He said who his accomplice was and the man was arrested, and they asked each one the name of their respective accomplices. In this way they were all arrested, except Lino, who was looked upon as a valiant man of great strength. He was taken through the deceit of his own Compadre Carlos Castro, who handed him a knife to pare some black and white mares in order to make a hakamore for the animal of the Father.⁵¹ Suspiciously, Lino said to Castro, "Compadre, why are you deceiving me? I know that you are going to arrest me." There were already two soldiers hidden behind the corral.

"Here, take your knife, Compadre, that which I thought is already done. I am going to pay for it—and if I had wanted to, I could have finished off the soldiers, the Mayordomos, and any others that might have been around on the same night that I killed the Father."

The result of all this was that the accused were sent to San Francisco, and among them was my father.⁵² There they were judged,⁵³ and those who killed the Father were sentenced to receive a *novenano* (nine days in succession) of 50 lashes for each one,⁵⁴ and to serve in public works at San Diego.⁵⁵ The rest, including my father, were freed because they had served as witnesses, and it was not proven that they had taken part in the assassination.

All returned after many years to their mission.⁵⁶

The Spanish Padres were very cruel toward the Indians. They abused them very much, they had bad food, bad clothing, and they made them work like slaves. I also was subjected to that cruel life. The Padres did not practice what they preached in the pulpit. The Same Father Olbés for all his cruelties, was once stoned by the Indians.⁵⁷

San Andres Ranch/Santa Cruz
Jurisdiction of Watsonville
July 10, 1877
Lorenzo Asisara
(rubric)

Editor's Conclusion

The martyrdom of Quintana became a "cause célèbre" among both his contemporaries and Hispanic colonial historians. Part of the aftermath of the assassination was the controversy which arose surrounding the conspirators' charge of cruelty practiced by the Franciscans in California. Franciscan historians are quick to point out that the military governor, Pablo Vicente de Solá, wrote a forceful defense of coercive mission practices under his jurisdiction.⁵⁸ Since there was a well-known animosity between the Franciscans and the military, some students of history may be tempted to view Solá's defense of Franciscan corporal punishment as a more or less persuasive denial of the charges against the latter.

While many historians choose to view Solá's letter at face value, there remains a nagging question regarding his motivations. He most certainly knew the Santa Cruz escolta [mission guards] were seriously negligent by not accompanying Quintana when he left the mission compound. Yet, curiously, no charges against the military resulted from their rather obvious neglect of duty. Military authorities must also have been embarrassed by the military surgeon's autopsy, which can most kindly be described as incompetent. On the other hand, Franciscan authorities were again faced with the embarrassing revelation of the coercive nature of Christian conversion throughout the Franciscan empire.⁵⁹ These church authorities were anxious to preserve and extend their colonial prerogatives. Earlier Father President Lasuén had justified the treatment of neophytes in California this way: "It is evident that a nation that is barbarous, ferocious, and ignorant requires more frequent punishment than a nation which is cultured, educated, and of gentle and moderate customs."⁶⁰

Certainly, Franciscan authorities were aware of the recent actions by the liberal Spanish Cortes of 1813. Reflecting

Enlightenment philosophy, this legislative body rejected the view that Indians were inferior. Consequently, they supported a plan to divest the Franciscan empire of its extensive land and labor holdings throughout New Spain's northwestern frontier and to provide mission Indians with land titles.⁶¹ Because of the current revolution in Mexico, the Cortes' decree remained in effect, but unenforced.

Given this situation, it would not seem unreasonable to assume that Franciscan authorities may have agreed not to hold the military authorities accountable for their failure to protect Quintana, in exchange for a report from the military governor that would contravene the Indian charges of cruelty to the neophytes and help redeem Quintana's and his order's reputation. CHS

See notes beginning on page 150.

A Cahuilla Indian and a descendant of mission Indians, Edward D. Castillo has an M.A. in anthropology and has also done graduate work in history at the University of California, Berkeley. He has published a bibliography and several articles on the response of Native Americans to Euro-American settlement, and is preparing a book on Hispanic colonization of Alta California for Garland Press' Spanish Borderlands Sourcebooks Project. He is currently director of the Native American Studies Program at California State University, Sonoma.



Reduced to homeless paupers, ex-neophytes of Mission Santa Cruz like Justiniano Roxas were grim reminders of the human cost of colonization. Courtesy Santa Cruz Public Library.

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Chinese grove workers packing oranges near Santa Ana, ca. 1895. CHS Library, San Francisco.

*This Bittersweet Soil:
The Chinese in California Agriculture,
1860-1910.*

By Sucheng Chan. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, 503 pp., \$40.00 cloth, \$14.95 paperback.)

The Chinese Experience in America.

By Shih-shan Henry Tsai. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986, 256 pp., \$29.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.)

Reviewed by Linda Pomerantz, Professor of History and Interdisciplinary Studies, California State University, Dominguez Hills.

These two books are a welcome addition to the growing library of works that deal with the history of the Chinese contribution to American life, and more particularly to California's history. While the purpose of each of these books

differs (Tsai's being a broad survey dealing with all the United States and Chan's being a specialized monograph on one aspect of Chinese-American history), they nonetheless both share high levels of scholarship incorporating new research approaches, and they both are eminently readable.

Henry Tsai's *The Chinese Experience in America* constitutes a remarkable synthesis of the available historical and social science literature dealing with Chinese in the United States. Set in a broadly chronological framework, Tsai's work not only deals with the nineteenth-century history of Chinese in America, but also carries their story up through the early 1980s. He integrates material from the comparative history of other ethnic groups in the United States, when appropriate, and provides insights derived from social science disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and political science to help clarify the Chinese experience.

I strongly recommend this book be used as a starting point for those who would like to introduce themselves to the field of Chinese-American history. Because of its readability, scope, and fine research, Tsai's work supersedes, in my opinion, earlier surveys that deal with the history and present circumstances of this important minority in our society.

Sucheng Chan's long-awaited monograph on the role of the Chinese in California's agricultural development during the nineteenth century represents nearly a decade's painstaking research and constitutes a magnificent scholarly accomplishment. Using a variety of primary source materials, including manuscript census data, county, state and federal archival materials, and a variety of contemporary newspaper and other materials, Dr. Chan has meticulously reconstructed the history of Chinese farming throughout the state.

Of particular interest is Dr. Chan's work dealing with the Chinese development of the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta region. This study documents the way that Chinese farmers, with painstaking and backbreaking labor, transformed the peat-laden soil of the delta into an important center of agriculture and introduced commercial crops such as potatoes, asparagus, and strawberries to the state, before moving into new areas of agricultural development in central and southern California.

This Bittersweet Soil represents an important development in the field of Chinese-American history. It tells a story that has remained hidden in thousands of documents until brought to life by Dr. Chan's scholarship. In addition to rounding out our understanding of the economic contribution of Chinese to California's history, it is a work that sets new standards for research in the field. Together with works such as Sandy

Lydon's *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (1985), which chronicles the history of the Chinese in the Monterey Bay region, a more complete picture of the nineteenth century history of the state is emerging.

Dr. Chan's work not only contributes to the field of Asian-American history, but also helps to flesh out the history of laborers and entrepreneurs in California agriculture. In particular, it adds to the body of literature by economic historians who have examined (and contended over) the significance of racial and ethnic divisions among California's farm workers in the nature of the development of California's agricultural industry in the twentieth century.

In sum, both these works are highly recommended to those who have an interest in the history of the Chinese community in California, while Sucheng Chan's book is also necessary reading for economic and agricultural historians of the state.

CHS

Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography.

By Dan L. Thrapp. (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1988, 3 vols., 1,168 pp., \$175.00 for three vols. cloth.

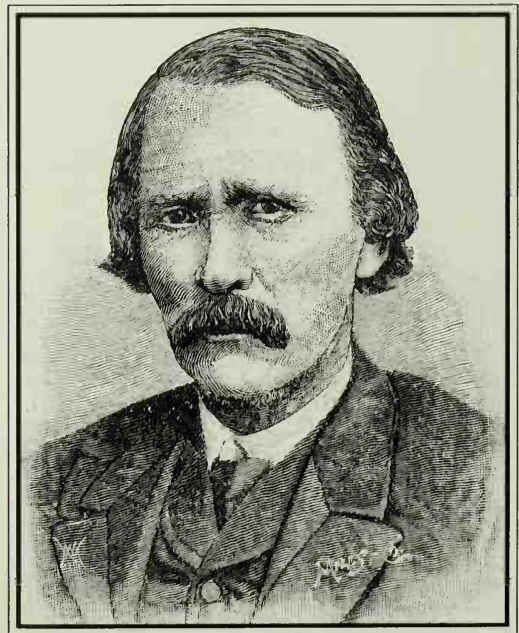
Reviewed by Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., Professor of History, University of Southern California.

Dan L. Thrapp, former religious editor of the Los Angeles Times and noted historian of American southwestern Indian-military affairs, has contributed an invaluable resource with the publication of this three-volume *Encyclopedia*. That one man could amass so much biographical data boggles the mind. The end result is a staggering achievement—a *tour de force!*

What is the purview of this impressive reference work? Thrapp answers that question best in his Introduction. "Candidates for inclusion in this compendium . . . include people no longer living, of either sex and any race . . . who came to attention through the *significance* of their deeds or simply were of *interest* in some connection with the evolving drama [on the American frontier]. Among them are explorers and discoverers, fur men, Indians and Indian agents, a few early cattlemen, travelers, military officers and soldiers, desperadoes

and lawmen, scouts, buffalo hunters, renegades, early conservationists and wildlife specialists, scientists, writers, painters, photographers and illustrators, expansionists, missionaries and martyrs, and those of many other callings—or none." However, the compiler eschews the mining frontier—"too vast a subject"—but does include a "few prospectors." (p. vii)

Since the book encompasses the ever-expanding American frontier from early European contact to the twentieth century, the end result is a cornucopia of biographical information. It becomes abundantly clear in scanning the text and reading the index (which is superb) that the reference work's main strength lies in military and Indian entries; understandable since that has been Thrapp's longtime research interest, with heavy emphasis on Arizona and New Mexico. Regrettably, California entries are slighted, though not totally ignored, say in



Engraving of Kit Carson, one of the heroes of 1846 and a western legend. CHS Library, San Francisco.

contrast to lawmen and outlaws. A sampling indicates that California subjects included are standard ones: Abert, Bidwell, Captain Jack, the Donner party, Frémont, the Gold Rush, Hastings, Kearny, Lasuén, the Modoc War, Neve, Oatman, Pico, Serra, Wolfskill, for example. Those interested in biographical information on the Golden State will find James D. Hart's *California Companion* more useful. Nor is the Pacific Northwest better served; so much for Pacific Coast regional chauvinism.

A second criticism is that a number of bibliographical sources relied upon to prepare the 4,500 entries are decidedly dated. This is understandable since work on this compilation has spanned many years. However, the reader should keep in mind that no work of this nature is definitive.

On balance, however, Thrapp's end product will ably serve as "a launching device for those beginning research into the history of some person or matter; a reliable reference for historians or others seeking a quick fact or to confirm a hazy recollection; a tool in locating further, more complete treatments of a subject; a means to round out a storehouse of facts or suppositions; a place to turn for those elusive shards of information the search for which might otherwise consume hours or even days, and a road toward further learning." (p. x) To these ends, this *Encyclopedia* will serve well. CHS

Gunpowder and Canvas From Drake to Canon Perdido: The History of Maritime Influence on the Central Coast of California.

By Justin M. Ruhge. (Goleta: Quantum Imaging Associates, 1987, 519 pp., \$25.00 paper.)

Reviewed by W. Michael Mathes, *Orden Mexicana del Aguila Azteca*, Professor of History, University of San Francisco, and author of various books and articles on the early maritime history of the Californias.

This volume is not for everyone, so if you are not deeply interested in early California maritime history, naval cannons,

or Goleta microhistory, please move on to another review. Possibly, the statement on the copyright page that the book was "assembled," and that of the author, a physicist, in the introduction that he would, as in his profession, use tables and illustrations, not words, to express himself, should have been adequate warning, for they are true to the letter. *Gunpowder and Canvas* appears to be a compilation of notes, some substantially better researched and more cohesive than others, formatted as sixteen individually numbered chapters. These are arranged in no evident order, chronological, topical, or otherwise, and vary in length from 3 to 118 pages. An arcane method of numbering footnotes eventually enables the reader to locate the source in a similarly unorthodox bibliography that is reasonably complete for published English language sources, but, since it treats of Spanish and Mexican California, is sadly devoid of works in Castilian, as well as manuscripts in any language. Furthermore, the text has numerous misspellings of Spanish names, some highly questionable translations, and lacks required accent marks and ñ, the latter essential in a region where Año Nuevo is an important coastal placename.

For early maritime and Goleta historians, the second "chapter" provides an entertaining overview of exploration of the Goleta coast, which places practically everyone there, makes it the hub of interest in California, and speculates (with illustrations) as to the "great city" that would have been located on Goleta Slough if there had not been so many Indians there, even though Vancouver stated that there were "reductions," thus indicating a "decline" in population! Chapter three continues the theme of Goleta (truly a beautiful area) as the *umbilicus orbis terrarum* with lists of trading vessels arriving for the hide and tallow trade taken from Bancroft, Howay, and Ogden, and chapter six tends to follow this concept by stating that "8-10,000 Chumash" inhabited the slough which was "once one of the outstanding waterways and population centers of the coast of California." Chapter seven discusses ship construction in the slough in the early nineteenth century, and chapter eight treats of its demise through wave erosion. Survival of the maritime tradition at Goleta through shore whaling in the 1870s is covered in chapter eleven.

The author's real strength, which unfortunately is diluted by a surround of chapters such as those mentioned, is in the

scientific investigation, identification, and restoration of iron naval artifacts. Chapter four discusses coastal batteries in Spanish and Mexican California and, although it seems to confuse "fort," "presidio," and "battery," locates the battery of Santa Bárbara with fine illustrations, maps, and lithographs. The theme of artillery and naval archaeology is continued with a listing of shipwrecks with cannon on the central coast in chapter five, and a clear and objective discussion of the Goleta anchor given in chapter nine. By far the most important contributions are in chapter fourteen (about 25% of the volume), an excellent scientific study of the cannons found at Goleta in 1981, the discussion of the ship *Dorothea* (a. *Eagle*) in chapter thirteen, and that of the theft of cannon during the U.S. invasion of Santa Bárbara in 1847 in chapter fifteen, although the lack of ñ and accent in Cañón Perdido (Lost Cannon) transforms it to Canon Perdido (an episcopal administrator who fell into sin!).

Finally, saving the best for last, are two chapters which will warm the hearts of followers of Churchward and Von Däniken. Chapter ten suggests the origin of Chumash canoes, by virtue of their similarity to Moluccan craft, as the western Pacific, and chapter sixteen—you guessed it—proposes Goleta Slough as the landing place for Francis Drake in 1579, with all the appropriate comparisons of conies, cartography, and coronations!

Notwithstanding the foregoing criticisms, in this volume there are many good illustrations, along with various bits and pieces of useful information and stimuli for further research for serious students of early California. All that is necessary is to sort them out. [CHS]

*Justified by Honor:
Highlights in the Life of
General James William Denver.*

By Edward Magruder Cook. (Falls Church, Virginia: Higher Education Publications, Inc., 1988, 176 pp., \$14.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by William F. King, Instructor of History at Mt. San Antonio College and author of *The Vintage Years*.

James W. Denver played a small, but interesting role in California history during the 1850s. An active, energetic man, Denver had many adventures, military and political, in several western regions. While his name became the basis for Colorado's capital city, he played no role in Colorado's development. Serving a brief term as the Territorial Governor of Kansas, which then stretched into the Rockies, some of his appointees named their frontier town after their benefactor.

An obvious labor of love, this slim, self-published book fulfills a long-cherished dream of Denver's descendant Edward M. Cook. A retired federal employee, Cook has assembled a wide-ranging and interesting collection of family letters, maps, sketches, photos, and portions of Denver's diary for his biography.

Born into a large Irish-American family in Virginia, Denver served in the Mexican War and then led a party of 34 gold seekers to California. His journal of the three-and-a-half-month trek occupies a quarter of Cook's work. Denver did not concern himself with the landscape or insightful commentary. The travails of the argonauts and the mounting number of trail-side graves are the most frequent references. Denver's diary of the trip does not add much to our knowledge of the man or the gold rush.

Upon arriving in his new home, Denver plunged into politics rather than mining. He served the Klamath-Trinity river region in the state legislature and Congress. He also had a brief stint as California's Secretary of State. Unfortunately, Cook devotes little time to these years in Denver's life. Denver is portrayed as an advocate of the transcontinental railroad and an advocate for the Indians, but Cook's coverage is superficial. Denver's role in securing property rights for California women is listed only in a cryptic addenda entry.

Instead, Cook concentrates on the duel in which Denver killed newspaper editor Edward Gilbert. Fought with rifles, the duel ended the life of the *Alta California's* leader and, by many accounts, forever marred Denver's political aspirations. Regrettably, the coverage of the duel is based primarily on accounts written many years later.

Although Cook has generally fulfilled his purpose, to highlight Denver's life, he has not provided an effective portrayal of his years in California politics. Based mainly on genealogical material, Cook's writing suffers from the usual strengths

and weaknesses of this approach. Since Denver's life was spent primarily outside of California, there is little here for those interested in California history. Hopefully, more will be written, stimulated by Cook's beginning efforts, on the exploits of General Denver in California. A full-scale biography is clearly needed. CHS

Dear Lizzie: The Papers of John Marsh Smith, 1849-1857.

Transcribed and annotated by The Historical Activities Committee of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Oregon. (Portland: The Society, 1987, 194 pp., \$24.95.)

Reviewed by Warren A. Beck, Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton, and co-author of *Historical Atlas of the American West*.

The California gold rush has produced a staggering number of books of all kinds—historical works, novels, poems, and, most important, diaries, letters, and memoirs by those who came "to see the Elephant." Yet, despite the vast total, there is always room for one more. This book is based mainly upon the letters home of a Quaker from Baltimore to his wife (Dear Lizzie) and to other members of his family. They relate Smith's experiences en route to California, and his stint as a prospector, merchant, and innkeeper in the Golden State and Oregon. These letters home display a keen insight into the realities of frontier life but also show a sense of humor and charm too often absent from this genre. This work has themes running through it similar to many others about the Gold Rush; it is, however, set apart by the religious orientation of the author.

The Quaker upbringing of Smith "is evident in his moral rectitude, his concern for others, and his loving tenderness toward Lizzie and the 'dear little boys.'" (2) The moral rectitude is revealed in the following: "Tell my kind creditors that I think of them often when I sling my *pick and shovel*." (83-84) Objection to gambling is frequently voiced: "Gambling is the occupation of the masses. 'Tis disgustingly popular." (28) "Merchandising and Gambling are the two principal occupations of the inhabitants here." (102) Smith refused to allow

gambling in the hotel he managed thereby contributing to the failure of the enterprise. A friend wrote to applaud his stand: "So you refused to make money by encouraging gambling! I can't tell you how glad I was to hear it—to know that there was one at least of our old friends who had the courage to hold on to moral principle in spite of pecuniary disadvantage." (45) Apparently neither Smith nor his pious friends saw any inconsistency in condemning gambling at cards or dice while engaging in prospecting for gold, the greatest game of chance of them all.

The principal author of these letters may have been a pious friend, but he was first of all a keen businessman. He came to California and Oregon for the same reason most men came—"to see the Elephant"; he comments many times that "all I want is my pile." (92) The statement, "when I make money enough to live comfortable, and buy a little farm, I am away [from] here," was the sentiment of most of his fellow Argonauts. Smith's frequent promise, "when I get home I don't want to go away no more," (89) was undoubtedly the sentiment of countless others.

For most of the time spent on the West Coast, these letters display a theme of optimism. However, as his stay drew to a close and Dame Fortune had still not smiled upon him, pessimism became pronounced. He predicts that "General bust" will take over in California shortly, and laments that "this is a country where honesty is a phantom too hideous to be countenanced." (128) Having tried the mines without success several times, Smith constantly sought business opportunities and advised a friend that with 4 or 5 thousand "success is sure," (38) but "the time has passed when men without means can make sudden Fortunes in California." (140)

Many letters discuss the high cost of goods such as potatoes, flour, molasses, candles, and shovels in the gold mining area and how much money could be made if one could only have a supply of items currently in demand. Smith even comments that Boston ice was being peddled in carts on the streets of San Francisco for fifty cents per pound. The author was amazed to find "Lawyers, Preachers, Doctors, Merchants driving wagons and carts, and one man driving an ox team was pointed out to me as one of the Professors from Yale college." (28)

Smith wrote of the mud, snow, and miserable weather, and although appreciative of the beautiful scenery, daily hard-

ships made him long for home. Even this pious Quaker could not accept a society where "Tis strange to see all men and no women," (35) and "I have not seen a half dozen or heard the voice of a single female for the last five weeks." (36)

This collection has been skillfully edited and is a worthwhile addition to the literature of the Gold Rush. This reviewer would have liked to have more information about the later career of John Marsh Smith and Dear Lizzie, but perhaps it was not available. CHS

Travels in Mexico and California.

Edited by Anne M. Perry. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1988, 143 pp. with index, \$17.50 cloth.)

Reviewed by Rudolph M. Lapp, Professor of History at College of San Mateo and author of Blacks in Gold Rush California.

This journal by New Englander Asa B. Clarke is a welcome addition to the small number of accounts of forty-niners who took a southerly route to the California gold mines. Clarke, a former school teacher and druggist, takes the reader in his daily notations mainly through Mexico and southern California with the Hampden Mining Company. His literate and sensitive comments make the journal eminently readable.

In the Mexican portion of the journal, there is considerable social description of the native peoples of Spanish, as well as Native American, origin. He is even-handed in his complimentary remarks as well as in his fears and annoyances at thievery experienced by travelers in Mexico. There is also something for Mexican War buffs who wish to read of the ravages of the war that had just ended a few years earlier.

The New Englander in Clarke emerges in his detailed description of a bullfight, which he thoroughly detested. He believed it was a serious blemish on the Latin-American character to enjoy this cruelty. But this did not inhibit him from expressing his gratitude for Mexican care and generosity when he was ill and in Mexican hands.

The feeling he has for the suffering of animals on this arduous journey is another reflection of this ex-school teacher's background. Clarke is very kind to his mule. His journal

reports on the death rate of work beasts as they journey through the deserts.

This reviewer could not fail to note the more than several occasions when Blacks appear in this journal—often as servants of other companies en route. (The editor, with one exception, unfortunately did not note them in the index.) In one case, an African-American was the servant of the *New Orleans Picayune* journalist, John Durivage, who, when in desperate straits and nearly dying of thirst, saw his black servant Isaac coming to him with water and described him as an "angel." The editor probably did not know that ordinarily Durivage's journalism was most derogatory to black people.

The journal continues into California and then comes to a conclusion. The literature of the life in the mines gains nothing from this part of the work. Clarke spends the year 1850 in business ventures in Sacramento and Marysville. The paucity of original materials on Marysville in the first years of the gold rush make Clarke's decision not to keep a journal for that period regrettable.

The whole account is enriched by the editor's biographical piece on Clarke and the extensive notes drawn from other published contemporary and parallel journals and diaries. CHS

Through Indian Country to California: John P. Sherburne's Diary of the Whipple Expedition, 1853-1854.

Edited by Mary McDougall Gordon. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, xiv, 285 pp., \$24.50 cloth.)

Reviewed by Joseph R. Conlin, Professor of History at California State University, Chico, and author of Bacon, Beans, and Galantines: Food and Foodways on the Western Mining Frontier.

In 1853, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis sent three military expeditions westward to survey the routes then being promoted as the most likely over which to build a railroad to California. The sectional politics of the projected transcontinental line, soon to treat the nation to the divisive Kansas-

Nebraska Act, were much on the mind of the Mississippian Davis. Himself convinced that the southernmost 35th parallel route was the best, he regarded the explorations between the 47th and 49th parallels, and between the 38th and 39th parallels, as little more than gestures of good faith to the North; and to command the party that traced the 35th parallel, he appointed a northern officer, Lieutenant Amiel Whipple of Massachusetts.

Although only thirty-six years old, Whipple had extensive experience in topographical surveys on both the Canadian and Mexican lines. Whipple's appointment of John P. Sherburne to the expedition's scientific corps, on the other hand, seems to have owed to little more than the fact that he was Whipple's brother-in-law. Sherburne had recently been asked to resign from West Point after three and one-half years of study, ostensibly because of irreconcilable differences with the science of chemistry.

Whatever his apparent qualifications, Sherburne proved to be an able worker and the keeper of a fascinating diary, now published for the first time in a splendidly designed volume by Stanford University Press, superbly edited by Mary McDougall Gordon. Gordon has followed the example set by J.S. Holliday in his editing of *The World Rushed In*, a Forty-Niner diary, in interposing in the text excerpts from other relations by participants, including Whipple's official report and journals and the *Diary* of the expedition artist, H. Balduin Möllhausen. It is an invaluable device, enhancing a single-sighted account into a rounded adventure.

The Whipple expedition, consisting of some 70 men, 240 mules, herds and flocks, and substantial baggage—the party gathered meteorological, botanical, and ethnological data as well as surveying a roadway—followed a trail blazed in 1849. They left Fort Smith, Arkansas, in August 1853, traversed Indian Territory, northern Texas, and New Mexico Territory to, some eight months later, San Pedro.

For transcontinental diary junkies, each one has its unique recommendations. Sherburne's is characterized by the youthful exuberance of its author; he was twenty-two and, it would seem, "liberated" rather than disheartened by his severance from West Point. He is without self-consciousness where, for example, Möllhausen and so many other cross-country travelers wrote first-person accounts that might have been titled "Odysseus and Friends." Sherburne's ethnological observa-

tions specialize in the comparative attractiveness of the young ladies of the various native tribes and pueblos which the party encountered, although, in his diary, Sherburne properly returns to camp after each of what seem innumerable *fandangos*.

There are new insights here for even the jaded old diary hand. Sherburne tells us of graffiti, Indian as well as white, in howling wilderness; of what it meant when mules stampeded (a chase of thirty-five miles!); of remote pueblos only then suffering catastrophically from the introduction of the white man's smallpox; of cowbirds so oblivious to human beings that teamsters could pop them dead with their whips when the birds alighted on the backs of the mules they were driving.

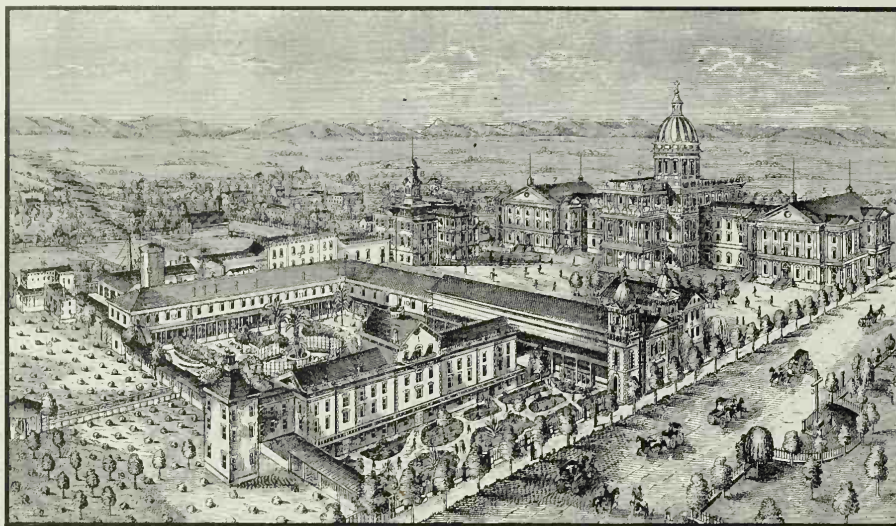
A final word in praise of the editor and publisher is in order. Mary McDougall Gordon's abundant, but never obtrusive, notes provide the reader with bearings and explanatory information at every turn. Stanford University Press has chosen paper that is a pleasure to handle, a perfect typeface, a strikingly chaste design, illustrations from Möllhausen, and excellent maps. If I seem a bit excessive here, it is because this is indeed a beautiful little book both in content and form. CHR

Sketches of California in the 1860's: The Journals of Jesus Maria Estudillo.

Edited and annotated by Margaret Schlichtmann. (Fredericksburg, Texas: The Awani Press, Inc., 1988, iii, 180 pp., \$8.95 paper.)

Reviewed by Richard Griswold del Castillo, Professor of Mexican American Studies at San Diego State University and author of The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History.

This personal diary of an 18 year old *californio* youth in 1862 provides a rare glimpse of how a member of the Mexican land-owning class thought and felt about his fast changing world. The diary covers the period when Jesus Maria Estudillo began college at Santa Clara and his summer vacation with relatives in San Diego. It contains his impressions of San Francisco, the events of the Civil War, various financial prob-



A line drawing of the Santa Clara College campus in the late nineteenth century. Some of the early buildings are still in use. *CHS Library, San Francisco.*

lems encountered by his family, and local events. The diary covers the year 1862; Ms. Schlichtmann was prevented by illness from extending her editorial work to the other volumes and this work was completed by Marie Wilson.

Jesus Maria Estudillo, referred to as JM by the editor, lived on Rancho San Leandro until he entered Santa Clara as a boarding student. The diary tells of his daily assignments, the weather, and his friendships with other upper-class *californio* youths who were also attending the college. Although JM was bilingual, his journal was written in a very-well-polished English that would put many of our present-day undergraduates to shame. He spent a great deal of time writing and waiting for letters from a variety of friends and relatives. JM waxed poetic about the events around him, confessing a loneliness that drove him to reading and recounting with vivid prose the lurid murders he had read about in newspapers.

Estudillo was already well acculturated. He was highly literate in English, and many of his friends were Anglo-Americans. Only a few passages might be interpreted as "ethnic," such as his account of the rage and insult he felt about being ignored by a priest-teacher or his joy at playing with his cousins in San Diego—all of whom were *californios*. But he admits that boredom drove him to read in Spanish; and that San Diego was ultimately a wretched place to visit.

This diary is a rare find. Not many teenagers in that age kept diaries that have survived to the present; and very few adults kept them as readably or as informatively. Of the more than

150 *californio* reminiscences compiled by Thomas Savage for Hubert Howe Bancroft during the 1870s and 80s, only a handful cover the post-1848 period, and none of these has thus far been published. There are probably scores of manuscript volumes of nineteenth-century history written by *californios* existing in the Bancroft Library as yet unpublished. It is indeed ironic that a Texas publisher should recognize the importance of making this literature available to the public.

Of special note is the very detailed editorial work done by Schlichtmann and Wilson. The considerable historical research they have done makes the diary much more comprehensible, setting it in a wider context and explaining otherwise cryptic passages. The editorial introduction to the journals is a well-researched history of the Estudillo family and the Rancho San Leandro. At the end of the book is a genealogy of the family as well as a selection of photographs from the period (without a photo of Estudillo, however). It would help if editorial commentary were set off from the diary entries by spaces or italics since frequently I was confused as to whose entry I was reading. Also, the scholarly notes do not follow any accepted style, but remain understandable.

Awani press is to be congratulated on publishing this much-needed book in paperback, thus making it accessible to a wider audience. I would heartily recommend this book for all those interested in California history; even students taking Chicano Studies classes might find Estudillo's musing inspirational.

CHS

The Ranch Papers: A California Memoir.

By Jane Hollister Wheelwright. (San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1988, 152 pp., \$19.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by George Edward Frakes, Professor of History at Santa Barbara City College and coeditor of *Minorities in California History*.

Jane Hollister Wheelwright's work is a nontraditional history of the Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County. This ranch was a vast privately-held tract of nearly 39,000 acres extending inland from the coast near Point Concepcion. Prior to its sale and division in the late 1960s, the Hollister Ranch was one of the state's last great working cattle ranches, and it reflected the life and spirit of nineteenth-century California. Originally purchased by William Welles Hollister in the mid-nineteenth century from the larger Mexican land grant, *La Nuestra Señora del Refugio*, the ranch remained in the Hollister family for more than ninety years.

This memoir, written by the granddaughter of the first Anglo owner, describes the history of the place by using the method of recounting experiences over different parts of the property while riding horseback. By not adopting the form or method of local, family, or corporate histories, the author, who is a Jungian psychotherapist, draws upon her training and experiences to provide emotional, psychological, and perhaps even spiritual images of the ranch. Mrs. Wheelwright, 83, writes in a traditional, nonscholarly, and near-poetic style. Her love of nature, concern for ecology, compassion for the original Native-American owners, and fond memories of earlier eras of ranch life are apparent. Equally obvious is her dislike of recent developments of the property. She does provide italicized inserts, a few documents, and pictures to provide an overview of her family and a history of the ranch. The work has excellent photographs and illustrations that provide a "window" through which we can see glimpses of earlier ranch life. In a sense, the history of the ranch is a micro-history of the state. Its course from a group of Chumash villages to post-war economic complexity reflects a recurring theme throughout the state.

Mrs. Wheelwright's prose and reminiscences are rich and evocative. Her approach to interpreting the past is difficult to

assess based only upon traditional academic historiographic standards, because her work is influenced by both Jung and Clio. The memoir does make a positive contribution to the state's history, and should be read by persons interested in Santa Barbara County, agricultural, and environmental history.

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*Ocean of Bitter Dreams:
Maritime Relations Between China
and the United States.*

By Robert J. Schwendinger. (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1988, 265 pp., \$18.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by Richard Dillon, *Sutro Librarian Emeritus* and author of *Texas Argonauts*.

It may not be fair to the author to describe him as a revisionist historian, since that adjective teeters, today, on the brink of the pejorative. This is so because of the excesses of some practitioners of the new art. They substitute preconceptions, chic sociology, or strident polemics for buttock-fatiguing research. Worse than the do-gooders or bleeding hearts, so called, who would rewrite the record to make it more "fair" (at least, their intentions are good), are the Freudians and Marxists who whet their axes with psycho-biography or dialectics masquerading as history. Schwendinger is not one of them, but some readers may feel that he is suspect because of seeming oversimplification of complicated issues and a one-sided partisanship in his account. For example, he might have examined, calmly and objectively, the proponents of the Exclusion Acts to be sure that racism was universal among them. Some may have seen Chinese as unique immigrants, men (almost no women, at first) who were admitted sojourners with no intention of becoming permanent Americans. They wished to make their pile and hurry home to the Old Country. Others surely saw them as the dupes, or witting tools, of capitalists determined to hold wages low and to keep organized labor in line. By and large, however, even the author's harshest criticisms appear to be substantiated by facts.

Historiography is no sundial, reflecting only the sunny hours of our past. It is our duty to examine the dark side

of our history. That is exactly what Robert Schwendinger does and, interestingly, where two inadequately explored areas of Americana—ethnic history and maritime history—intersect. The former, belatedly, has become the scene of considerable activity. The latter, inexplicably, remains, largely *mare incognita*.

Because his subject is large, the author divides his book into three parts in hopes of better organizing its disparate elements. Part I is devoted to the China trade of the sailing-ship era. In it, Schwendinger argues that Uncle Sam was something of an unindicted co-conspirator with John Bull in the Open Door trade policy. An arrogant and greedy Britain, with more or less American acquiescence, rudely—violently—kicked the door ajar by means of the despicable Opium Wars. Proud California clippers soon entered the opium and coolie trades, as Lord Palmerston reassured critics that the drug was no more addictive than tea. What he had to say about the coolie trade is not recorded, but Yankee skippers soiled their hands in this transportation of indentured contract laborers—serfs—to sugarcane fields in Cuba or filthy guano pits on Peru's Chincha Islands.

The second section covers Chinese immigration and its exclusion in the days of both sail and steam. The most interesting part of the entire book is here, a documentation of the connivance of our consular officials with unscrupulous traders. It is hardly surprising to find consuls *en cama* with skippers and supercargoes. But their involvement in fraud and extortion comes as a shock. Consul General Rounseville Wildman (Hong Kong) is the star of this tacky drama. The sometime editor-publisher of San Francisco's influential *Overland Monthly* probably deserves an entire book, himself.

The last part of the volume has to do with the attempts of West Coast labor and politicians to ban Chinese crews from American ships. The Asians were falsely accused of incompetence and cowardice and, thus, held responsible for the many casualties in the Golden Gate shipwrecks of the *City of Chester* (1888) and the *Rio de Janeiro* (1901).

The abuse of the enfeebled Manchu Empire by the Western powers made it easy for bigots on the Pacific Coast to mistreat individual Chinese seamen and immigrants with impunity. They had no votes, and their opponents were extremely vote-



Oriental trade warehouses along the San Francisco waterfront, 1870s. CHS Library, San Francisco.

conscious. (Some of this reviewer's own blue-collar Irish ancestors were so supportive of the secret ballot that, secretly, they voted several times over in the same election.)

So it is that, in the pages of this hard-hitting and, yes, partisan, book we see, alas, a number of our heroes with, at least, one foot of clay, each. James Phelan, Andy Furuseth, Jack London, and others were thus disfigured by their willingness to embrace bigotry out of economic or political opportunism. CHS

*Visions Toward Tomorrow:
The History of the East Bay
Afro-American Community, 1852-1977.*

By Lawrence P. Crouchett, Lonnie G. Bunch, III, and Martha Kendall Winnacker. (Oakland: Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life, 1989, 70 pp., \$8.50 paper.)

Reviewed by Douglas Daniels, Associate Professor of Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *Pioneer Urbanites*.

This slender volume is an impressive work. It covers a century and a quarter's history of Blacks in the East Bay, notes the significant individuals and institutions that played leading roles, and manages to avoid the pitfalls of many local histories. The work is based on written documents from large and small urban and community archives, and especially the Northern California Center for Afro-American History and Life (formerly East Bay Negro Historical Society); on oral histories and memoirs of East Bay residents; and on photos from family albums and various archives and libraries.

There are two themes that are treated with accuracy as well as sophistication. It documents the pervasiveness of racism in Oakland, Richmond, and Berkeley, in private businesses and public institutions such as the University of California, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But this is not the main concern. These obstacles are presented rather as challenges to an oppressed people determined to improve their personal welfare and to actualize the promises of democracy

and equality so that the Afro-American community benefits tangibly. The balance between individual efforts and concerted group activities is as remarkable as the shifts from white racism to Black accomplishments.

That a small body of residents—about 6,000 in 1920—succeeded in creating and sustaining a complex array of institutions is even more impressive than the amount of white racism that made it necessary. In the 1850s Black pioneers supported a private school and a mission that became a church a few years later. Besides, several churches, fraternal organizations, newspapers, business establishments, civic and women's clubs, a home for the aged, and their own branches of the



Afro-Americans in California at the turn of the century. CHS Library, San Francisco.

YMCA and fire department evidenced their energy, dedication, and sense of community.

The work is not without some flaws, however. It would have benefitted from closer proofreading, as several words are misspelled, such as the name Sanderson (p. 6), "separatism" (p. 32), "racial" (p. 33), and the state of Mississippi (p. 45). Also, an occasional reference to similar developments in San Francisco and Los Angeles would strengthen the California context. Many readers would find a map valuable and a bibliography useful for future reading. Nonetheless, the work represents a model for local histories in terms of its imparting a humanist dimension to people frequently viewed as inarticulate and in its treatment of a variety of themes in such a way as to build upon the methods and themes developed in Afro-American studies. CHS



Among the attractions of the Treasure Island Fair was the Court of Pacifica, theme statue of the exposition. CHS Library, San Francisco.

The San Francisco Fair: Treasure Island, 1939-1940.

Edited by Patricia F. Carpenter and Paul Totah. (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 1989, ix, 158 pp., \$29.95 cloth.)

Reviewed by Burton Benedict, *Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of The Anthropology of World's Fairs.*

This is a non-book, but a pretty one. It consists of fifty-one, two-to-three-page reminiscences by people who attended or worked at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay during 1939-1940. Nearly all of them comment on the beauty of the fair, especially at night when the buildings and fountains were illuminated by colored lights. This is well-documented in the spectacular photographs by Karl Jacob (1906-1971), which, the editors acknowledge, were the impetus for the volume. The whole book is a panegyric. There is no analysis of the fair. The editors furnish a two-page introduction which acknowledges that there had been a depression and was about to be a war, but they provide no scholarly or critical questioning. They do not attempt to draw conclusions from the reminiscences they have collected. The reminiscences are largely autobiographical and often romanticised. Some of them barely mention the fair. Many are banal. All are anecdotal.

What do people remember about the fair? Children remember the giveaways—Heinz's pickle pins, Union Pacific's aluminum tokens. They also remember eating a lot and being allowed to run free. Pre-pubescents remember trying to get into Sally Rand's Nude Ranch. High school and college students remember the big bands of Benny Goodman and Tommy Dorsey, and the opportunities for dating. Those a little older remember the wonders of television, GM's transparent car, the Vodor that reproduced the human voice (sort of) by keyboard operation, and the foreign pavilions, especially that of Japan. Esther Williams and the Aquacade made a big splash in 1940.

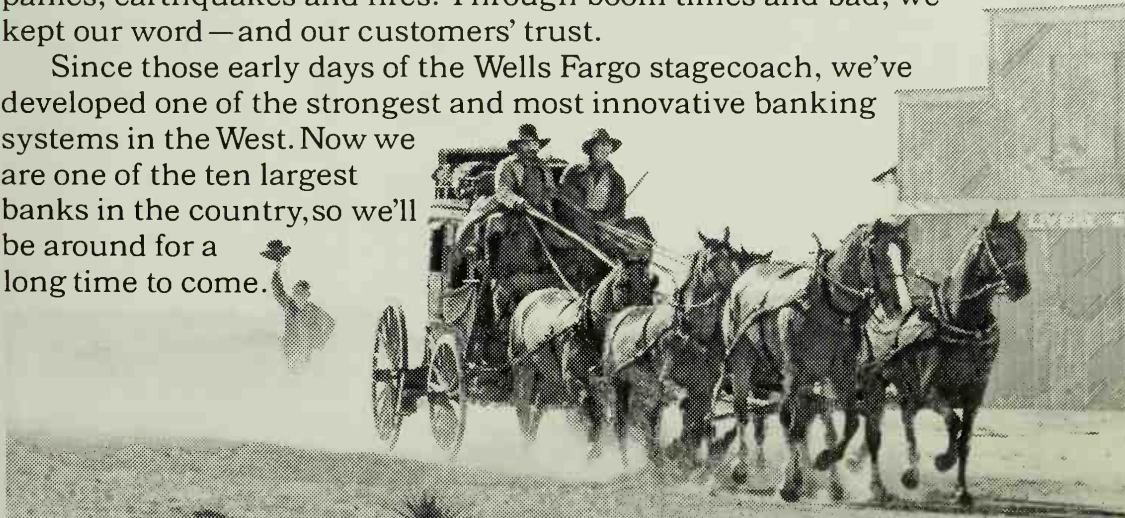
In general one has the impression of a show with much surface and little content. The same can be said of this book. CHS

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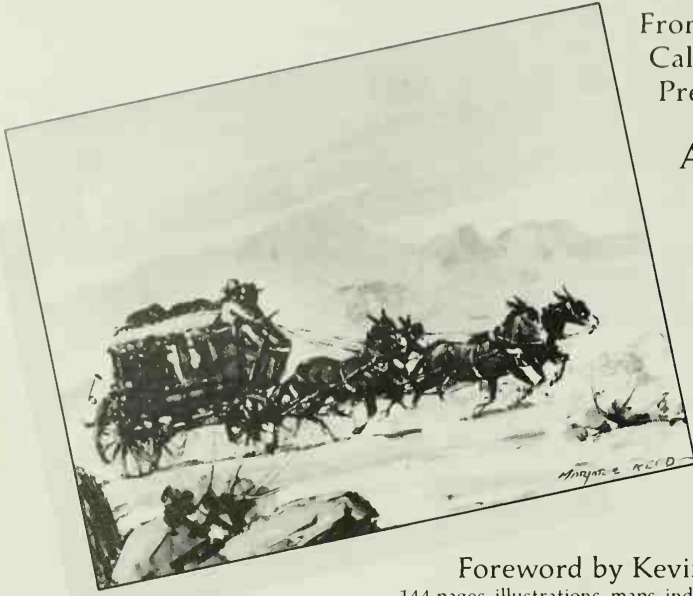
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Laurie W. Boetcher, Editorial Assistant
California History

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Abril, Ben. *Abril: Images of a Golden Era*. Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1989. \$40.00 (cloth) ISBN 0-87062-174-2. Order from: The Arthur H. Clark Company; P.O. Box 14707; Spokane, WA 99214.

Armitage, Susan and Elizabeth Jameson (eds.). *The Women's West*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988. \$24.95 (cloth) ISBN 0-8061-2043-6; \$12.95 (paper) ISBN 0-0861-2067-3. Add \$1.50 postage and handling for each copy. Order from: University of Oklahoma Press; P.O. Box 787; Norman, OK 73070-0787, or call 1-800-627-7377.

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Derickson, Alan. *Workers' Health, Workers' Democracy: The Western Miners' Struggle, 1891-1925*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989. \$26.95 (cloth) plus \$2.50 postage and handling. ISBN 0-8014-2060-1. Order from: Cornell University Press; 124 Roberts Pl.; P.O. Box 250; Ithaca, NY 14851, or call 1-800-666-2211 (credit cards only).

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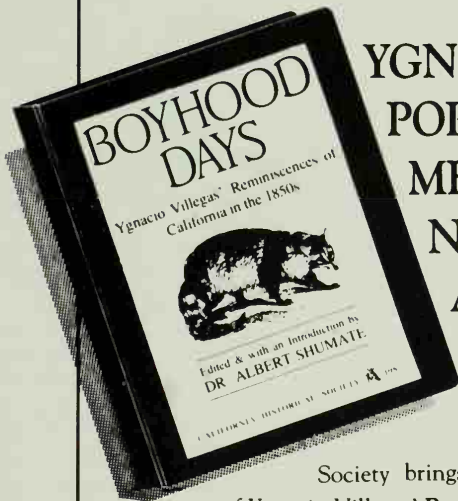
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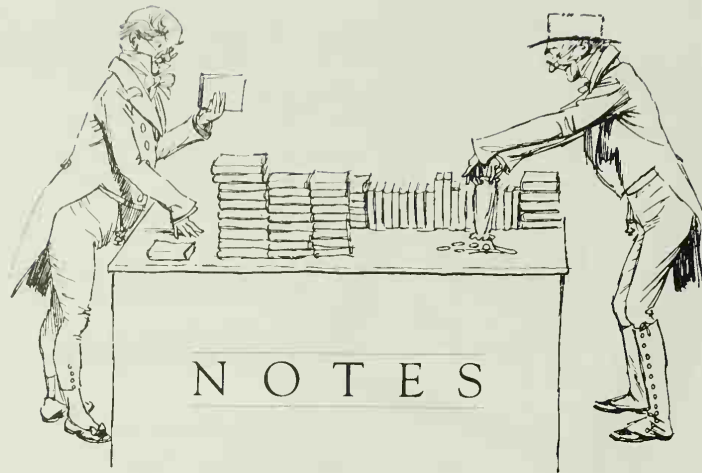
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GREGORY, "Dust Bowl," pp.74-85.

1. The articles were written for the *San Francisco News* (Oct. 5-11, 1936) and republished as *Their Blood is Strong* (San Francisco, 1938). A new edition, edited by Charles Wollenberg, has recently been issued as *The Harvest Gypsies: On the Road to the Grapes of Wrath* (Berkeley, 1988).
2. Recent studies of the Dust Bowl migration include: James N. Gregory, *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California* (New York, 1989); Walter J. Stein, *California and the Dust Bowl Migration* (Westport, Conn., 1973); Sheila Goldring Manes, "Depression Pioneers: The Conclusion of An American Odyssey, Oklahoma to California, 1930-1950, a Reinterpretation" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982); Jacqueline Gordon Sherman, "The Oklahomans in California During the Depression Decade, 1931-1941" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1970). Still more valuable is the collection of more than fifty interviews conducted by the California Odyssey Program, California State University, Bakersfield, Library.
3. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of the United States, Population: 1920*, Vol. II, 628-29; 1930, Vol. II, 155-56; 1940, *State of Birth*, 17-18; 1950, *State of Birth*, 20-24; 1960, *State of Birth*, 22-23; 1970, *State of Birth*, 28-29.
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Seymour J. Janow, "Volume and Characteristics of Recent Migration to the Far West," in U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens, Pursuant to H. Res. 63, 491, 629 (76th Congress) and H. Res. 16 (77th Congress), *Hearings* (Wash. D.C., 1940, 1941), Part 6, 2307.
5. Donald Bogue, Henry S. Shryock, Jr., and Siegfried A. Hoerman, *Subregional Migration in the United States, 1935-1940, Vol I: Streams of Migration Between Subregions*, Scripps Foundation Studies in Population

- Distribution, No. 5 (Oxford, Ohio, 1957) table 1, lxxxiii-cxxxiii.
6. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940 Census Public Use Microdata Sample (Wash. D.C., 1983). This is a machine-readable data file consisting of a 1 percent sample of enumerated households. For a fuller reporting of the migrants' socioeconomic experience see the tables in Gregory, *American Exodus*, 49, 60, 186-87, 252-53.
7. 1950 Census Public Use Microdata Sample.
8. 1970 Census Public Use Microdata Sample.
9. 1950 and 1970 Census Public Use Samples. See Gregory, *American Exodus*, appendix B, 250-51.
10. An adequate general study of the history of the San Joaquin Valley still needs to be written. Meanwhile, see Wallace Smith, *Empire of the Sun* (Fresno, 1939); Walter Goldschmidt, *As You Sow: Three Studies in the Social Consequences of Agribusiness* (Montclair, N.J., 1978); Gerald Haslam, *Voices of a Place* (Walnut Creek, 1987).
11. Pacific Bell Bakersfield Telephone Directory yellow pages (July 1984), 171-76; Bernard Quinn, et al., *Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1980* (Atlanta, 1982), 45-46, shows that 58 percent of Kern County Protestants belong to evangelical churches.
12. On the preservation of Southwestern accents in the valley see Bruce Ray Berryhill, "The Relationship Between Regional and Social Dialects and Linguistic Adaptation" (MA thesis, California State University, Fresno, 1976). Several journalists have described persisting cultural patterns: Gerald Haslam, "The Okies: Forty Years Later," *The Nation* CCXX (March 15, 1975): 299-302; David Lyon, "Campfires Dotted the Still Nights," *Bakersfield Californian*, May 27, 1979; Michael Fessier Jr., "Grapes of Wrath, 1977," *New West II* (July 18, 1977): 24-31; Irwin Speizer, "Dust Bowl's Living Legacy," *Fresno Bee*, July 6, 1986.
13. Michael Barone, Grant Ujifusa, and Douglas Matthews, *The Almanac of American Politics 1978* (New York, 1977), 77; Tony Quinn, "Anatomy of an Electorate: 75%

Faithful, 25% Fickle," *California Journal* XIII (March 1982): 100-102.

14. The literature on American ethnic experience is vast and complex. The place to begin is *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, ed. by Stephan Thernstrom (Cambridge, 1980), especially the theoretical articles on leadership, religion, assimilation and pluralism, and concepts of ethnicity. The importance of institutional opportunities is also suggested in William L. Yancey, Eugene P. Erickson and Richard N. Juliani, "Emergent Ethnicity: A Review and Reformulation," *American Sociological Review* XLI (June 1976): 391-403; Grace DeSantis and Richard Benkin, "Ethnicity Without Community," *Ethnicity* VII (June 1980): 137-43; Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore, 1975). The recollection of the former Oklahoman, quoted above, is from Ernest Martin, interviewed by Judith Gannon, April 5, 1981, California Odyssey Program, California State University, Bakersfield, Library.
15. Quinn, *Churches and Church Membership*, 11; Gregory, *American Exodus*, 191-221.
16. James N. Gregory, "Country Music and the Okie Subculture," in *New Directions in California History*, ed. by James J. Rawls, (New York, 1988), 281-94.
17. The seminal exploration of country music origins is Archie Green, "Hillbilly Music: Source and Symbol," *Journal of American Folklore* LXXVIII (July-September 1965): 204-28. The standard full-length treatment is Bill C. Malone, *Country Music USA: A Fifty-Year History*, (Austin, 1968). Other essential works include D.K. Wilgus, "Country-Western Music and the Urban Hillbilly," *Journal of American Folklore* LXXXIII (April-June 1970): 157-79; and Patricia Averill, "Can the Circle Be Unbroken: A Study of the Modernization of Rural Born Southern Whites Since World War I Using Country Music" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1975); Richard A. Peterson and Russell Davis Jr., "The Fertile Crescent of Country Music," *Journal of Country Music* VI (Spring 1975):

- 19-27. The pages of the *John Edwards Memorial Foundation Quarterly* (hereinafter *JEMF Quarterly*) provide the best look at California's early country music scene.
18. Douglas B. Green, "The Singing Cowboy: An American Dream," *Journal of Country Music* VII (May 1978): 10-20; Gene Autry with Mickey Herskowitz, *Back in the Saddle Again* (New York, 1978); Malone, *Country Music USA*, 145-153.
 19. Background information on these and other country musicians can be found in the *JEMF Quarterly*; Malone, *Country Music USA*; Green, "The Singing Cowboy"; Stephen Ray Tucker, "The Western Image of Country Music" (MA thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1976), 60-68.
 20. Joe Klein, *Woody Guthrie: A Life* (New York, 1980), 87-89, 92, 102.
 21. Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Recordings, 1940 and 1941, Archive of Folk Culture, Library of Congress. The two men published some of their observations in "Ballads of the Okies," *New York Times Magazine*, November 17, 1940, 6-7 + . For other examples of professional music ambitions, see Esther A. Canter, "California 'Renovates' the Dust Bowler," *Hygeia* (May, 1940), 455; Saunders, "Migrant's True Friend," *Bakersfield Californian*, October 21, 1939; Letter from Mrs. J.A.S. in the Charles Todd Okie Studies Collection, in the possession of Professor Gerald Haslam, California State University, Sonoma. Describing her marriage at age 17, she says of her husband, "like most 'Okies' he was a musician."
 22. Keith Olesen, liner notes, Maddox Brothers and Rose, 1946-1951, Volume I (Arhoolie Records 5016). For other career stories, see Paul Westmoreland, interview by Tom Norris, May 23, 1983, Sacramento History Center; interviews with Buck Owens and Bill Woods by Jana Jae Greif, November 6 and May 12, 1976, Oral History Collection, California State University, Bakersfield, Library. Also the following articles in *JEMF Quarterly*: Ken Griffis, "I Remember Johnny Bond," XIV (August 1978): 110; Gene Bear and Ken Griffis, "The Porky Freeman Story," XI (Spring 1975): 33-34; Merle Travis, "Recollections of Merle Travis, 1944-1955," XV (Summer 1979): 107-114.
 23. Merle Haggard with Peggy Russell, *Sing Me Back Home: My Story* (New York, 1981), 108.
 24. Interview by author, March 27 and April 1, 1985. On Wills' career see Charles R. Townsend, *San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills* (Urbana, 1976).
 25. My thoughts on political culture have been guided by Robert Emil Botsch, *We Shall Not Overcome: Populism and Southern Blue-Collar Workers* (Chapel Hill, 1980); Julian B. Roebuck and Mark Hickson, III, *The Southern Redneck: A Phenomenological Class Study* (New York, 1982); John Sheldon Reed, *Southern Folk, Plain and Fancy: Native White Social Types* (Athens, GA., 1986).
 26. Richard A. Peterson and Paul Di Maggio, "From Region to Class, The Changing Locus of Country Music: A Test of the Massification Hypothesis," *Social Forces* LIII (March 1975): 497-506. On blue-collar conservatism see Arthur B. Shostak, *Blue-Collar Life* (New York, 1969), 211-27; Richard Krickus, *Pursuing the American Dream: White Ethnics and the New Populism* (Bloomington, 1976); Jody Carlson, *George Wallace and the Politics of Powerlessness* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1981). In California, these changes can be glimpsed in Lillian Breslow Rubin's two studies of blue-collar families in Richmond, *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family* (New York, 1976) and *Busing and Backlash: White Against White in an Urban School District* (Berkeley, 1972).
 27. Details of Haggard's life can be found in his autobiography, *Sing Me Back Home*. See also Paul Hemphill, *The Good Old Boys* (New York, 1975), 140.
 28. Glenn Hunter, "The Bakersfield Sound," *Westways* LXXI (July 1979): 28-32; Jana Jae Greif, "Nashville West: The Musical Heritage of Bakersfield," History 373 paper, Spring 1976, in Cal. State Bakersfield Library. See also her interviews with Buck Owens and Bill Woods at the same location.
 29. "Merle Haggard Discography" *JEMF Quarterly* VII (1979): 18-22.
 30. Hemphill, *The Good Old Boys*, 140.
 31. Samples of the literary production can be found in *California Heartland: Writings from the Great Central Valley*, ed. by Gerald W. Haslam and James D. Houston, (Santa Barbara, 1978); California Odyssey Project, *Guide to "Roots of My Raising"* (Bakersfield, 1982). On other developments see Lyon, "Campfires Dotted the Still Night"; Don Wegars, "The Okies Take a Place in American History," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 16, 1978.
 32. Frank Manies interview by author, April 31, 1985; Peggy Staggs interview by author, August 18, 1980; Ernest Martin interview by Judith Gannon, April 5, 1981, 36, California Odyssey Program, California State University, Bakersfield, Library.
 33. Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (New York, 1971), was the manifesto of the new ethnicity. Stephen Steinberg takes a critical look in *The Ethnic Myth* (Boston, 1981).
 34. Hunter, "The Bakersfield Sound," 28.
- HAYDEN, "Mason," pp. 86-99.**
 Acknowledgements: The author would like to thank her research assistants, Mary Beth Welch, Susan Ruddick, Donna Graves, and Drummond Buckley. Miriam Matthews, Barbara Jackson, Kathy Perkins, Lonnie Bunch of the California Afro-American Museum, and Bill Mason of the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, plus Linda Cox and Gladys Owens Smith, descendants of Mason; and Richard Orsi offered helpful comments on drafts of this paper. Betty Odabashian of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Elizabeth Young Newsom of the Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, and Kimberly Grimes of the Charleston Museum provided essential help on the history of midwifery.
1. For a review of the Black population in Los Angeles see J. Max Bond, "The Negro in Los Angeles," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1936), 44; Emory J. Tolbert, *The UNIA and Black Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies, 1980), 25-47; Lawrence B. de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890-1930," *Pacific Historical Review* 39 (August 1970): 323-352; Russell E. Belous, William M. Mason, and Burton A. Reiner, "Black Heritage at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History," Museum of Natural History, History Division *Bulletin* no. 5, (1969); William M. Mason and James Anderson, "Los Angeles' Black Heritage," Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History *Quarterly* 8 (Winter 1969-70): 4-9; Lonnie G. Bunch, *Black Angelinos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950* (Los Angeles: California Afro-American Museum, 1988). On preservation issues, see Dolores Hayden, "The Power of Place: A Proposal for Los Angeles," *The Public Historian* 10 (Summer 1988): 5-18.
 2. "Obituary," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1891, and "Funeral Notice," *Los Angeles Times*, Jan. 18, 1891; Kate Bradley Stovall, "The Negro Woman in Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 1909.
 3. Elizabeth Jameson, "Toward a Multicultural History of Women in the Western United States (Review Essay)," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 13 (Summer 1988): 782. Jameson refers to Lenwood G. Davis, *The Black Woman in American Society: A Selected Annotated Bibliography* (Boston: Hall, 1975), and, for an example of a well-known article, Lawrence B. de Graaf, "Race, Sex and Region: Black Women in the American West, 1850-1920," *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (May 1980): 285-314. Also see Miriam Matthews, "The Negro in California from 1781 to 1910: An Annotated Bibliography," unpublished paper.
 4. Stovall, "The Negro Woman"; Delilah L. Beasley, *The Negro Trail Blazers of California* (Los Angeles: no publisher, 1919); Barbara Jackson, "Biddy Mason: Pioneer (1818-

- 1891), unpublished paper delivered at a symposium, sponsored by The Power of Place, "The Life and Times of Biddy Mason," UCLA, Nov. 21, 1987; Donna Mungen, *The Life and Times of Biddy Mason: From Slavery to Wealthy California Landowner*, (Los Angeles: no publisher, 1976); Charlotta A. Bass, *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper* (Los Angeles: Charlotta A. Bass, n.d.); Susan M. Ruddick and Mary Beth Welch, "The Story of Biddy Mason," unpublished paper, 1984, UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Bunch, *Black Angelenos*, pp. 14-18, is the fullest published account to date and follows the preceding ones in interpretation of Mason, while arguing that a wider look at Mason's contemporaries is needed.
5. *Census of the City and County of Los Angeles, California, for the Year 1850* (Los Angeles: Times Mirror Press, 1929), analysis of Schedule 1. For a more general view, also see Barbara Laslett, "Household Structure on an American Frontier: Los Angeles, California, in 1850," *American Journal of Sociology* 81 (July 1975): 109.
 6. Ward Ritchie, "Introduction," *The First Los Angeles City and County Directory, 1872* (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1963), 9, 123; Bellous, Mason, and Reiner, "Black Heritage," 46.
 7. Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967); de Graaf, "City of Black Angels"; de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region"; Mason and Anderson, "Los Angeles' Black Heritage."
 8. The place of Biddy Mason's birth is not known. The manuscript schedule of the 1860 census says Mississippi. The 1870 and 1880 schedules say Georgia. Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States (1860), Reel 61; Ninth Census (1870), Reel 73; Tenth Census (1880), Reel 67 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1967). Beasley gave both Hancock County, Mississippi, and Hancock County, Georgia. Matthews and Mason say Georgia; Jackson and Bunch say Mississippi. (Bunch's suggestion that Mississippi was part of Georgia does not apply in 1818.) Biddy Mason's obituary gave her birthplace as Hancock County, Georgia (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 16, 1891).
 9. "District Court, First Judicial District, Habeas Corpus, In the Matter of Hannah, Biddy and Others, Order, Certified Copy (Slave Papers, Biddy Mason and Children, 1856)," photostat copy (from handwritten copy owned by Gladys Owens Smith, Los Angeles), Golden State Mutual Life Insurance collection, UCLA Special Collections. This Golden State collection also includes photostats of her deeds and her will and copies of photographs all gathered by Miriam Matthews. On nursing, see Mungen, *Life and Times*, 1.
 10. Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family From Slavery to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1985), 11-43, emphasizes the importance of slaves' childbearing to their masters' wealth.
 11. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism 1790-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1976), 141-143, gives details of the settlement.
 12. John Zimmerman Brown, ed., *Autobiography of Pioneer John Brown (1820-1896)* (Salt Lake City: privately printed, 1941), 88-102. For an exact count of the party, see page 96. For a popular, illustrated account of a parallel trail, see John G. Mitchell, "On the Seacoast of Nebraska," *Audubon* (May 1989), 56-76.
 13. Jackson, "Biddy Mason," refers to Hannah as Biddy's sister. Mason's descendant, Linda Cox, in a personal communication to this author, March 1989, said the family is unclear about the relationship, but thinks Hannah was at most a half-sister. No contemporary accounts list her as a sister.
 14. Brown, *Autobiography*, 94, 99, and 101.
 15. Jackson, "Biddy Mason," 2.
 16. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 199.
 17. The Mormons outlined a prospective State of Deseret, including not only Utah but large portions of Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern California. See Hayden, *Seven American Utopias*, 108.
 18. "Suit for Freedom," *Los Angeles Star*, Feb. 2, 1856. In addition to Charles, Hannah's son born in Utah about 1850, Hannah gave birth to two girls in San Bernardino: Marion about 1852, and Martha about 1854. Hannah was pregnant again in 1855, and bore a boy in the first week of January 1856. Given the attention to family relationships at the trial, it is significant that Hannah is not called Biddy's sister here.
 19. Stovall, "The Negro Woman." On free Blacks in California towns, Rudolf M. Lapp, *Blacks in Gold Rush California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Vivian B. Octavia, *The Story of the Negro in Los Angeles* (San Francisco: R. and E. Research, 1936). For the arrival date, see *Times*, "Obituary."
 20. Richard R. Powell, *Compromises of Conflicting Claims: A Century of California Law, 1760-1860* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana, 1977), 210.
 21. "In the Matter of Carter Perkins and Robert S. Perkins," *Reports of Cases, Supreme Court, State of California, 1852* (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney, 1906), 424-459; "In the Matter of Archy," *Reports of Cases, Supreme Court, State of California, 1858* (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney, 1906), 148-171.
 22. Quoted in Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 88.
 23. Robert Curry Owens, "My Grandfather," typescript, 1930, UCLA Special Collections, 2.
 24. *Ibid.*, 1-3.
 25. "Suit for Freedom," *Los Angeles Star*, February 2, 1856. This article (unsigned) is a full account of the case and the legal arguments supporting the decision by Judge Hayes.
 26. Stovall, "The Negro Woman."
 27. "Suit for Freedom," *Los Angeles Star*.
 28. *Ibid.*
 29. *Ibid.*
 30. *Ibid.*
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. *Ibid.*
 34. *Ibid.*
 35. Jones, *Labor of Love*, 11-43.
 36. Powell, *Compromises*, 210.
 37. "Suit for Freedom," *Los Angeles Star*.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. *Ibid.*
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. *Ibid.*
 42. *Ibid.*
 43. "District Court . . . In the Matter of Hannah, Biddy and Others."
 44. "In the Matter of Carter Perkins"; "In the Matter of Archy"; also see Howard Zinn, "Slavery Without Submission," *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 182.
 45. "Suit for Freedom," *Los Angeles Star*.
 46. Jackson, "Biddy Mason," 3, says he led them to San Bernardino. He was also with Mason's group going to Salt Lake. See Brown, *Autobiography*, 99-100.
 47. *Los Angeles Star*, May 14, 1859.
 48. Jackson, "Biddy Mason," 3.
 49. Ludwig Louis Salvator, *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies, 1878*, tr. M.E. Wilbur (Los Angeles: Zeitlin, 1929), 121. Harris Newmark also mentions her, according to de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," 301, footnote 52.
 50. Martia Graham Goodson, "Medical-Botanical Contributions of African Slave Women to American Medicine," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 11 (1987): 198-203.
 51. *Ibid.*, 198.
 52. *Ibid.*, 202.
 53. *Ibid.*, 200-202.
 54. *Ibid.*, 200.
 55. Linda Holmes, "Medical History: Alabama Granny Midwife," *The Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey* 81 (May 1984): 390.
 56. Judy Barrett Litoff, *American Midwives: 1860 to the Present* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1978); Richard W. Wertz and Dorothy C. Wertz, *Lying-In: A History of Childbirth in America* (New York: Schocken, 1979); Debra Anne Susie, *In the Way of Our*

- Grandmothers: A Cultural View of Twentieth-Century Midwifery in Florida* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1988); Jacqueline Jones Royster, *Women as Healers: A Noble Tradition* (Atlanta, Georgia: Spelman College, 1983); Judith W. Leavitt, *Brought to Bed: Childbearing in America, 1750-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
57. Mungen, "Life and Times," 4. On wages for Black women, see de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," 299.
58. Holmes, "Medical History," 390.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Ibid.* Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1973), recount the midwives' professional struggles; Carolyn Conant Van Blarcom, "Rat Pie: Among the Black Midwives of the South," *Harper's* 160 (February 1930): 322-332, gives a condescending look at Virginia's "granny midwives."
61. Annie Mae Hunt, "It Wasn't No More than Three Dollars to Catch a Baby," excerpt from *I am Annie Mae* (1983), in Nancy Caldwell Sorel, ed., *Ever Since Eve: Personal Reflections on Childbirth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 188-189.
62. Jensen and Miller, "Gentle Tamers Revisited," 198-99; Chris Rigby Arrington, "Pioneer Midwives," in Claudia L. Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 43-66.
63. Jensen and Miller, "Gentle Tamers Revisited," 201.
64. de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," 303. The first Black woman earned a medical degree in 1864; according to Royster, *Women as Healers*, 17, the first nursing degree was earned in 1879.
65. Jensen and Miller, "Gentle Tamers Revisited," 184; also see Richard Griswold del Castillo, "La Familia Chicana: Social Changes in the Chicano Family of Los Angeles, 1850-1880," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* (Spring 1975): 41-58.
66. de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," 287-9.
67. Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 109.
68. Robert Curry Owens, "Robert C. Owens (Autobiography)," typescript, UCLA Special Collections, pp. 1-3. Beasley (page 110) dates the marriage October 16, 1856. Robert was born in 1860.
69. *Ibid.*, 3; Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 109-110. Biddy's daughter Ann died in 1857; Harriet remained in Los Angeles.
70. This photograph is identified by Miriam Matthews' handwriting on the label. The fencing matches the Owens' house exactly and suggests it was close by. Census data and city directories also suggest this, though street numbers were not used consistently.
71. William L. Kahrl, *Water and Power: The Conflict over Los Angeles' Water Supply in the Owens Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 9-17.
72. Deed, November 28, 1866, William M. Buffum and James F. Burns to Biddy Mason, copy at UCLA Special Collections.
73. Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 90.
74. Pierce photo, UCLA Special Collections; *Zanjas and fence*, Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 109. The city directories give the following residential addresses for Biddy Mason:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1872 (or 1873) | "1st Street Below Main" |
| 1875 | no listing |
| 1878 | "rear 155 Spring" |
| 1879-80 | no listing |
| 1880-81 | no listing |
| 1883 | "108 Fort St." |
| 1884-5 | "237 S. Spring St." (Later renumbered as 331-5. This is her homestead.) |
| 1886-7 | no listing |
| 1887-8 | no listing |
| 1888 | no listing |
| 1890 | "235 S. Spring" |
| 1891 | no listing |
75. Ritchie, "Introduction," *The First Los Angeles City and County Directory, 1872*, 9.
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*, 122.
78. *Ibid.*
79. Deed, Biddy Mason to J.H. Jones and Charles M. Wright, January 2, 1875, Los Angeles County Recorder's Office; Sanborn Map, Los Angeles, 1888, Map Library, California State University, Northridge.
80. Sanborn Map, 1888. A photo of her building in 1904 was published in *The Liberator* (Los Angeles) 5 (March 1904): 1.
81. Sanborn Map, Los Angeles, 1894, Map Library, California State University, Northridge.
82. Robert Curry Owens, "Robert C. Owens," 3; Deed, Biddy Mason to Robert C. Owens and Henry L. Owens, June 20, 1890, Los Angeles County Recorder's Office.
83. Robert Curry Owens, "Robert C. Owens," 3.
84. For brief histories of these industries, see Dolores Hayden, Gail Dubrow, and Carolyn Flynn, *The Power of Place: Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: The Power of Place, 1985).
85. Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 109; Kathy Perkins, F.A.M.E. Historical Committee, personal communication, June 1988, noted that Mason continued to attend the white Fort Street Methodist Church at times. Since California law began to segregate churches in this era, and required that Blacks attend only churches founded by them (Powell, *Compromises*, 210) Mason's continued attendance at a white church could have been a political protest. For a general overview of early Black churches, see Edward D. Smith, *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1740-1877* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian, 1988).
86. Ruddick and Welch, "Story," 13.
87. *Ibid.*, 17; Beasley, *Negro Trail Blazers*, 109.
88. Stovall, "The Negro Woman"; "Funeral Notice."
89. de Graaf, "Race, Sex, and Region," 301.
90. Bunch, *Black Angelenos*. Also see Mason, and Anderson, "Black Heritage."
91. "Negro Will Build Block," *Los Angeles Daily Times*, August 12, 1905.
92. *Ibid.* Robert C. Owens suffered financial reverses in the depression and shot himself and other family members, according to Gladys Owens Smith, interview on "Black Angelenos," KCOP, 1988.
93. Sue Bailey Thurman, *Pioneers of Negro Origin in California* (San Francisco: Acme, 1952), 47.

BEARDSLEY, "Japanese," pp. 100-115.

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1952 *The Salvage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Thomas, Dorothy S., and Richard Nishimoto
1946 *The Spoilage*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- United States Department of the Interior
1946 *WRA: A Story of Human Conservation*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.
- 1946 *Impounded People: Japanese Americans in the Relocation Centers*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. (Mimeo).
- 1947 *People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. (Mimeo).

NOTES

1. Generous grants from the Carnegie Corporation and Ford Foundation through the Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, and from the Horace Rackham Faculty Research Fund made possible the research reported here. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Harumi Befu and Hiroshi Wagatsuma in the 1957-58 portion of this research, and give thanks to (then) Miss Ellen Samuelson for her contribution in 1963. My own study continued in brief visits in 1968 and 1970.

In attempting to analyze features of Delta Japanese life, we have taken two approaches. One is synchronous sampling of Japanese of similar origin and history who live in a setting that imposes different constraints. The other is a longitudinal series of observations in the same community over a period long enough for changes to find expression. We used the comparative synchronous approach in 1957, setting Delta Japanese findings against those from a control community, also rural, on the lower slopes of the Sierra mountains about sixty miles northeast of Delta (Befu 1965). Now, in addition to the 1957 data from Delta, I have been able to observe changes through thirteen years into 1970, which, counting recollected earlier history, gives a perspective of more than fifty years. It is important, no doubt, that in these last years the nation came into the era of the Civil Rights Movement, for it appears that this era has begun to set its mark on the hamlet of Delta.

2. White owners could take refuge behind California's Alien Land Act of 1913 that banned aliens from buying land. Asian immigrants were ineligible for naturalization until the Second World War [Chinese, 1943; Filipinos, 1946; Japanese and all other Asian immigrants, 1952]. The land act was finally repealed in 1951, but even before then everyone was well aware of legal ways to gain *de facto* ownership such as buying through a trusted citizen friend, or in the name of a U.S. born child upon his reaching legal maturity.
3. In 1957, some 76% [102 out of 134] of the Nisei born to households of the Delta community lived elsewhere. Half of the absentees were still in Central California, especially Sacramento.
4. Proper citation of the 1968 report is withheld, not out of courtesy but because to cite it by title would blow the cover-designation given the community.

CASTILLO, "Assassination," pp. 116-125.

1. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, Vol. II, Part I (San Francisco: James Barry Co., 1912), 224. Examples of other similar works include: E.B. Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions* (Los Angeles: W.F. Lewis Co., 1952); Francis F. Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," *Southern California Quarterly* 65 (Spring 1983): 1-65; Clement W. Meighan, "Indians and California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 69 (Fall 1987): 183-201; and Thaddeus Shubsda and Valerie Steiner (eds.), "The Serra Report," Typescript,

Monterey, California, 1986.

2. Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 1-194.
3. The ethnographic data referred to here include physical, social, linguistic studies, and informant notes that broadly describe native economies, religions, technologies, world views, oral histories, and intergroup relations. For examples of such works, see Edward Castillo's "Impact of Euro-American Exploration and Settlement," *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8—California, ed. R.F. Heizer (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 99-127; Jack Forbes, "The Native American Experience in California History," *California Historical Quarterly* L (September 1971): 234-242; James A. Sandos, "Levantamiento! The Chumash Uprising Reconsidered," *Southern California Quarterly* 67 (Summer 1985): 109-133; Florence C. Shipek, "California Indian Reactions to the Franciscans," *The Americas* XLI (April 1985), and "The Impact of Europeans Upon the Kumyaay" in *The Impact of European Exploration and Settlement on Local Native Americans* (San Diego: Cabrillo Historical Society, 1986).
4. Pablo Tac, "Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey, A Record of California Mission Life Written by Pablo Tac, An Indian Neophyte," in Mina and Gordon Hewes (eds.) *The Americans* 9, No. 1 (1952): 87-106.
5. Julio César, "Cosas de los Indios de California," unpublished manuscript, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
6. Fernando Librado, *Breath of the Sun* (Banning, California: Malki Museum Press, 1979).
7. Gerald J. Geary, *The Secularization of the California Missions, 1810-1846* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1934), 5-37.
8. Cook, *Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 56-90, and George H. Phillips, "Indians and the Breakdown of the Spanish Mission System in California," *Ethnohistory* 21 (Fall 1974): 291-302.
9. For examples, see Jack D. Forbes, *Warriors of the Colorado* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), and Edward Castillo's chapter, "The Native Response to the Colonization of Alta California," in *Columbian Consequences*, David Hurst Thomas (ed.), Vol. I, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989).
10. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The History of California*, Vol. II (San Francisco: The History Co., 1886), 146.
11. *Ibid.*, 149-150.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, Vol. III, Part II, 12.
14. José María Amador, "Memorias de la Historia de California," unpublished man-

uscript, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Lorenzo's narrative, which follows, is published with the permission of the Bancroft Library from the Amador manuscript.

15. E.S. Harrison, *History of Santa Cruz County* (San Francisco: Pacific Press Publishing Co., 1892), 45-48. Bancroft published a somewhat altered and edited version of the Savage-Asisara interview in *California Pastoral* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), 594-600. Possibly hoping to avoid offending his readers' Victorian sensibilities, he deleted all sexual references found in the original interview.
16. These sources include the second half of the present interview, Amador, "Memorias," 91-113; and Harrison, *History of Santa Cruz*, 45-48; and others in note 20 below.
17. H.A. van Coenen Torchiana, *Story of the Mission Santa Cruz* (San Francisco: Paul Elder Co., 1933), 460.
18. A.L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Berkeley: California Book Co., 1953), 465.
19. Richard Levy, "Costanoan," in Heizer (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8, 485-499.
20. Santa Cruz Baptismal Register, Vol. I, Archive of the Diocese of Monterey, California, Entry No. 1803. Lorenzo's mother's baptismal record in the spring of 1820 describes her as the 19-year-old daughter of *Hetjeglavihai*. No record of her native village again appears in the baptismal, marriage, or death journals kept at Santa Cruz or at nearby missions. However, one must remember these names were taken down phonetically with scant regard to native pronunciation. Nevertheless, a village called *Chalala* appears in the San Antonio Baptismal Register and is described as "above the Salinas River." By 1820, the Mission Santa Cruz may have been recruiting natives from this region of the interior. Most likely, Lorenzo's mother was a Salinan Indian, and her native village was most probably *Cholame* near the confluence of Estrella Creek and the Salinas River.
21. Alphonse Pinart, "Santa Cruz Vocabularies," word lists manuscript, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. A comparison between Pinart's Santa Cruz linguistic informants, Rustico's and Eulogia's word lists, and that supplied by Lorenzo in his 1890 interview, demonstrates that Lorenzo spoke the Santa Cruz dialect called *Awastwa*.
22. Robert Jackson, "An Introduction of the Historical Demography of Santa Cruz Mission and the Villa de Branciforte, 1791-1846," University of California, Santa Cruz, Special Collections Library, unpublished senior thesis, 1980. The author cites an 1845 census of ex-missionized Indians that

- includes a "Lorenzo Olivara (sic), age 26. Native county: Santa Cruz; a widower whose occupation is drover."
23. Harrison, *History of Santa Cruz*, 46.
 24. "Old Times Roxas: The Oldest Inhabitant on Earth," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, December 27, 1873.
 25. "Mission Santa Cruz: The Centennial Anniversary of Its Founding Celebrated," *Santa Cruz Surf*, Weekly Edition, October 3, 1891.
 26. Santa Cruz Baptismal Register, Vol. 1, Entry No. 1832. Lorenzo's date here is undoubtedly wrong. Baptismal records for the Mission Santa Cruz place his birthdate at August 10, 1820.
 27. *Ibid.*, Entry No. 215; and Chester King, "Map indicating approximate locations of many Costanoan and neighboring groups recorded in Spanish mission registers," May 1975, in author's possession; and C. Hart Merriam, "Village Names in Twelve California Mission Records," University of California *Archaeological Survey* No. 74 (University of California, Berkeley, 1968), 41. The baptismal record states Lorenzo's father's village to be *Cotoni*. Merriam's work notes ten Indian baptisms for 1793 from *Cotoni* out of a total of 47 between 1792 and 1800. The village of *Asar* may have been another name for *Cotoni* or that of a satellite village to *Cotoni*. Merriam's study includes one baptism from a village spelled *Asan* or *Axen* in 1829, but given the date it was probably not Lorenzo's *Asar*. The village *Asar* does not appear anywhere in the historic or ethnographic record. King's map locates *Cotoni* along the extreme northern coast of Santa Cruz County, which coincides with Lorenzo's general description of the location of *Asar*.
 28. Donald T. Clark, *Some Santa Cruz County Place Names* (Santa Cruz: University of California, Santa Cruz, 1980), 19. Clark notes that the *Rancho Agua Puerca* y *Las Trancas*, located on the north county coast, was known prior to 1843 as *Rancho el Jarro*.
 29. Santa Cruz Baptismal Register, Entry No. 215. Baptismal records identify a gentile of about 20 years of age named Llenco, who was inducted into the mission and given the name Venancio at his baptism, May 12, 1793. He was indeed an early convert.
 30. Maynard Geiger, O.F.M., *Franciscan Missionaries in Hispanic California, 1769-1848* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1969), 203-206. Fray Andrés Quintana was born November 27, 1777, at Antonossa in the province of Alva in Spain. He joined the Franciscan order in 1794 at the age of 17. He completed his studies for the priesthood in the province of Cantabria in 1804. That year he sailed for Mexico, where he entered the San Fernando College in Mexico City. The next year he sailed from San Blas, arriving in Monterey in late August 1805. He was given his first assignment at the Mission Santa Cruz, where he remained until his assassination at the age of 35.
 31. Cook, *Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 113-134. Cook's balanced discussion of "Delinquency and Punishment" includes Father President Lasuén's spirited defense of mission punishments, which characterizes them as just and mild. Nevertheless, Quintana's wire-tipped whip appears to be an unusually brutal instrument. In a second part of Lorenzo's interview (not translated here), he describes a later padre who liked to beat Indians on the stomach with a whip.
 32. Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 205-206; Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries of California*, Vol. III, 14; and Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. II, 389. Both Geiger and Engelhardt make a spirited defense of Quintana's character based on Governor Solá's letter of 1816 to the viceroy. Bancroft notes that officials in Mexico took seriously the Indian charges that Quintana had beaten two neophytes nearly to death, before making a new instrument of torture that led to his assassination.
 33. This sentence is somewhat jumbled. Its translation here is literal. What it appears to suggest is that Quintana himself admitted to the neophytes that God does not order the punishments; he (God) only prescribes examples and doctrine as means of instruction. Thus, perhaps, the neophytes felt Quintana was solely responsible for the floggings and punishments administered. One must keep in mind this interview was handwritten under field conditions. This sentence may have been shortened by Savage and its obscurity later overlooked by Bancroft.
 34. This sentence also seems disjointed. What it appears to suggest is that Julian's wife suggested the ploy of having her husband, who apparently was habitually sick, play ill to lure Quintana outside the mission compound. The subsequent narrative bears out this contention.
 35. The term *mayordomo* in colonial Spanish California referred to a person with an overseer's authority, sometimes an active or retired member of the mission guard. In this case a neophyte, whom Lorenzo describes as a "man of natural abilities," was in charge of Quintana's personal servants.
 36. Maynard Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 206. This author points out the "deplorable" condition of security at Mission Santa Cruz that fall of 1812. He states the mission gates were supposed to be locked at night, and that "Quintana disobeyed regulations or at least ignored custom in not having at least one soldier accompany him outside the mission."
 37. Robert Archibald, *The Economic Aspect of the California Missions* (Washington, D.C.: The Academy of Franciscan History, 1978), 115-141; and "Santa Cruz Mission Libro de Cuentas," no author, manuscript. The original is at St. Mary's College, Moraga, California. The sources of this gold and silver were numerous and included the sale of surplus grain and manufactured goods, as well as the renting of native laborers to the residents of the nearby pueblo of Branciforte. After 1810 a widespread and illegal clandestine trade with foreign sailing vessels provided a substantial income for the Santa Cruz missionaries. This trade included grain, livestock, tallow, cattle hides, and other pelts, all, of course, procured by forced Indian labor.
 38. Otto von Kotzebue, quoted in "Footprints of Early California Discoverers," *Overland Monthly* (March 1869): 261; and Cook, *Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 56-134. The Russian explorer, Otto von Kotzebue, visiting Santa Clara in 1824, described one such convent as a large quadrangular building resembling a prison, without windows and only one carefully secured door. He goes on, "these dungeons are opened two or three times a day, but only to allow the prisoners to pass to and from church. I have occasionally seen the poor girls rushing out eagerly to breathe the fresh air, and driven immediately into the church like a flock of sheep by an old ragged Spaniard armed with a stick. After mass, they are in the same manner hurried back to their prison." Cook's work analyzes both the psychological and biological consequences of this mass incarceration of unmarried neophytes in these unsanitary compounds.
 39. A *jayunte* was a crude, rectangular house constructed like a wicker basket with walls packed with mud. Obviously, at this time no adobe structure had been built to house the unmarried male neophytes.
 40. A *rancheria* was the Spanish term for an Indian village. The *rancheria* referred to here was located below Mission Hill, near present-day Harvey West Municipal Park. Residents of this village were married neophytes and their families.
 41. Florian Guest, O.F.M., "The Establishment of the Villa de Branciforte," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 41 (March 1962): 45-46.
 42. Sherburne F. Cook, "Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1820-1840," *Anthropological Records* XX (No. 5): 198. Nazario Galindo is described by José María Amador as taking part in a macabre ritual of baptizing gentile Indian captives followed by an orgy of mass murder. Amador boasted they massacred 100 Indians this way in 1837.
 43. Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 145-146, 204. Marcelino Marquez was born in

- Trevino, Spain, in May of 1779. Becoming a Franciscan in Cantabria, Spain, in 1798, he sailed to Mexico in 1804. After six years in the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, he arrived in California. First serving at Mission San Luis Obispo for a little more than a year, he was transferred in the fall of 1811 to Santa Cruz, where he remained until 1818. Records indicate he was subject to frequent attacks of colic. He was, in fact, ill and receiving medical treatment at Monterey when Quintana was assassinated.
44. Maynard Geiger and Clement W. Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Missionaries, 1813-1815* (Santa Barbara: Mission Archive Library, 1976), 99. In this collection of responses to a broad questionnaire from colonial officials in Cadiz, Spain, Fray Marquez and Jayme Escude of Santa Cruz describe wailing practices among local natives. Those here described agree with other accounts of mourning behavior which prescribe wailing as a practice to send a spirit away from earth. It did not necessarily suggest any affection for the departed.
 45. Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 387. Bancroft reports that Padres Narcisco Durán of San José and José Viader of Santa Clara chanced to be in Santa Cruz on October 13, the day after the discovery of Quintana's body. Together they presided over his funeral and buried him that same day. Padre Marquez arrived from Monterey just after the ceremony and prepared the certificate of burial.
 46. *Ibid.*, 387-388; and Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 204. Geiger reports that before he was buried, a superficial investigation was undertaken which found no cause to suspect violence. But on October 15 the governor of California became suspicious and ordered Lt. José María Estudillo of the Monterey Presidio to investigate. Estudillo wrote to Padre Marquez that it was imperative that the surgeon Don Manuel Quijano examine the body. Quintana's remains were exhumed, and incredibly the surgeon's investigation again found no trace of violence and concluded Quintana died of natural causes. Bancroft cites Estudillo's report, dated October 23.
 47. Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 205. All authorities and documents consulted agree that the discovery of the conspiracy to assassinate Quintana resulted as described by Lorenzo. They also agree it was "about two years later." Certainly by the fall of 1814, the conspirators had been arrested. Geiger cites a letter written by Fray Narcisco Durán to Noberto de Santiago October 2, 1814, in which he states, "all those guilty are now prisoners."
 48. Leon Rowland, *Santa Cruz the Early Years* (Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1980), 234. Born on the overland march from Sonora, Mexico, Castro was married at Santa Barbara in 1805. He eventually became Mayordomo of Santa Cruz in 1812 and later held that post at Santa Clara.
 49. Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 625. It is unlikely that Padre Olbés played the role described by Lorenzo in the arrest of the conspirators. Both Bancroft and Geiger agree that Olbés was not stationed at Santa Cruz until June 1818, long after the conspirators had been condemned. There is a possibility that he was visiting Santa Cruz at this time, as missionaries sometimes did, yet there is no evidence to support this supposition. The role ascribed to Olbés may have been played by Fray Jayme Escude, who replaced Quintana at Santa Cruz from spring 1813 to February 1818.
 50. Again we find a seemingly incomprehensible statement. It is absurd to suppose that Padre Marquez would warn the conspirators of their imminent arrest, so that they might flee. The only reasonable explanation for this statement is to view it as a mistake on Lorenzo's part or an error in transcription by Savage.
 51. A hackamore is an article of tack used like a bridle. In mission times they were made of twined horsehair.
 52. Amador, "Memories de la Historia de California," 78. Amador states, "I, José María Amador, was commissioned, along with Jesus Mesa to conduct the prisoners involved in the death of Quintana from Santa Cruz to the Presidio at San Francisco. We took sixteen of them fastened together by their thumbs and to a bar passing along the back of their necks. They were turned over to me in shackles, but I refused to receive them in this condition and I was then authorized to conduct them in such a manner as I saw fit. I ordered the shackles removed from their limbs."
 53. Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, Vol. III, 12. This author seems to suggest Quintana's body was again exhumed to confirm evidence given at the trial, but cites no source. Nevertheless, he says the conspirators were found guilty and the sentence sent to the viceroy for final determination.
 54. Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 389. Bancroft noted that evidently officials in Mexico attached some importance to the Indian testimony at the military tribunal in San Francisco that claimed (like Lorenzo) that Quintana was extremely cruel. He had previously nearly beaten two neophytes to death and finally had prepared a new instrument of torture (the wire-tipped whip). The author goes on to note that no records exist of the trial. His source relies on correspondence between Governor Sola and the viceroy.
 55. Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, 12-13. In the spring of 1816, after the case had been reviewed by officials in Mexico, the accused (Lino Antonio, Quirico, Julian, Ambrosio, Andrés, Leto Antonio, Secundino, and Felguncio) were sentenced to 200 lashes each and to work in chains from two to ten years at Santa Barbara. However, while awaiting their fate in the San Francisco Presidio, two of the accused died. Engelhardt's source for this data is the controversial defense of Quintana written by Governor Solá to the viceroy, June 2, 1816, which additionally summarizes the Indian charges against Quintana. Engelhardt translates it in full.
 56. Bancroft, *History of California*, II, 388. This author, citing Nazario Galindo's memoirs, notes that Lino died in Santa Barbara in 1817, and only one of the condemned survived his punishment.
 57. Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 167-168. Ramon Olbés was born in Ateca, Spain, February 8, 1786. Joining the Franciscan order in 1802, he arrived at the College of San Fernando in Mexico City in 1810. Arriving in California in 1812, he served at Santa Inés, Santa Barbara, San Luis Rey, and finally in Santa Cruz. He was stationed at Santa Cruz from June 1818 to November 1821. Bancroft elsewhere characterized him as a "monster of cruelty," whose eccentric behavior amounted at times to insanity. Lorenzo, in a second part of this interview (not translated here), provides some harrowing descriptions of his sadistic cruelty.
 58. See Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, Vol. III, Part II, 12; and Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, 205.
 59. While neophyte revolts, fugitivism, and native guerrilla warfare might be dismissed by colonial authorities, serious charges of cruelty and mismanagement originating within the Franciscan order had developed earlier. Padre Antonio de La Concepción Horra of Mission San Miguel in a 1791 memorial to the viceroy specifically charged the order with cruelty to the Indians of California. Although the Franciscan order declared Horra to be insane, a series of embarrassing military and defensive church investigations took place until 1805. By this time Horra had been deported entirely from the New World and returned to Spain and his charges dismissed. For details, see Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 587-596.
 60. Quoted in Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 124.
 61. David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 43-68.

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Milestones in California History—Sacramento's 150th Anniversary



Restored California State Capitol, California. Photographic reproduction courtesy Instructional Media Center, CSU Hayward

The capital city of Sacramento, which in 1989 celebrates the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of its founding, was the fitting site for the "Envisioning California" conference. In the summer of 1839, the Swiss immigrant John A. Sutter, accompanied by a party of Europeans and Hawaiians, sailed a flotilla upriver from San Francisco Bay and established his wilderness fort at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers. Nueva Helvetia—the inland empire he built on the basis of a Mexican land grant and scores of Indian laborers he employed and intimidated—soon became a mecca for arriving settlers. Swamping Sutter's Fort in the late 1840s and early 1850s, hordes of gold-rush squatters wrested control over the

land from Sutter and incorporated the city of Sacramento.

Despite its proximity to the mines, Sacramento was not at first the state capital; the honor shifted frantically in the early years of statehood between San Jose, Vallejo, Sacramento, and Benicia. Not until 1854 did the seat of government settle permanently at Sacramento and the city's future as an interior commercial, manufacturing, and transportation center become secure.

Originally constructed in the 1860s, the present capitol building was restored in the 1970s to its early-twentieth-century Victorian elegance. It now serves as a museum, as well as headquarters for the legislature, governor, and some state agencies.

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California History is published with the cooperation and support of
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I. Introduction

“Envisioning California”: AN INTRODUCTION

by Jeff Lustig

Director, Center for California Studies
California State University, Sacramento

This special issue of *California History* presents selected papers from the “Envisioning California: Peoples, Land and, Policies” conference, the founding gathering of a statewide community of Californians devoted to interdisciplinary inquiry into California’s history, policies, and future, and to encouraging the new academic field of California Studies. In February 1989, historians, social scientists, policy-makers, business people, environmentalists, writers, and artists, along with representatives from labor and ethnic groups, met in Sacramento to share their insights and research, compare divergent perspectives, and collaborate in envisioning—in perceiving and trying to understand—California, its master trends and possibilities as a whole.

This conference was called and hosted by the

Center for California Studies, California State University, Sacramento. The California Historical Society provided great support as co-sponsor, as did other organizations, including the California Economic Development Corporation, the University of California’s California Policy Seminar, the California State Library, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, and the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

For all its sunshine and open spaces, California has often proven a difficult place to comprehend. “In the saga of the states,” Carey McWilliams noted, “the chapter that is California has long fascinated the credulous and charmed the romantic.” The burden of fable stretches as far back as Ordóñez de Montalvo’s fixing of our location in 1510 “very near the Terrestrial Paradise” and comes as near as



Carey McWilliams in 1951. Photo courtesy Iris McWilliams

the most recent Hollywood movie. Our geography and natural species conspire to compound the difficulties of perception, dwarfing the human scale, exciting to great deeds and luring to no less grandiose defeats.

But what, beyond the fables and images, *is* California? How do its distinctive regions and rich cultures fit together? What does California *mean*? "Maybe I did have all the aces," remarks one of Joan Didion's characters, "but what was the game?" This in effect was the question that informed the conference and that attendees variously addressed. What are the unifying characteristics, the imminent tasks, the rules, and, as with any game, the *stakes* of life in current California? Such questions arise now not simply because, as noted again by Didion, Californians have always shared a suspicion that "things had better work here, because here . . . is where we run out of continent." The questions arise because of a widespread recognition that California is entering upon a new era. We who have always enjoyed bountiful resources now face depleted stocks, compacted cities, and threatened living standards. The faultlines that vein our society now prove no less disquieting than those that underlie our land, and are just as demanding of serious attention. The questions arise also because California, as McWilliams noted, is a chapter in the saga of the states. It is the lens through which that

nation often glimpses its future. The questions arise, finally, because throughout our regions, and as affirmed in the new interdisciplinary field of California Studies, Californians are clearly developing a new sense of place, a new awareness of the distinctiveness of their state's culture and its claims.

In addition to the selections printed in this issue, people who attended the conference in Sacramento heard speakers address the state's land use, arts, ethnic diversity, history, and economy. To note only a few of the offerings, author James Houston, artist Frank LaPena, and California State University Trustee Claudia Hampton explored California's "Sense of Place"; the general managers of the Metropolitan Water District and the State Water Contractors Association debated critics of state water policy; ex-Senator Pro Tem James Mills joined journalists and historians identifying the distinctiveness of California political institutions; Assemblyman John Vasconcellos evoked a vision of the future; and California writers and poets read from their works.

This first California Studies conference was dedicated to the memory and legacy of Carey McWilliams, the writer/lawyer/social historian and investigative journalist who anticipated by forty years many of the key questions addressed by the conference. In books and articles written over a twenty-year period at the birth of modern Califor-

nia, McWilliams explored the history and hidden histories, sought the deeper meanings, and attempted the larger vision of California. Within a large range of issues, from immigration and farm labor to Japanese American internment, from southern California culture to the environment, we still find ourselves thinking in his metaphors, following in his footsteps, and seeking to live up to his intellectual rigor and democratic sensibilities. (Illustrative of the unexpected fruitfulness of gatherings like these was the gift—suggested at the conference by Carey McWilliams, Jr., and later conferred by Iris McWilliams—to the Center for California Studies and California State University, Sacramento, of the California portion of the late McWilliams' library.)

California's foremost playwright and dramatist, Luis Valdez, opened the conference with a powerful call to common inquiry and common vision. His address appears as the first paper of this issue. When the great book of California public art is written, Valdez's name will surely appear on the first page, as he has pioneered a unique, regionally-rooted theatre, a drama that speaks with a California voice and in a distinctively California institution—El Teatro Campesino. For twenty years Valdez has taught us about ourselves with candor and with wit, and in a drama that affirms as it entertains. It was because we saw in his vision key elements of

our own—for an intellectual life addressed to the varied peoples of the state, for a synthesis of history, literature, politics, and art, and for the creation of an ongoing community of inquiry and dialogue—that we invited Luis Valdez to present the keynote. The truth of the matter, as he affirmed, is surely that “the future belongs to those who can imagine it.”

The Center for California Studies, host of the “Envisioning California” conference, is a public service, public affairs, and applied research office of the California State University devoted to enhancing public understanding of California's history, politics, and cultures in activities like the conference. It undertakes a wide range of programs in fulfillment of its charge, including seminars and colloquia, research publications, curricular resources for courses in California Studies, and administration of the nationally-acclaimed capitol fellows programs. In coming years it will host annual California Studies conferences and bring the resources of the state's largest and most diverse university system to the service of government, public discussion, and civic education. By the time *California History* readers receive this issue, Envisioning California II will have occurred in February 1990 in Sacramento. We hope that many readers will have been able to attend and will continue to join us in building a vital California Studies community. CHS

II. Envisioning California

Envisioning California

by Luis Valdez

I love the title of this conference because I think it really gets to the heart of the issue. We are examining California as a vision, and that vision evokes the basic question that I've always tried to entertain throughout my life, the question that underlies all the varied professions of our land — *the nature of the human being*. The human being is a creature of habit, the human being is a creature of imagination. Looking for those images, I find a number of specific experiences of California from my life that I would like to share with you.

The year was 1946. I was six years old, walking along a dirt road along the middle of a tomato patch in the Santa Clara Valley, by Moffett Field. Lockheed, I believe, occupies the same acreage now, right by the Bayshore Freeway. There was no Bayshore in 1946. The highway to San Francisco was the El Camino Real. So we were out there, in the middle of nowhere, except for Moffett Field. I was walking along, and there, at my feet, I suddenly spotted a dead rattlesnake. I didn't know at the moment that the snake was dead; it just looked fierce and terrifying. So I tried to cry out to my parents who were a couple of rows down, but no voice came out. I was paralyzed with fear. At that

instant, something caught my eye, and I looked up at the sky. My cry came out as I spotted this huge blimp heading for one of those giant hangars at Moffett Field. Between that moment of silence and the cry, I sensed the depth and breath of my being. I sensed fear and I sensed exhilaration. It couldn't have happened anywhere but in that tomato patch in the Santa Clara Valley in 1946. Moffett Field was a magical place, with airships floating through the sky and landing. Even as a farmworker, as a child, I felt privileged to be in this magic land. That's a unique California experience.

Let's flash forward more than 30 years to another experience of California which didn't even happen in this state. It was in a small apartment across the street from Columbia University in New York City. I rang the doorbell at a very humble apartment to encounter one of the great Californians of our century, Carey McWilliams. This is a man who was and remains one of my heroes, a man who has shaped my vision of the world through his book, *North from Mexico*, which I had read in 1959. And now here I was in 1977, in New York City, about to interview him about his role in the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee back in 1942, in defense of the



Luis Valdez. Photo courtesy El Teatro Campesino



In 1981, Universal Pictures released the feature film, "Zoot Suit," written and directed by Luis Valdez and based on true incidents of inter-racial violence in World War II Los Angeles. In this still from the motion picture, the mythical *El Pachuco* (played by Edward James Olmos) is coolly detached, as Della (Rose Portillo) protects Henry (Daniel Valdez), who had been badly beaten during a brawl at Sleepy Lagoon, a reservoir in East Los Angeles. Courtesy Luis Valdez and Universal City Studios, Inc.

Pachucos. Of course, that research led to *Zoot Suit*, the play, and *Zoot Suit*, the movie. He was quite generous and open. We spoke for hours, until his wife Iris came and stopped us, because he was just as fascinated with the subject as I was—the subject of California. But it was getting late in the day.

Flash forward a couple of years. At the time I had talked to McWilliams I had said, "I'm researching for a play that I want to write for the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. We have hopes that maybe some day this can come to New York City." He just smiled. In fact, when we opened on Broadway at the Winter Garden Theater in 1979, he was there. He said, "You know, I thought you were going to make it." It was wonderful. It was wonderful that he was there, and it was wonderful to bring the "Zoot suit" riots and the Pachuco experience and the Chicano vision to New York City.

As you may know, we ran into a critical blank wall, a wall that is the East Coast. One of the first things I did when I got back to San Juan Bautista, where I live with my wife and three kids and the larger family of Teatro Campesino, was that I made

a sign for myself with felt pens. I pinned it up on the wall of my office. The sign contained a single word, and that word was CALIFORNIA. The trip to New York had taught me who I was: yes I was Chicano, yes I was an ex-farmworker, yes I was this, yes I was that. But, above all, I was a Californian. I realized in New York City the uniqueness of my California origin. I decided then, in 1979, that this would become the foundation of a greater exploration of my history, of our history, of our take on reality.

So, I am very happy to be part of this conference because it is all part of the same search: the search for images, the search for visions. Those visions exist as an intrinsic part of the history of this corner of the universe; visions that have emerged from the mind of every single human being that has ever trod this earth.

A lot has been said of the final frontier, of our coming to the West Coast and ending the western migration. I want to submit to you a slight change of direction: that the winning of the west was the losing of the north. The north was a very specific

place for centuries. One of the things you must have, if nothing else, in order to exist is a sense of place; and with a sense of place comes a sense of your own mind. Place exists in reality—in the collective reality of our society and in the visionary reality of your own mind.

I am working on a screenplay that takes place in the twenty-first century. It is science fiction. So I come out of the twenty-first century, and I get the odd impression that I'm stepping back in time, that somehow I am living in the past, and that a lot of the nonsense that swirls around us, a lot of the outmoded beliefs, are really part of the dead skin of the serpent that is being sloughed off, as time propels its way into the future. The things that take us forward, in fact, are our visions. They are what we see.

North and south, east and west—I give you reality. I give you four directions as a sense of place and even as a sense of time. The world, after all, is a spherical place, and there's a

square inside of it, a cube inside it. There are four corners, eight if you will, if you square the cube and go around. There is a sense of direction that humanity must have in order to know where it is. We are all born into a time and place. California is one of those places that, because of its unique position, has been the repository of the westward movement. So, many people, having started somewhere else, come here and declare this their home.

I, like many of you, started here. This is where I opened my eyes. Not in Mexico, but here in California, right here in *el valle*. This place, this valley, is where I took root. *I am not an immigrant*. My parents were born in the United States. I am a native. And so I speak with a native tongue and a sense of native belonging, of having been born in this place.

But I was born in Delano, California, in 1940, and in 1940, Delano was the asshole of the universe. It was bad, let me tell you. There was a white side, and there was a brown side, and a railroad and Highway 99 sliced right down the middle.



Mexican American field workers in the Imperial Valley, ca. 1960. CHS Library, San Francisco

Everybody knew the town was segregated, but no one admitted it. Filipinos and the *chinos* and a few Japanese lived in Chinatown. We lived in that nether region which is also a California phenomenon—the *barrio*. Most of it was Filipino actually; but to this day my parents' idea of an evening out is to go to a Chinese restaurant, because of the Pagoda Restaurant on the west side in Delano, the first restaurant I ever knew. Next to it was the Montecarlo, and so forth. What I didn't know, but soon learned, is that there were 13 warehouses in Delano; this is in a town of 10,000 people. Somebody was awfully active there—lots of aerobics. It so happens there were a lot of single men, a lot of Filipinos who weren't allowed to marry white women. There were a lot of ugly rumors, and racism on both sides of the fence. What I didn't know then was that the Filipinos were Hispanic, but they looked *chino* to me.

There is another image too that comes from the early days of California, Spanish California at any rate. When they were gathering those parties back in Sonora, Mexico, to come and colonize Alta California, they had to bring whomever they could find, anyone who was willing to come to this far-flung wilderness on the edge of the earth. So who came? *Mestizos*, *mulatos*, *filipinos*, *chinos*, *negroes*, *tercerones* (one thirders), *saltatraces* (the ones who bounce back, the racial retards, the throwbacks). These are the people who settled the early Spanish California pueblos of Los Angeles, San Jose, and San Francisco. San Francisco was settled, among others, by a man called José Tiburcio Vasquez, who came and laid the foundations for the city. A generation later, his son was the Sheriff-Mayor of San Jose, and their adobe stood in the plaza right beside the site of the modern convention center on Market Street. A generation after that Tiburcio Vasquez, José's great-grandson became the last of the California bandits, and the last man to be publicly hanged in California. He died less than two blocks from the adobe of his grandfather, the late Sheriff-Mayor of San Jose.

What happened after 1848? An enormous upheaval, the Gold Rush, which we all know about, the search for El Dorado. As it turns out, that is only a manifestation of something else, of a vision that this land for some reason or another has always inspired in its inhabitants.

Did you know that here, in California, before the Spaniards arrived, was the largest concentration of Native Americans in the continental United States? A quarter of a million Indians lived in the hills and valleys of this fabled land. The Spanish came, but

not in great numbers. When the Americans arrived in 1848, because of the Gold Rush, there were just barely 10,000 Spanish Californians. That's not even a good sized *barrio* these days. Only 10,000 Hispanics (or as I like to say, "High Spanics") were spread over this vast territory.

Part of the *sensation* of California has always been the sensation of vastness, of space . . . and with space, as we now know, comes time. Space/time. That's only one of the axes that we encounter here. In addition to east and west, there is north and south, and if one axis is space and time, the other axis has to be spirit and body, because this has always been a very spiritual place. It has always been flaky. We have always been into moonbeams. "Governor Moonbeam" was unfortunately ahead of his time. But I liked his craziness. Ricardo Flores Magon tried to overthrow Tijuana in 1911, and was arrested in San Diego when he objected to World War I. He was sent to Leavenworth Prison, where he refused to eat. He said as he was dying in 1923: "The revolutionary of one man is always the reactionary of another. The revolutionaries of today become the serious men of tomorrow." Jerry Brown is a revolutionary. He's nuts. That's why he is a revolutionary. He is a man of vision, a man who understands the axes that come to bear on this land: the east and the west and the north and the south, space and time, and spirit and matter. Yes, this is a magical land, and we must be able to see it from all the four corners of creation in order to understand it.

More images from the life of a Californian: Highway 99—an endless stream of cars and trucks on a ribbon of asphalt 900 miles long, the high road to hope, prosperity, and dreams of social progress. That is how they got rid of all the Delano warehouses. The new Highway 99 came through and *whoosh*. It eliminated a lot of suffering, but it did not change Delano much. That town remained a nasty place for Mexicans to live, especially in the winter. It was always hard until spring, when the only chance to work, to get away as migrant workers, beckoned from distant valleys. So we took to the road on that Highway 99, the endless path to endless wealth.

And yet, I was not always a migrant. I was born in 1940, and we all know what happened December 7, 1941. Not September 7, but December 7, 1941. There were a lot of Japanese American farmers working the San Joaquin Valley in the 1940s. They were doing quite well tilling small pieces of land; they had done a lot to make row crops pro-

ductive. They were showing American agriculture how to grow things like watermelons and cantaloupes and cucumbers, produce that had not been known and seen in this valley. They had the art, the skill, the gift. Naturally, this produced competition, and human beings being what they are, someone took advantage of the historical moment, and all Japanese farms were vacated when their farmers and families were sent to concentration camps in 1942.

Suddenly the U.S. Army was responsible for hundreds of farms across California. Who was to take charge? They turned them over to the Mexican farmworkers. One of them was my father. They asked him if he would like to run a farm. Well he went for it, and suddenly we were *rancheros*! So World War II was a very prosperous time for my family. We had a "new" car (a 1939-1940, but they did not make new cars during the war). We had food, a house—two houses. We had acreage. My

dad was farming; it was wonderful. The only *patron* we had to deal with was the U.S. Army, which showed up occasionally.

But a strange and tragic thing had happened on our ranch before we got it. The Japanese farmer who had lived on it refused to go to a concentration camp. So he hanged himself in the kitchen. Growing up with my older brother, I would be afraid to go into the kitchen after certain hours. One night our parents were gone. Our cousins were there, and we started telling ghost stories. I could see the farmer hanging from the lamp. So my cousin, who was about 15 at the time, got out the holy water, and she went around blessing the house from corner to corner. "Help us." We were saved.

Then in 1945, a more terrible thing happened. The U.S. won the war. The G.I.s came back, and the Mexican farmers for one reason or another began to lose their farms. So from utter prosperity, my family fell to utter poverty. In 1946 we hit the

During the Delano Grape Strike, strikers and supporters marched three hundred miles up the San Joaquin Valley from Delano to Sacramento to attract public attention to their cause. CHS Library, San Francisco



Protesting workers picket from roadside at a vineyard during the 1969 Delano Grape Strike, a critical turning point in the founding of the United Farm Workers Union and the achievement of collective bargaining for California farm workers. CHS Library, San Francisco

road, and I got to pick those tomatoes next to Moffett Field, and watch the blimps go by. That is a California story.

I did not understand it then. I did not understand the energies of this state. I did not understand, for instance, that Delano has been the focal point of some of the greatest labor struggles in the history of this country and in the history of this century. I was not aware of the residue of social consciousness that existed in Delano. I did not know that for at least another 20 years, until I went back and joined Cesar Chavez and the United Farmworkers, in an effort to try to make some changes happen. *La huelga* led to the Grape Boycott, which led to the first farm labor collective bargaining agreements in U.S. history. Change did happen, but then the Teamsters and the growers got together and the pendulum swung back. All those contracts were lost.

This state will not be able to achieve its greatness until it deals with its gut, until it deals with its agriculture, until it deals with injustice on the land where we grow our food. This is not just a repetition, a warning that comes from the past. This is a warning for the future. The pesticides and other poisons that are seeping into the richest farmland in the world are going to impoverish our grandchildren. It is happening in the Imperial Valley as well. Why is it happening? Because of human intransigence, because of human insensitivity, because one ethnic group believes in the American dream and wants to deny it to another.

We are enmeshed in the future, but we are

entangled in the past. The only way out is for us to get to the very core of the issue. The core of the issue has something to do with the way we view who we are, what we are, where we are, where we are going. This idea of Manifest Destiny—that somehow the only progression that has ever come to California has come from the east to the west—is only half of the vision. There's a progression from the south to the north, and, if you will go back to that little line of nomads coming down twenty thousand years ago across the Bering Strait, from the north to the south. We must cross the "T", we must square the circle, in order to understand who it is we are.

I have gone from east to west, to the north and to the south, across this beautiful state, and I love it, I love the feel of it. I am probably one of the few people who gets high driving on I-5. For a while the question was what to do with all that empty land west of the freeway. That was before they put in the gas stations and motels. Someone suggested that the state legalize gambling and prostitution there, so we could fill it up. Delano again. That is not squaring the circle, that is not locating ourselves. We must know our place geographically and otherwise, and we must know our time.

We must know our position. One of my goals has been to position myself, to posit myself. I am a positive thinker, and it comes from being able to posit myself, place myself. "Give me a place to stand and I shall move California. Give me a place to stand and I shall move America." My entree into America is not so much as an Hispanic, not

In the early 1970s, the new California Aqueduct, lifeline of the California Water Plan for shifting water from northern to southern parts of the state, encouraged subdivision of previously arid lands into water-thirsty farms and orchards down the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. Newly-completed Interstate 5 hugged the foothills of the Coast Range to the west.
Courtesy California Department of Water Resources



anymore, not as a Chicano, not even as a farm-worker. Forget it. It is as a CALIFORNIAN, as one of the native Californians who possesses part of the vision that we have all shared for centuries.

There are borders. One of the traditional conflicts in this state has been between north and south. Of course, you must know there were Spanish Californians involved in the creation of the California Constitution, which was based in part on the law that already existed here among the Spanish-speaking peoples. I rush to say these were not Spanish, these were not Chicanos per se; these were *mulatos*, *filipinos*, *chinos*, *indios*, *criollos*. From its very inception, California was a multi-cultural land. It was the destiny of this corner of the world to square the circle. Even so, before too long after the Gold Rush, the state suddenly found itself divided into northern and southern California. Bear Flaggers would accuse the southern *californios* of putting a drag on the development of California as part of the United States, because they wanted to maintain political control. For a while there was talk of secession and of splitting the state into two separate states, northern California and southern California.

We still find that. It affects my work. I put a play on in San Francisco. If it's a success in San Francisco, I have trouble in Los Angeles. If I have a successful Los Angeles play, I have trouble in New York. I do not want to deal with that in my own state. I want to be able to travel. There is a north and a south. But more than ever we are one state. More than ever the north is dependent on the south, and the south is dependent on the north. If for nothing else, then to share a common vision.

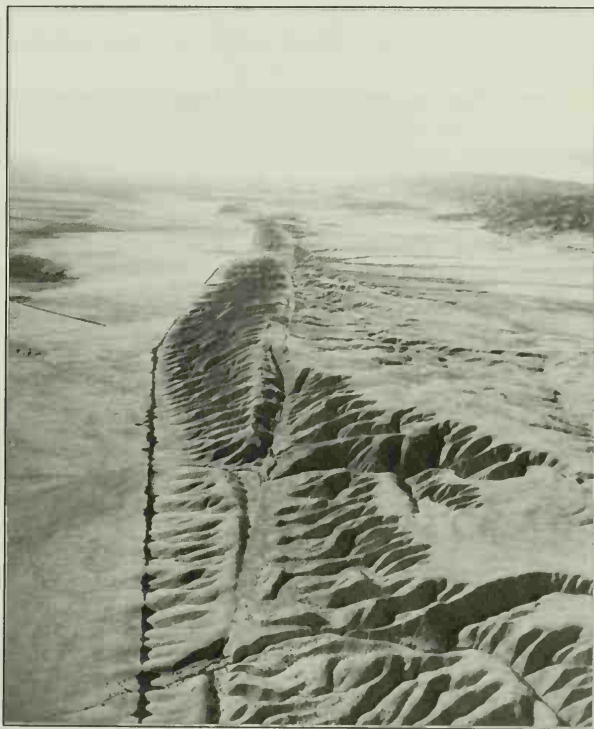
I think one of the most beautiful parts of California is the unpopulated part in the middle. We see the rolling hills, benign and soft, almost poetic in their natural rhythms. This is the faithful California, the California of old. But I am sure I am not the only one driving those freeways; nor are you. Many other kinds of visionaries are driving those freeways, and they see one city from San Francisco to Los Angeles. That too is part of our future; north to south. Will it become that? It depends on what we see.

And, then, as narrow as the state is, there is an east and west, and that is the most important, fascinating part of our California. I could not define it when I was 6, but I knew the moment we packed our belongings into the pickup and headed down Highway 99 and then up to 152 over Pacheco Pass, and came down the hills to Gilroy that we were suddenly in *la costa*, the coast. *La costa* was a magical land. We used to speak of it; our parents used to tell us stories about *la costa*. They used to say, "look to the *duendes*." The *duendes* are our spirits—little

leprechauns, little creative spirits—and maybe it was just a way to keep us picking. But, you know, it worked. Because they were magical, and I was picking up the *duendes* all along and did not even know it. I sensed it in the ecology of *la costa*.

Back in 1946 we did not know the word "ecology" existed. It was "nature" then. We saw it around us in the rivers, in the clumps of live oaks, in California poison oak, and in those hills. The Santa Clara Valley and San Fernando Valley were amazing because they were magical, and they were open, and they were free. Now they're full. I wouldn't keep anybody out of the state, far from it. But I sense the loss, that the newcomers never saw that openness. They never really got a chance to look for the *duendes*, even as children.

What I did not know was that I was looking at a geological phenomenon; that mythical line called the San Andreas Fault, which you encounter just west of Pacheco Pass, is the boundary between two continental plates, the North American plate and the Pacific plate. The Pacific plate rose out of the sea a million years after the North American plate. So the flora and the fauna are new, and



In the Coast Range west of Bakersfield, looking south in 1965 along the San Andreas Fault, border between the Pacific (west) and North American (east) plates that compose the coastline of California. Offset streambeds indicate the northward drift of the Pacific Plate. Many of California's most catastrophic earthquakes, including ones in 1838, 1857, 1865, 1906, 1940, and 1989 have been caused by rupturing of this fault. Courtesy United States Geological Survey

there's a different vibration. It doesn't matter who you are, you pick up on it. That's why we're flaky.

Do you know that studies are still trying to determine what our planet is composed of? Some think that the core is molten iron. Or maybe, there is a giant crystal at the core of the earth. We do not know. We only know that there are still volcanoes—live and active—around the world, that new stretches of land are being created in the sea. And we know this: the fissures and cracks in the earth are not just there to shake us up a bit once in a while, for there are forces rising from the earth, earth forces rising from the very center of the planet. There is around the world, a grid of "T" spots where these fissures in the continental plates have created power spots around the planet. And those that are under the sea are of no help to us unless we eat the fish that swim by there. Those that are on land have given birth to the greatest cities on earth, to great centers of civilization. Why? Because when the earth shakes, what comes up through the earth is not just a sensation of vibration, but vibration itself. Energy! Spirit! You will get the spirit if you think of the earth as a ball of mud, or even a ball of molten iron. By contrast, if you think of earth as something to be covered, that the earth is something to be strapped and chained, you get nothing back.

The history of agriculture has taught us many things. Unfortunately, it has not taught us quickly enough. When Europeans came to America, they discovered a miraculous new system of agriculture. They discovered some very essential things. For instance, the humble potato that I used to pick outside Bakersfield in mid-July. (That was in a place called Fomosa. In 1950, there were headlines that the Red Chinese had invaded *Formosa*. We were picking outside *Fomosa* and I was trying to look to see if we could see any Chinese.) Anyway, the potato took root in the San Joaquin Valley, and a tremendous amount of money was made. I don't know if you know about the potato: the Irish potato, the Idaho potato, the sweet potato. The potato was developed by the Inca. One theory was that it was developed in Machu Picchu on step levels. The Inca bred potatoes that would grow in any kind of weather. The potato is medicinal, the potato is alcoholic, the potato is food; the uses of the potato alone are incredible. One of the things it did was to solve a tremendous problem in northern Europe. Being a vegetable that could grow in cold climates—because it came from the Inca—the potato solved the problem of famine, and it joined the world's food supply and became a natural treasure, along with the gold of America, some of it from California.

As you know, the world's gold supply is limited. We have a great deal of international finance these

days because of the gold in California and Mexico, the silver in South America, and so forth. Interestingly enough, some of the people who mined the gold were Indians here in California. They knew where it was centuries before 1848—many centuries. A new technique was developed here to mine gold. In 1824, there was a sergeant in the Mexican army by the name of José Medina, on his way to the Presidio in San Francisco with a message. He happened to stop in the Santa Clara Valley, and he saw Indians fooling around with red clay. He was a mineralogist, and he knew cinnabar when he saw it. So he took this red clay, and put it into barrels of his shotgun, his *escopeta*, and fired it. Inside the core of the barrel were little drops of quicksilver. If it hadn't been for that quicksilver, the California Gold Rush could not have been what it was. I submit to you that the gold that was gouged out of our hills is today in Fort Knox or the Bank of London or Japan, in major financial capitals of the world. The world's gold supply has not grown. It was taken from the earth, and it was here for thousands of centuries. Why did those Indians not develop some kind of greed here? What's the matter with these backward savages; don't they know gold when they see it? They knew it! They just didn't feel the same way about it. That's part of the crossing of the "T", if you will. We have something to learn from those Indians that we have not yet learned.

There are movements around the world, people moving from east to west, from west to east, from north to south, from south to north. We find ourselves in a dynamic flux today, and California is one of those spots that, like a seismograph, records planetary activity. Why? Because we are squaring the circle here. Because people are here now from all over the world, and they are facing off and looking at each other.

We used to talk about integration. I no longer talk about integration, unless you want to change the metaphor. We must talk about the integrated circuits of society. There is another idea I want to borrow from science that makes a lot more sense to me in terms of what is happening in California. I call it "cultural fusion." The twenty-first-century culture is going to be a product of fusion, as in nuclear "fusion," as opposed to fission. Instead of splitting the cultural atom, we are going to integrate it even more. There is power there, so we must fuse it, make it work for us instead of blowing it apart. Instead of coming into a place and blowing it apart, why not fuse?

I address myself to ancient fears, fears of miscegenation. "What will happen to our kids if they end up looking and being like *them*?" It is a fearful thing that touches every community, but neverthe-

less it is inevitable. Fusion. It is not just a question of dealing with the newly arrived Vietnamese; it is a question of one day *being* Vietnamese. It is not a question that whoever does not speak Spanish learn Spanish; you are already more Spanish than you realize. You have been living here for a long time, and there's more in those tacos than you realize. We know herbs and plants. We absorb, and then we become and we evolve.

An ancient myth sustains my everyday progress into this maddening reality of ours. Ultimately we are all Maya; we are all part of the roots of America. The Maya believed that in that place where the conscious meets with the subconscious—in the navel of the universe—the four heavenly roads converge. The yellow road, the black road, the white road, and the red road. Squaring the circle. They had a symbolic image of God. No name, but an image. A square inside a circle. They called it *hunabku*. That's as close as they ever got to the picture of God; God as a mathematical vector.

I did not know this when I reared my head in Delano. Nobody told me I was a mathematician, I had to find that out for myself. So in my first year of college I married math and physics. I majored

in math and physics. Ultimately, mathematics embraces us all, and it comes back to the question of who we are. We are an unfinished equation that continues to unravel itself. As Lou Diamond Phillips said in *Stand and Deliver* . . . "Cal-coo-loose." There is the calculus of our minds. There is the beat of the universe, as it hums like clockwork and can be described in numbers. There is the magic of the human mind as it perceives and makes sense of its own experience. Sometimes the vision precedes, outlining a road; sometimes the vision emerges from experience. But the vision is always there. And that vision always brings us back to our essential nature as spiritual beings. We are conscious energy. The word "wisdom" comes from the word "vision." It's the same word. In order for California to be wise, it must enlarge its vision to include all humanity.

I leave you with one final thought. The future belongs to those who can imagine it. Thank you. CHS

Founder of El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, Luis Valdez is an eminent California playwright, director, and filmmaker.



A San Joaquin Valley vineyard under irrigation, ca. 1920. CHS Library, San Francisco



This pamphlet cover, published in 1897 by the California State Board of Trade, ancestor of the present-day California State Chamber of Commerce, testifies to the long-held view of many that California is a special place, an Eden of possibility for human success. *Courtesy Huntington Library*

II. *Envisioning California*

From El Dorado to
the Pacific Rim:
The Place Called California

by James D. Houston

These heathen seem to be very well supplied with everything, especially with plenty of fish of all kinds; in fact they brought to the camp so much that it was necessary to tell them not to bring any more, for it would eventually have to spoil.

FRAY JUAN CRESPI
encamped near Santa Barbara
August 20, 1769

When you are trying to locate a place, it is usually safe to begin with maps. I always do. But when the subject is California, you have to be careful. Maps of this region have been deceptive from the start. The earliest ones depicted an offshore island, separated from what is now Nevada by a long narrow channel. Some people say these may be the most reliable maps we have—geographically wrong, but psychologically close to the truth.

On my relief map of North America, the place named California lies along the continent's western rim. A broad valley, shaped like a cucumber, occupies its center. Two great rivers water this valley, fed by a dozen tributaries flowing down from the massive range of high peaks that frame its eastern side. To the west, another range borders the valley, a long pattern of folds and ripples rising

up from the Pacific Ocean. The two great rivers empty into delta lands that channel the water, via a wide gap in the coastal mountains, toward San Francisco's nearly landlocked and marvelously protected bay. To the north there are more mountains, extending toward Canada, though a political line cuts through them to mark where California ends and Oregon begins, just as another political line cuts through the desert that occupies the southern quarter of the state, a desert that extends deep into Mexico.

Is this, then, what we mean by *the place*—this complex system of ridges and waterways, this mosaic of micro-climates and varied terrains? Well, yes. But no. Not exactly. Not when the subject is the state of California. It is now almost impossible to separate the place on the map from the legends that have kept it alive in the imagination. And one would not want to keep them separate for very long. The beguiling attraction of California lives right there, in that interplay. Simply consider the Gold Rush, this region's formative event. How can a few thousand pounds of gleaming metal, no matter how native to the mountainsides and riverbeds, be disentangled from the noise and spectacle of the sudden multitude? Without the gold embedded in the landscape, of course, there would have been no Rush. But without the Rush, we

would have only greed to remember, and bank accounts. No magic. No world-class legend to tickle the memory and stir the blood.

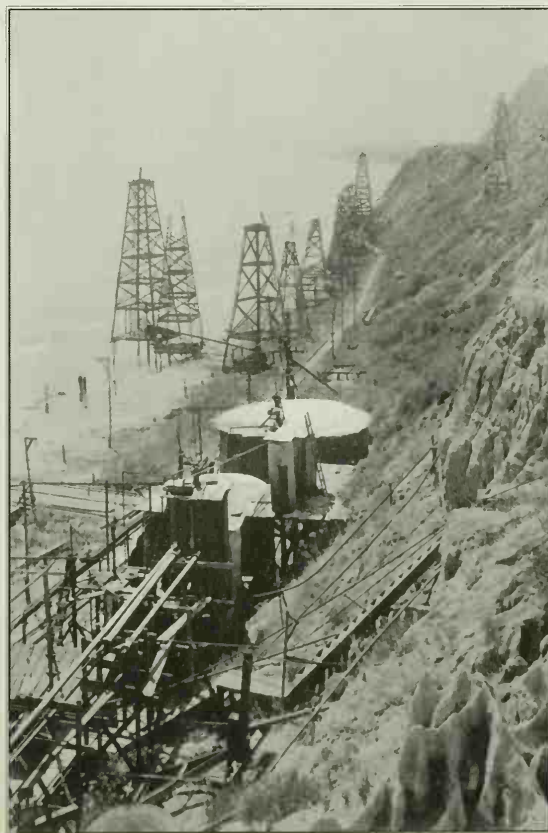
These two—the place on the continent, and the place in the mind—have never been easy to pry apart because the legends actually came first. The dream, the expectation of something remarkable out there at the farthest edge of the New World, lived in the minds of the earliest explorers before they ever glimpsed the monumental headlands at Point Reyes and Point Conception or dipped their hands into the bottomlands of the luscious coastal valleys—San Fernando, Ojai, Salinas, Santa Clara. It was a far western version of El Dorado that originates in a sixteenth-century novel by Garcí Ordóñez de Montalvo called *The Adventures of Esplandián*. There California is named and described for the first time—a science fiction name, in those days, as unearthly as Lilliput or Brobdingnag. It was a mythical island, very near the gates of the Terrestrial Paradise, inhabited by Amazons, made impregnable by steep cliffs and rocky shores, and in this whole island, “there was no metal but gold.”¹

California was not the first place on earth to get this type of advance billing. Explorations of every

kind have been propelled by heady visions and improbable dreams. An intriguing feature of this region’s history is the extent to which its array of natural endowments—climate, landscape, and bountiful resources—lived up to some of the visions, fleshed out the hopes for a blessed and promised land.

The rich potential of the valleys and alluvial plains was evident to the first overland travelers. “All the soil is black and loamy,” wrote Fray Juan Crespí, chaplain of the Portolá expedition, as they crossed the Los Angeles basin in the summer of 1769, “and is capable of producing every kind of grain and fruit which may be planted.”²

It proved to be ideal for farming and ranching, and for seventy years or so this appeared to be what the earth of California had to offer—extensive grazing lands for cattle, prime acreage for wine grapes and wheat. It was the discovery of gold that brought the boomtown mentality to an otherwise quietly fertile outpost. When this remote western landscape actually delivered pockets and seams of the fabled ore so many adventurers had dreamed about, the world’s imagination suddenly had a new touchstone. Maybe El Dorado existed after all!



Almost as soon as the industry emerged, oil wells invaded the beach at Summerland, Santa Barbara County, shown here in this 1911 photograph. CHS Library, San Francisco



Many generations of Californians have preferred the coastal regions for work, residence, and recreation. San Diego Bay, pictured here on the brink of the post-World War II boom in 1946, has become the home of a great city of more than 1 million people, as well as major naval and port facilities. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

"On our poor little maps of California printed in France," wrote the journalist Etienne Derbec in 1850, "the San Joaquin is shown as a river flowing between the California mountains and the sea, a short distance from San Francisco, in the midst of a rich plain which its waters cover with gold dust every year. The editors had even taken the pains to gild that precious plain on their maps."³

A few decades later the legend was recharged and reinforced when the landscape delivered up another treasure, dark and sticky, that had been waiting for millenia, locked in subterranean pools and caverns. Fifty or sixty million years ago, when Long Beach was underwater and the central valley was an inland sea, uncountable generations of plankton sifted downward, leaving tiny skeletons to be transmuted into oil. As these ancient deposits were discovered, one by one—the Doheny strike in Los Angeles in 1892, the Lakeview Gusher in the lower San Joaquin in 1910, the phenomenal find at Signal Hill near Long Beach in the early 1920s (in barrels per acre the richest in the world)—fortunes accumulated, both private and corporate, that far surpassed the wealth created by the Mother Lode. The timing, moreover, seems uncanny, because during the same era, while the substrata was releasing its hoard of black gold, California was developing as a world headquarters for the machine that would be a prime consumer: the automobile, with its own by-products, the car culture and the drive-in style of life.

In the early 1980s, seventy years after the Lakeview Gusher darkened the skies above Taft and Maricopa, Kern County alone still ranked 18th among the world's oil-producing regions, delivering more barrels per day than some of the OPEC nations. (And there were more registered vehicles

in California than there were people in the seven nearest western states.)

Meanwhile, another resource, another feature of the place itself, the weather, had fueled three new industries. The first was real estate. From the 1870s onward, land developers packaged the climate, telling easterners that California offered "the loveliest skies, the mildest winters, the most healthful region, in the whole United States."⁴ The second was cinema. Early film-makers, looking for a way to put some distance between themselves and New Jersey, where Thomas Edison was trying to control the patents on film-making equipment, crossed the continent to southern California. They found a number of things that encouraged them to stay, including varied terrain, an abundance of light, and over three hundred clear-sky days in any given year, which made it ideal for outdoor and location shooting.

Hollywood and aviation have at least that much in common. In the early days of flying, pilots and designers also found the southern California climate ideal for testing planes, for taking off and landing. Though the *Spirit of St. Louis* departed from New York in 1927 to make the first trans-Atlantic flight, the plane was designed in San Diego. The demands of World War II gave this fledgling industry size and shape. One thing led to another. Nowadays, in the endlessly sunny deserts north of Los Angeles, while the U.S. Air Force tests its space-age capsules and weaponry, the spirit of aerial adventure lives on in the work of Paul McReady, the aviation renegade who has developed a record-setting series of engineless and human-powered aircraft, the *Gossamer Condor*, the *Gossamer Albatross*, the *Gossamer Penguin*. In 1981 his 198-lb *Solar Challenger* astonished the aviation

world when it crossed the English Channel powered solely by the energy of the sun. The plane was designed in Pasadena. It was systematically tested in the dry clear air above Shafter Airport, a few miles south of Bakersfield.⁵

In this way, time and time again, some feature of the place we call California has led to some new opportunity or perception; and these in turn have advanced the reputation and the legend of the place.

Location itself can be described this way. Simply as a physical creation, the thousand-mile coastline, from Crescent City in the far north, to Point Loma in the far south, is one of the world's most widely praised and often visited beauty zones. Because of its numerous blessings, Californians have hugged this coast from the earliest days of European settlement, spreading out around the long necklace of presidio and port and mission towns founded by the Spanish. This is still where most Californians live, work, and play. Some eighty percent of the state's twenty-six million inhabitants reside within a band about forty miles wide, between Santa Rosa and the Mexican border. They eat fruits and vegetables trucked in from the Central Valley; and their water comes from somewhere farther inland and higher up, sources like Hetch Hetchy and Mono Lake. But they work in San Diego, in the L.A. basin, in the extended megalopolis around San Francisco Bay. And the coastline is their principal recreation zone—the beaches, the tidepools, the several dozen surfing spots, the fishing and sailing in offshore waters, the stirring scenery along Highway One, the drop-off cliffs that launch hang-gliders, the trails and

hot springs and campsites throughout the many ridges of the long Coast Range.

Because of its location, this coast that shapes the curving outline of the state has also helped to shape its history. By the late 18th century, Spain, England, Russia, and the United States were all eyeing the strategic advantages of California's as-yet-undeveloped ports and harbors, in their long-distance struggle for control of Pacific trade and trading routes. Today, with control of the Pacific still in mind, some thirty percent of the entire U.S. Naval fleet is based in San Diego.

It is the look of this coastline, as perceived from the East, that has had such a profound effect on what we might call the region's psychological history. Most travellers to California have come from somewhere east. Because of its place in history, because it was settled late and happens to occupy the continent's farthest edge, the West Coast has been viewed as some final stopping place, the end of the trail, the conclusion of that great thrust and opening outward from Europe that began five hundred years ago. No one has voiced this more deliberately and passionately than the Carmel poet Robinson Jeffers. For him, the meeting of shore and water was not only a scene of wild and holy magnificence, it was the cultural cliff-edge, where lives culminate, where cross-continental destinies are somehow completed. This theme propels his early poem, *Continent's End* (1924):

I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray,
the established sea-marks, felt behind me
Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the
continent, before me the mass and doubled
stretch of water.⁶

"Continent's
End" at Point
Bonita, Marin
County, in 1912.
CHS Library, San
Francisco



If El Dorado was this region's first large metaphor, Continent's End was the second. And in recent years a third image has risen into public consciousness, as a way of describing California's place on the map and in the mind. It is the term, *Pacific Rim*. A rim, of course, suggests a circle, and the term itself places this state, not at the outer edge of European expansion, but on a great wheel of peoples who surround the Pacific Basin. It helps to bring into sharper focus some of our ever-changing ethnic, cultural, and economic realities.

Because it faces west, this coast is where most trans-Pacific travellers have landed and where immigrants from Asia have settled. Among the people of Asian and Pacific Island background now in the United States, some forty percent live in California. The Asian presence, such a vital feature of this state's unique cultural mix, is much more than a matter of numbers. It is felt in the architecture, in eating habits, in the popularity of certain ideas and belief systems, such as zen and yoga, in the practice of martial arts and healing arts, and in the evolution of the economy. In 1982, for the first time, United States trade with Atlantic nations was surpassed by its trade with nations across the Pacific. In 1986 the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles moved 58.6 million tons of cargo, almost triple the tonnage handled by the ports of New York and New Jersey.⁷

The legends of California are always tied to some feature of its varied and abundant landscape. The oil boom launched by the first major strike in the San Joaquin in 1909 and 1910, for example, had a kind of prologue in the 1906 earthquake. Both episodes begin with underground, innate features of the western earth that have helped to shape both history and mythology. While it wrecked a large piece of San Francisco, the famous quake also flattened the old Russian Orthodox chapel at Fort Ross, seventy miles north, and shook loose a wall of the San Juan Bautista Mission, which we now know stands right in the rift zone, eighty miles south. There had been other fearful quakes in California since settlement began, but this was the one that set a city on fire and first drew widespread attention to something geologists have come to view as a principal feature in the physical life of the place, that six hundred mile crease through the landscape, the San Andreas Fault.

In a similar way the prologue to the Gold Rush is the story of the ill-fated Donner Party, who started too late from the Middle West, fell prey to squabbling along the trail, entered the Sierra Nevada range well past the season when it was considered safe to cross, and thus found themselves trapped in the early winter of 1846. One of the most notori-

ous events in the history of the American West—some say it is the basic event—the Donner tragedy provides an unavoidable counterpoint to the legends of fulfillment and abundance. It is a story not only of seekers pushed past their limits, who devour human flesh in order to survive. It is a story from a region where the weather can turn on you in an hour, where the landscape is no longer an ally or bountiful provider, and where nature is an adversary, or perhaps a mentor you can never afford to take for granted.

The lesson of the Donner Party contains a warning not unlike the warnings of John Muir, the great naturalist and patriarch conservationist who began to tramp the Sierra Nevada range some twenty years later. Be attentive to this land and its habits, he said; learn to enjoy it, but never let down your guard.

The power of the high country so filled Muir with awe and wonder that he devoted his life to preserving as much of this far western landscape as he could. He worked to save Yosemite Valley, and succeeded. He fought harder to save Hetch Hetchy Valley, which he claimed was too beautiful to be dammed up and turned into a reservoir, and failed. He founded the Sierra Club, and in his writings he gave voice to an environmental consciousness, a reverence for natural beauty and a respect for the potent and interlocking cycles of the earth, that speaks ever louder as the years go by.

One of the great California ironies is the way its very virtues sometimes seem fated to bring about the state's undoing. This region still draws people at a phenomenal rate, continuing to grow by a thousand or more per day, day after day, year after year, about half by birth and half by in-migration. As the demands on space and resources intensify, one sees examples everywhere of how some cycle of nature is overlooked, or given low priority, in the rush to develop a parcel of real estate, maximize income, or expand a city: in a new subdivision, built across a fault line, half a dozen duplexes are tipped off their foundations by a quake; somewhere along the coast, a fragile slope, over-logged and over-built, is cut away by erosion and four homes go sliding to the bottom; in the lower San Joaquin Valley, over-irrigation coupled with poor drainage fills a hundred thousand acres of cropland with plant-killing salts and minerals, while a spectacular lake in the High Sierra drops fifty feet in fifty years in order to serve a thirsty city three hundred miles south.

The succession of such events, together with the ongoing debates over river use, air quality, the coastal impact of offshore drilling, and so on, are gradually leading us toward a revision of the original California legend. Gradually we are discovering,

or rediscovering, that this land is not a cornucopia of limitless reserves, but a well-endowed place with very specific limits that have to be acknowledged and honored. And these limits, too, are fundamental features of the place—weather, tides, wind and water flow, cycles in the soil and in the earth beneath the soil.

The legend dies hard, however, the one with the boomtown voice saying, "Take what you want while the taking is good." And perhaps we can still learn from the native tribes who once flourished in this part of the world. They understood that in order to survive it was important to find a way to live in harmony with the whole environment. If one failed to do so, the penalty could be severe.

Up along the north coast, the Yurok expressed this via a World Renewal dance, described in Theodora Kroeber's retelling of one of their best-known tales: "To a world in balance, the flat earth's rise and fall, as it floats on Underneath Ocean, is almost imperceptible, and nothing is disturbed by it. Doctors know that to keep this balance, the people must dance the World Renewal dances, bringing their feet down strong and hard on the earth. If they are careless about this, it tips up and if it tips more than a very little, there are strange and terrible misplacements."⁸

That is a prologue to the story of *The Inland Whale*, who became stranded in a landlocked lake. Why? The people had grown careless. They allowed

the earth to tip too far, so that ocean waters came pouring across the land, carrying all the creatures of the sea. When the earth finally righted itself, and the sea water drained away, a female whale was left behind. Unable to return to her natural habitat, she became a lonely wisdom figure.

In this ancient story, life is a balancing act, and the earth is a delicately hinged support system one must revere and respect. Evidence suggests that some of the early Spanish explorers saw California this way too. Fray Juan Crespí found the landscape itself to be something one approached respectfully and with more than ordinary caution. As diarist and chaplain with the Portolá party, he was the first writer to give us a detailed account of what this region looked like as European settlement began. Making daily entries as the party crept up the coastline from Baja toward San Francisco Bay, Crespí reported at length on the fauna and the flora, the habits of local tribes, and the habits of the land.

At the end of July 1769 they were camped along the banks of the river we now call the Santa Ana, which follows the Riverside Freeway into Anaheim and Garden Grove. In those days it followed a similar course but had a different name, *el rio del dulcísimo nombre de Jesús de los Temblores*. On July 28, the padre wrote:

The bed of the river is well grown with sycamores, alders, willows, and other trees we



Ironic counterpoint to all its physical beauty and its people's material success, California is regularly wracked by devastating earthquakes. This was foreshadowed when Fray Juan Crespí and other Spanish pioneers of the Portolá expedition were terrorized by severe tremors while exploring the coast in 1769. Above is Arnold Genthe's photograph of the fire set off by the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906. This view was taken down Sacramento Street, near Powell, on the morning of the first day of the fire, April 18. CHS Library, San Francisco



Houses toppled from their foundations, Bolinas, Marin County, April 1906. It is not well known that the great quake caused severe damage outside of San Francisco, particularly in lightly-settled Marin County and down the San Francisco Peninsula to San Jose. *CHS Library, San Francisco*



Severe earthquake destruction is no stranger to southern parts of the state. In 1925, a tremor devastated Santa Barbara, causing much of the downtown neighborhood to be levelled. Such disasters often give birth, however, to important social, economic, and cultural changes. In this case, as shown in the photograph, Santa Barbara's nineteenth-century American pioneer buildings were in ruins. City leaders seized upon the opportunity to redevelop the downtown in the Spanish colonial architecture, then very popular in the state, thus giving the city a more distinctive visual identity that lasts to the present day. *CHS Library San Francisco*



Marina District, San Francisco, after the earthquake of October 17, 1989. Photograph by Deanne Fitzmaurice. *Courtesy San Francisco Chronicle*

Marina District, San Francisco, after the earthquake of October 17, 1989. Photograph by Vince Maggiora. Courtesy San Francisco Chronicle



The collapsed Cypress Structure along the Nimitz Freeway, Oakland, after the earthquake of October 17, 1989. Photograph by Steve Ringman. Courtesy San Francisco Chronicle



have not recognized. It is evident from the sand on its banks that in the rainy season it must have great floods which would prevent crossing it. It has a great deal of good land which can easily be irrigated . . . I called this place The Very Sweet Name of Jesus of the Temblors, because we experienced here a horrifying earthquake which was repeated four times during the day. The first, which was the most violent, happened at one in the afternoon, and the last one about four.⁹

Undaunted, the exploration party continued north the next morning, from Santa Ana into what is now the heart of Los Angeles. For the next five days they were periodically shaken by quakes large and small. Though Crespi was alarmed by the tremors, he never failed to comment on the beauties and endowments of the land they passed through, its possibilities for food and shelter, irrigation, timber, and farming. In his diary these concerns, the land's blessings and the unaccountable quivers in the earth, live side by side.

On Tuesday, August 1, they camped just south of where Mission San Gabriel now stands:

At ten in the morning, the earth trembled. The shock was repeated with violence at one in the afternoon, and one hour afterward we experienced another. The soldiers went out this afternoon and brought an antelope, with which animals this country abounds. They are like wild goats, but have horns rather larger than goats. I tasted the meat, and it was not bad.

On Thursday, August 3, the party forded a river they had named for Our Lady of the Angels of Porciuncula (now called the Los Angeles), and Crespi described "a large vineyard of wild grapes and an infinity of rose bushes in full bloom." A few miles later they reach a small stream:

The banks were grassy and covered with fragrant herbs and watercress. The water flowed afterward in a deep channel toward the southwest. All the land that we saw this morning seemed admirable to us. We pitched camp near the water. This afternoon we felt new earthquakes, the continuation of which astonishes us. We judge that in the mountains that run to the west of us there are some volcanoes, for there are many signs on the road which stretches between the Porciuncula River and the Spring of the Alders, for the explorers saw some large marshes of a certain substance like pitch; they were boiling and bubbling, and the pitch came out mixed with an abundance of water . . . and there is such an abundance of it that it would serve to caulk many ships.

Imagine Crespi, born on the Spanish isle of Mallorca, seasoned traveller and soldier of the Cross, marching through the richest land he has yet seen, and struck by subterranean powers such as he has felt nowhere else in New Spain. The dark and loamy soil, where grapes and roses evidently grow wild, is rolling and rumbling beneath his sandals. Ahead of him rise the Santa Monica Mountains, which appear to be volcanic; that is, he *hopes* there are volcanoes up ahead, for that would at least explain the rumbles and the percolating tar pits reported by the scouts.

Crespi has no way of knowing that a rift zone lurks thirty miles to the east. He has no access to the theory of Continental Drift, which some two hundred years later will help account for what is going on. He has no way of knowing that the same forces that created that long crease and these sub-surface tremors—two great slabs of the earth's crust grinding together—also contributed to the scenic grandeur and the miraculously fertile fields. And yet in his diary of 1769, he manages to catch this condition, this pairing. Be wary in the land of promise, his diary suggests. Be attentive, because this appears to be a land of two promises, where abundant possibilities and a potential for disaster live side by side.

When the subject is California, the place on the continent and the place in the mind are now so closely wedded that we may never again be able to separate the two. And yet from time to time one cannot help wondering what this region seemed to offer, in and of itself, before dreams and legends began to shape our view of it. If we can trust what Crespi saw and recorded, during the weeks when the white explorers were arriving, with the roads and the rifles and the high expectations and the first bits of merchandise, this much was already here—grapes and roses and petroleum and fault lines—co-existing in the landscape. CHS

See notes beginning on page 261.

James D. Houston is the author of a dozen works of fiction and non-fiction, including the novels Love Life (1985) and Continental Drift (1978). Among his non-fiction works are the award-winning Californians: Searching for the Golden State (1982), and Farewell To Manzanar (1973), both book and teleplay, co-authored with his wife Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. He is Visiting Professor of Literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

CALIFORNIA: A Visual Artist in Today's Landscape

by *Stephen Johnson*

Growing up in California gives an artist a significant visual advantage. This is a visually stunning place. Partially because of its remarkable landscape, California has played a unique role in the development of landscape photography as a respected and imitated art form. The California landscape has had dramatic influence on the history of photography and our national attitude toward conservation, parks, and our relationship to the environment in general. Both the majesty of and the threats to California's land have been significant in the development of a growing national environmental ethic.

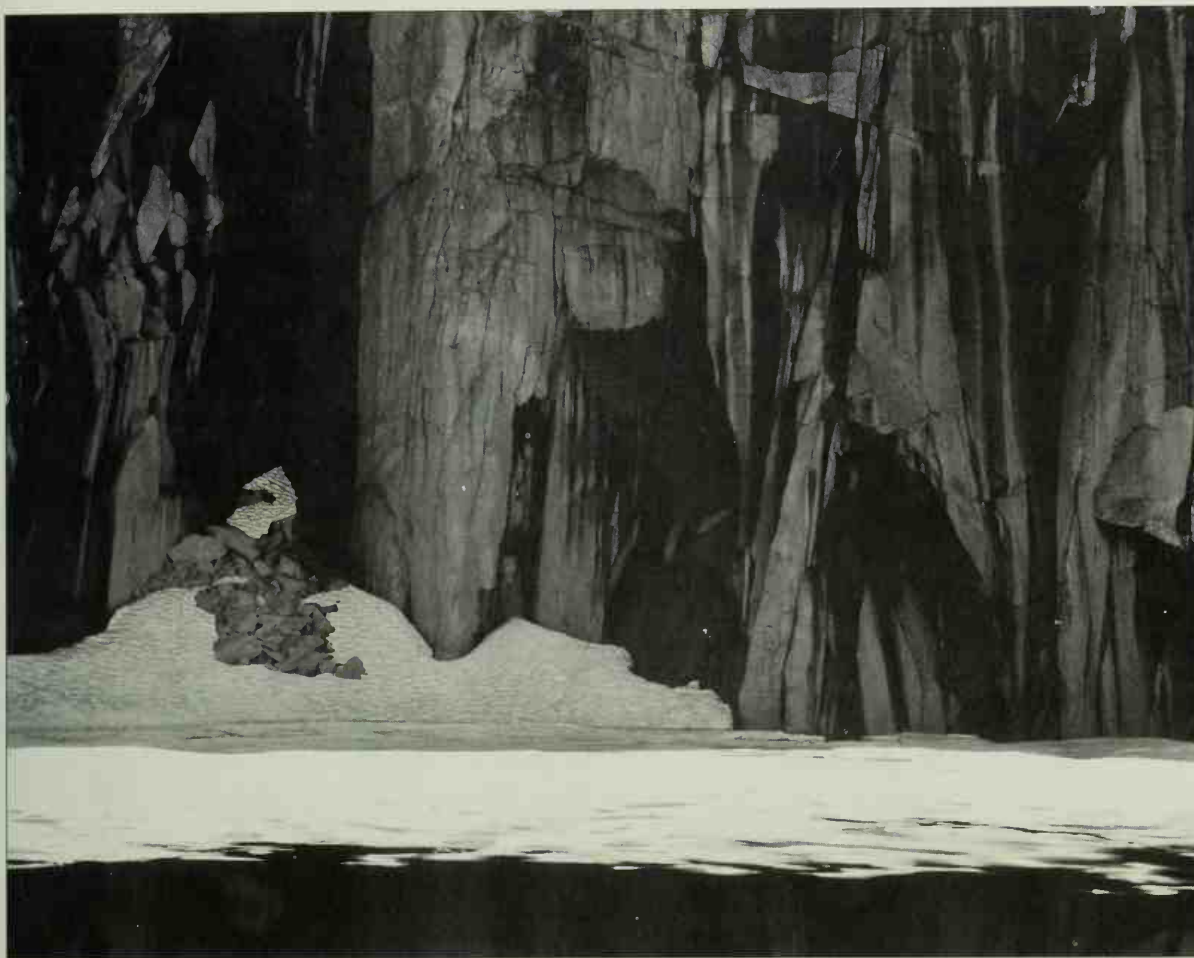
In the nineteenth century, California became the land of gold, the terminus of our westward migration, and possibly the end of our dreams of a limitless frontier. In the 1930s, it was the promised land of milk and honey to a desperately poor, drought-stricken Midwest. Hollywood became a symbol and a dream machine with global implications. More recently, our state has been a magnet for people seeking sunshine and new economic opportunities. For those who stayed elsewhere, our state is still often imagined as some eclectic gathering of surfers attending yoga classes and discussing astrology. Accurate or not, in both positive and negative ways, these views of California have acted as powerful symbols to our nation, and perhaps the world. An underlying theme to this conference is the desire that a more complex and realistic view of California will emerge.

As a visual artist I deal in symbols; my vocabu-

lary is limited to what can be seen, or what can be made to appear to be seen. And as a native Californian, it is easy to succumb to symbolic, exaggerated views of an imagined California. My own homeland pride can easily deteriorate into little more than chamber-of-commerce rhetoric. Our landscape presents itself almost self-elaborated. Overly romanticized descriptions of land can easily happen in a place like California; this land lends itself to overstatement. But the saving grace of this place, of what is perhaps a kind of California state of mind, is that we do, ultimately, confront both our opportunities and problems with some degree of realism, with unique energy and a somewhat naive belief that we can do anything. We are, after all, *Californians*.

Much of California's population is descended from western Europeans who migrated north or west, bringing with them some notion of this land as a source of wealth, not just sustenance. The European immigration seems to have brought a generally consumption-oriented attitude that, from our first penetration here, led to the exploitation of mission Indians, washed away mountainsides in lust for gold, divided the state into railroad-driven land baronies, turned our waterscape upside down, and waged what amounts to chemical warfare on our farmlands.

When photographer Carleton Watkins struggled with his mammoth-glass-plate camera up the steep sides of Yosemite Valley in 1861, I wonder if he had any notion that 27 years later he would be working



"Frozen Lake and Cliffs, the Sierra Nevada," Sequoia National Park, California, 1932, by legendary twentieth-century landscape photographer and environmental activist Ansel Adams. CHS Library, San Francisco. Photograph by Ansel Adams. Courtesy of the Trustees of the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust. All rights reserved

on a commission for the Kern County Land Company's land promotion schemes near Bakersfield. I wonder if he would have seen any contradiction in the two efforts. I suspect not, because we have been a long time learning to distinguish between being impressed by landscape and re-working it into profit. To the pioneer it was one and the same, a continuum of thought; a new and beautiful place that could make a home was also a place to "work the land." With modern technology and transportation, and no new ethical guidelines to follow, it was still the same: magnificent landscapes where great profits could be made—in gold, lumber, agriculture, and tourism.

It is no coincidence that John Muir and Ansel Adams gained fame here. Nor that placer mining and corporate agriculture rose to such great fame and notoriety. Nor is it surprising that Sacramento Valley farmers brought what may be the first environmental suit when they pressed the state to stop hydraulic mining in the late 1870s.

Early photographers helped to glorify the majesty of this place. And though pictures of Yosemite and the rugged coast could never compete with the images of the Gold Rush, they did have an impact. Watkins' 18x22-inch photographs were circulated in Congress lobbying for passage of the Yosemite Act. In 1864, when Abraham Lincoln signed the

law setting aside Yosemite "for public use, resort and recreation" that would "be inalienable for all time," he made a grand, sweeping gesture that in many ways founded the environmental movement.

It is into this complex context I was born and raised, and eventually settled on the arts as my life's work. My decision was due, in no small proportion, to the beauty of California's Sierra Nevada and Yosemite. But, I now know that it was also due to those days riding my bicycle on the lonely backroads and farmlands of Merced County in the San Joaquin Valley. That long horizon and endless space had as much to do with my development as Yosemite's grandeur.

The Central Valley is a peculiar place. We know it is a valley; local car dealerships and newspapers carry the word "Valley" as an icon. But most of the time there are no mountains to be seen, the horizon seems to go on and on without end. And there can't be a valley without mountains. I was sure of it; I read it somewhere.

This strange sense of space breeds an unusual sense of place, and contradictory notions of limits and possibilities. The invisible mountains suggest that things are not always what they seem. The unending space suggests that there are no limits to what we can do, yet it inevitably makes us feel small and isolated. It insulates us from the consequences of our actions and encourages us to try almost anything. And then the sun comes out and

changes everything. What seemed possible in the spring is often unimaginable by August. The summer sun settles all questions. In fact, it settles any desire to ask questions.

With this as my background, it was inevitable that political and environmental considerations would become a part of my decision to pursue art. In California, love for the outdoors often fuses into political activism. There seems to be no other choice. The French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson has been quoted as saying during World War II that he could not understand how Ansel Adams and Edward Weston could be running around California photographing rocks and trees while the world was falling apart. It is somewhat ironic that the seeds sown by California landscape photographers like Adams have so influenced the growth of the environmental movement. Today, this movement, now fully grown, attempts to avert such global disasters as the elimination of rainforests, the greenhouse effect, and chemical/nuclear contamination, threats that are surely as ominous as war.

My own environmental/political crusades as an artist have been somewhat smaller in scope. In 1979 I initiated an effort to build a visual constituency for Mono Lake on the eastern Sierra. Mono Lake is dying because the Los Angeles Depart-



"River View Down the Valley, Cathedral Rock, Yosemite," ca. 1861, by Carleton E. Watkins, first in the line of California's great landscape photographers. Prints such as these aided in persuading Congress and President Lincoln in the 1860s to set aside Yosemite Valley as a scenic land preserve and to grant it to the state of California as caretaker. Historians view the Yosemite grant of 1864 as the origin of the American national park movement. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

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Carleton E. Watkins became associated with Yosemite and landscape views early in his career, as is evident in this advertisement for his studio that appeared in the *San Francisco City Directory, 1873*. CHS Library, San Francisco

ment of Water and Power is exporting water from the Mono Basin. As the lake receives less water, it is shrinking; ultimately its fragile ecosystem will collapse. As a photographer, I wanted to help.

With the help of fellow photographers Al Weber and Don Worth and the support of David Brower at Friends of the Earth, we were able to put together "At Mono Lake," a traveling fine-arts exhibit that toured the country from 1980 to 1983, reaching about two million people. In 1983 we published a book drawn from the exhibit, and I think we made a difference in how Mono Lake is perceived. In many circles, Mono is now a part of a mindset—a beautiful and important landscape being destroyed, that *must* be saved.

I knew at the time that I was merely carrying out a long tradition of photographers' attempting to influence land-use issues. After Carleton Watkins came William Henry Jackson, whose 1872 photographs were used as evidence of the value of Yellowstone when it was under consideration as the first national park. In 1936 Ansel Adams took

his Kings Canyon portfolio to Washington, D.C., to lobby for the creation of a new national park. Such traditions are certainly not unique to California, but it may well be that as technology and ever more intensive land use issues evolve here, artists in this state are in an increasingly unique position, and bear a special responsibility to stand up for endangered lands.

It is interesting to observe how photography is changing from the past emphasis on the idealized western landscape. In contemporary landscape work it is ever more common to deal with how man-made constructions change the landscape, rather than to seek those remaining pristine vistas that become romantic symbols of what once was. In photography, it is clear that the focus is shifting from the ideal to the confrontational. And it is not hard to understand why much of this contemporary work has been done in California. Most of the work is not overtly political, but it functions in and effects the charged political arena of contemporary California culture.

I know that much of this was on our minds when Robert Dawson and I took up photographing the Central Valley in 1982. The effort evolved into a traveling photographic exhibit we couldn't resist calling "The Great Central Valley Project," after the giant federal irrigation project. The book from the exhibit, with a comprehensive text by Gerald Haslam, is being published by the University of California Press in 1990.

When I first returned to the valley to photograph, I was still struggling to understand the place. I remember using dense filters, attempting to cut through the haze and see the mountains. I was still trying to see those mountains, to make this place look like an ideal valley. I was still trying to see the valley for what I thought it was, rather than what it now looked like. For the most part, those photographs were poor and unrevealing. But I kept working, left the filters behind, and the images got better. I began to see the valley as the dynamic, evolving, and troubled landscape that it is. The vast space of the valley and its often ironic human creations became the inspiration for making the photographs as often as did the simple beauty of its rural landscape.

I knew that the Central Valley was a completely re-made land. What I discovered while photographing it was just how dramatic that transforma-

tion has been. Early European explorers most often described the valley as a desolate land of miserable extremes. No doubt, they were seeing the valley through highly prejudiced eyes. Valley Indians certainly did not see their home in such grim terms. In fact, their lives were probably richer and easier than most native Americans. Their population was surprisingly large, perhaps as many as 160,000 people.

The first white settlers viewed technology as the only way of profiting from this land. And they may have been right. Local Indians did not profit from the land, they were merely sustained by it. Therein lies an enormous difference. But now, the very technology that has made the valley bloom with crops may be a source of its undoing. Massive irrigation is salting and polluting the soil. Groundwater pumping is draining and collapsing vital natural aquifers. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are poisoning the water, and possibly the food supply. Atmospheric pollution probably accounts for billions of dollars in crop losses each year. And we are having an ever more difficult time preserving prime farmland as suburban development pressures push out agriculture.

The arts have a role to play in the stewardship of our land. As artists, it is our job to help take stock of what we have done and to find evidence, inspi-

The coast near Gaviota, Santa Barbara County, ca. 1890, by William Henry Jackson. Although more famous for his views of Yellowstone, Jackson also operated in California.
CHS Library,
San Francisco





"Mono Lake Storm"
(1979). Photograph by
Stephen Johnson

ration, and metaphor for what appears to be coming. We can have a unique influence on questions of value, maybe not monetary value, but the more fundamental questions of what we draw sustenance from as human beings. Artists are accustomed to finding sustenance in something other than money. We have a good perspective on the subject.

It is unthinkable now, but if it had not been for Frederick Law Olmstead's and Galen Clark's efforts in the early 1860s, our giant Sequoias might have been logged. It may be unthinkable now, but there was a time when discussions were underway to dam the Grand Canyon. And with Glen Canyon now drowned under Lake Powell, there is ample evidence of how rational these developments can be made to sound. It should have been unthinkable to flood Hetch Hetchy Valley. It was certainly irrational to have destroyed Owens Lake at the base of Mt. Whitney, and now to threaten Mono Lake. It is interesting to watch the state's largest

lake, Tulare Lake, reincarnate in particularly wet years, to the extreme frustration of those trying to farm its former lakebed.

It took visionaries to see the danger of sacrificing our land to destructive development. With California's exploding population and growing economic demands, it will take commitment from everyone with a vision of that danger, to battle for that delicate balance between development and conservation. As an artist whose vision was shaped by this landscape, I find the stakes too high, and the opportunities too great, not to try. CHS

Stephen Johnson is a photographer and author. His photographs of Mono Lake and the Central Valley have been the subject of major exhibitions. In 1990, the University of California Press will publish a volume of Central Valley photographs by Johnson and Robert Dawson, with text by Gerald W. Haslam.

III. Literary California

LITERARY CALIFORNIA: "The Ultimate Frontier of the Western World"

by Gerald Haslam

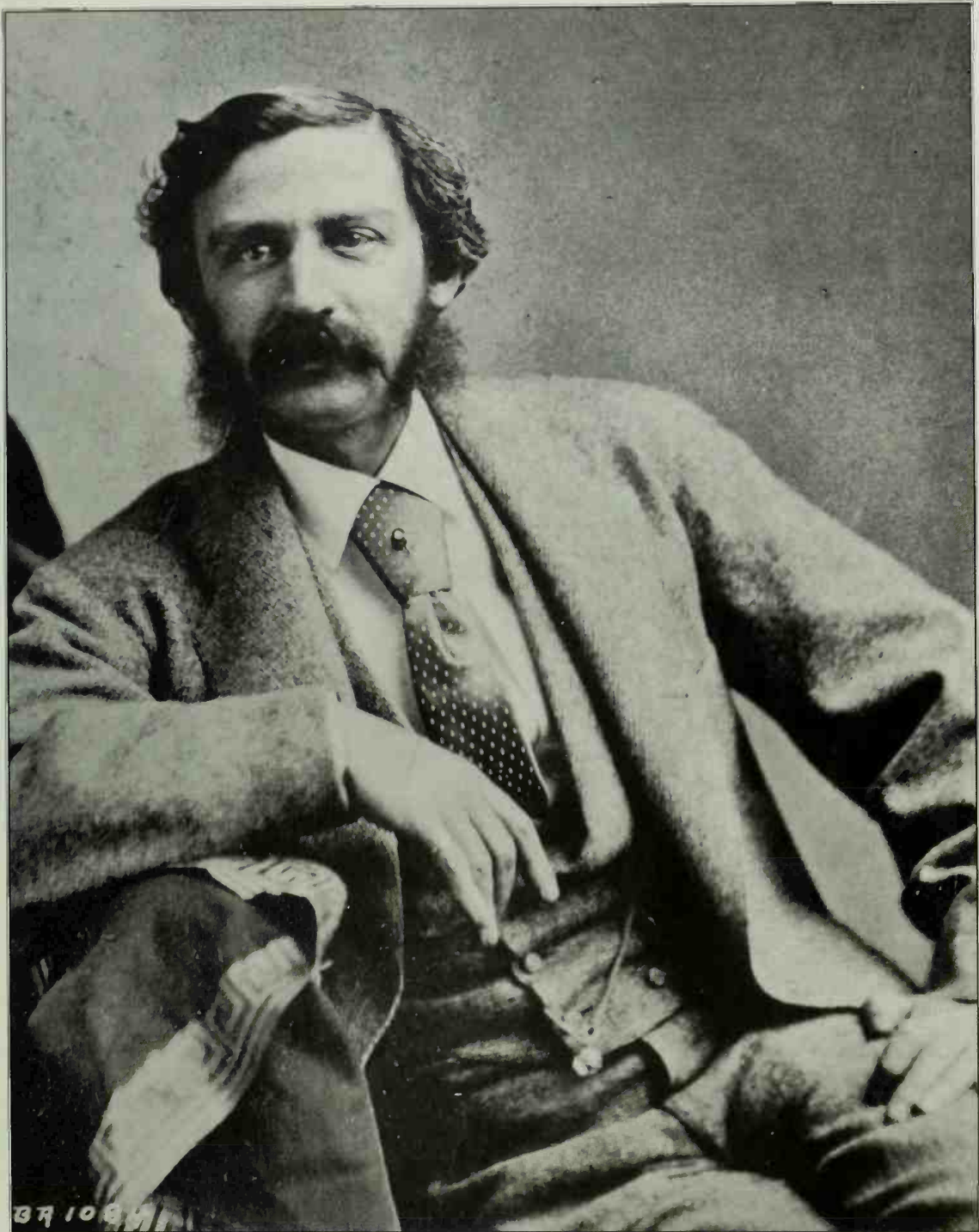
British journalist Michael Davie states the situation unambiguously: ". . . for a hundred years California has been the ultimate frontier of the Western world: the stopping place of man's strange westering urge." One obvious reason this state remains "the ultimate frontier" is that, like the deep Amazon, it is obscure to outsiders, hidden by stereotypes, by illusions, by expectations as high as the Andes.

Unlike the East Coast corridor, whose values have been confused for the nation's, California is relatively free from European yearning. It is a place whose exotic components speak to new forms and new possibilities. Look, for instance, at how many contemporary Californian writers of note are non-white, women, and from working-class backgrounds. Look at how many are wacko.

Ours is a dissident literature because ours is—from the perspective of interior America—a dissident, diverse, sometimes hyperbolic, society. It is interesting, too, that the complaint of outsiders that California is full of nuts is actually an acknowledgment, *via negativa*, of one of this state's most positive characteristics, its tolerance of sometimes humorous individuation: Joaquin Miller swaggering and lying his way through Oakland and London, Mary Austin's "I-Mary" navel gazing in Carmel and Taos, Charles Bukowski's fist clenched around the neck of a bottle or of an opponent in San Pedro and New York.

Moreover, the state's first four major writers were, arguably, Jack London, Robinson Jeffers, John Steinbeck, and William Saroyan—each a maverick, each misunderstood by mainline critics. My own contemporary favorites include William Everson, Floyd Salas, Joan Didion, Luis Valdez, Maxine Hong Kingston, Wallace Stegner, Gary Soto, Wilma Elizabeth McDaniel, and James D. Houston, hardly a homogeneous group. No, in literature as in life, the Golden State remains heterogeneous, a place that has escaped domination by the old world. As Davie observes, "In California, the European traveler cannot fail to be struck by the absence of the political, social, and religious arrangements the rest of America derived from Europe."

European settlement of California is said to have begun in the 1530s when a few Spaniards ventured onto its southern reaches. Nothing those adventurers experienced, however, lived up to the image of California that had already been created by Garcí Rodríguez Ordóñez de Montalvo in a popular Spanish novel, *Las Sergas de Esplandián* (1510): ". . . there is an island called California . . . inhabited by black women without a single man among them and living in the manner of Amazons . . . Their arms are all of gold, as is the harness of the wild beasts which, after taming, they ride." Not even Venice Beach lives up to that description—not quite, anyway. The seminal point



Francis Brett Harte (1836-1902). As poet, short story writer, and editor of the important San Francisco magazine, *Overland Monthly*, "Bret" Harte was the state's first writer of note and the founder of the "California school" of regional literature. CHS Library, San Francisco



Jack London (1876-1916), one of the major literary interpreters of what Lucy Hazzard called the "industrial frontier" and perhaps California's most widely-read author. CHS Library, San Francisco

is that, from the start, expectation has outstripped reality in this state.

Lucy Hazzard, in *The Frontier in American Literature* (1927), argued that American authors had dealt with two developments: a physical frontier, featuring the writing of such as Bret Harte, Dame Shirley, and Mark Twain; and an industrial frontier, seen in the work of such as Frank Norris, Edwin Markham, and Upton Sinclair. Hazzard also asserted that a third frontier was emerging, spiritual pioneering for control of self. California's writing has not only strongly evidenced the first two of Hazzard's stages, it has virtually defined the third.

As a spiritual frontier, California represents the possibility of great reward and great disappointment, of infinite if nebulous enrichment. Little room has existed for middle ground in this land of dreams. It continues as the edge of the known, where America abuts the future. As native son Richard Armour blithely states matters:

So leap with joy, be blithe and gay,
Or weep my friends with sorrow.
What California is today,
The rest will be tomorrow.

Contemporary illusions concerning the Golden State are largely the product of general misunderstanding fostered by mass media that proclaim versions of coastal California's image to be the

state's homogeneous reality. This state is far too complex, far too rich, far too mysterious, to grasp totally or easily explain, and so is its literature. As a result, models can be usefully employed to better comprehend its diverse literary reality. John and LaRee Caughey, for instance, employed a strictly chronological order with no regional references in their classic collection, *California Heritage* (1962). So did W. Storrs Lee in *California, A Literary Chronicle* (1968). Gary Soto in *California Childhood* (1988) employs a tripartite regional division: Northern California, Central Valley, and Southern California. James D. Houston, on the other hand, suggests a more complex model: rural and urban writing viewed as separate categories and examined diachronically and synchronically.

My own model features our geo/literary regions and one exclusively literary realm that have emerged from California writing, each reflecting distinct history and literary outputs. First, the North Coast, extending from Big Sur north toward Oregon, with San Francisco as its core; in no other place did the East more dramatically penetrate and influence the West. Second, the Southland, dominated today by the Los Angeles-San Diego freeway culture; it was until the late nineteenth century called "the cow counties," as wild a west as existed anywhere. What I call Heartland is number three, the state's rural regions, principally the great Central Valley,

although Steinbeck has single-handedly made the Salinas Valley a significant contributor too. The fourth is Wilderness California, another catch-all that includes the state's mountains, deserts, and forests, vast tracts still little settled, if widely used. My fifth section is called Fantasy California—the state as state of mind. Each of these regions has its own history and its own contemporary reality.

The concept of regions should be seen as an acknowledgment of the state's diversity, rather than an iron-clad dictum. As James Houston explains, "California is really a large mosaic of regions, each with its singular identity and microclimate." Those of us who live here recognize that there is more than one California.

It is also worth mentioning that many writers (Soto, Houston, and Lawrence Clark Powell, for instance) are also students of their state's literature. And it is important to note that many authors write from and about more than one of the state's regions: Steinbeck and Everson composed important work about both the North Coast and the Heartland; Gary Snyder's output reflects Wilderness California, as well as the North Coast. More than a few works, I find, seem to rise from the boundaries between regions; in fact, much writing from Fantasy California does just that. Two obvious examples might be Joan Didion's *Play It As It Lays* (Southland-Fantasy) or Robert Roper's *Royo County* (Heartland-Fantasy).

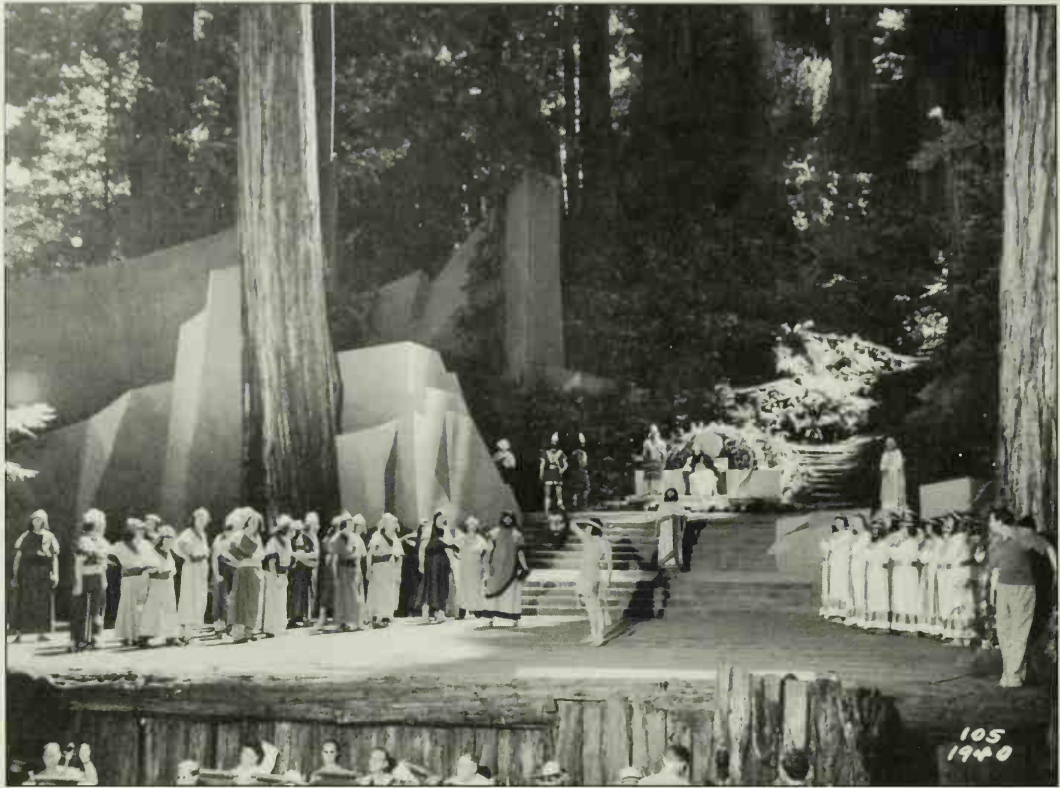
Since I'm tossing out asides and caveats, I also should note that Phillip Rahv's distinction between

"paleface" and "redskin" writers offers an interesting perspective when applied to California. Both are, of course, major factors in our state's literature, but they are different. For instance, Herbert Gold is an acclaimed paleface, an outsider who now dwells here and writes in and about San Francisco, a recognized paleface colony; he can be contrasted with his old friend William Saroyan, raised and blooded in Fresno and very much a redskin. In California, the term "paleface" need not carry pejorative connotations simply because so many of this state's most important resident writers, like the rest of the population, have come from elsewhere—Maya Angelou, Ernest Gaines, Gerald Rosen, Alice Walker, David Bromige, and Ishmael Reed, among many others. Outsiders are frequently insiders here.

A wealth of paleface writers is only one characteristic of the North Coast's literary history. San Francisco Bay allowed the development of a rough-hewn imitation of an eastern seaport, attracting to the region during the late 1840s and 1850s such estimable, if largely forgotten, paleface authors—along with their signal *noms de plum*—as Alonzo Delano (Old Box), George Horatio Derby (John Phoenix), Louisa Smith Clappe (Dame Shirley), and John Rollin Ridge (Yellow Bird). The following decade—San Francisco was by 1860 the fourteenth-largest city in the Union—saw the development of a national literary reputation by writers operating in the San Francisco area. The Golden Gate Trinity (Bret Harte, Ina Coolbrith, and Charles Warren



Ina Coolbrith (1841-1928), California's first poet laureate. In the 1860s she became part of the remarkable circle of writers associated with the *Overland Monthly* that included Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Joaquin Miller, and Charles Warren Stoddard. Later, as librarian for the Oakland Public Library, Coolbrith served as mentor for the young Jack London. CHS Library, San Francisco



Dramatic performance at the annual Summer Encampment of the Bohemian Club at Bohemian Grove in Sonoma County, 1940. Photograph by Gabriel Moulin. Courtesy Moulin Studios

Stoddard, the three editors of *The Overland Monthly*) and their partner Mark Twain marked a high point in western American literature. Most important, perhaps, artists of the time reflected a distinctness still associated with the region. "They had defined themselves as a people liberated from the Puritan past," explains Kevin Starr, "glorying in an exuberant lust for life."

Throughout the remainder of the century, this region remained a cultural magnet, attracting diverse artists. By the 1870s, the larger North Coast remained frontier, but the Bay Area became a frontier province, complete with its own *avant garde* and an association to encourage it. Founded in 1872, the Bohemian Club assembled many of the most creative men of the period; it was, as Starr observes, "a gathering place for productive personalities . . . through the turn of the century."

Bohemian movements have flourished on the North Coast. Late in the last century, for example, creative people began gathering at Carmel. Some, like Joaquin Miller, were links to the frontier past. Most, however, bespoke a new generation's dynamism: Jack London, Lincoln Steffens, George Ster-

ling, Mary Austin, and a host of lesser-known writers. Visitors included such figures as John Muir, Upton Sinclair, Ina Coolbrith, and Charles Stoddard.

By the early twentieth century, then, this had become one of America's most productive, most controversial literary regions, producing literature not simply reflecting the physical and industrial frontiers identified by Hazzard. It was also the first western area to generate a significant body of writing exploring the spirit and to establish a precedent for the continued examination of that timeless frontier. The North Coast's bohemians, up to and including Jack Kerouac and the Beats, Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters, Richard Brautigan and the Hippies, have been everything from space cadets to geniuses.

The Southland is a desert-turned-city as a result of water piped from elsewhere. Little touched by the Gold Rush, it remained largely Spanish-speaking until 1860; it also harbored a strong movement to split the state to avoid dominance by the economically and culturally advanced north. "At that time," Powell claims, "Los Angeles was the

toughest town in the West, a cesspool of frontier scum."

While hardly a literary enclave like San Francisco, the region did produce an interesting body of writing in the nineteenth century, writing that exemplifies principally the first of Hazzard's three stages. Most intriguing are Richard Henry Dana's early glimpses of Spanish California in *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), a book that views the area as the first American settlers did, from the sea; William Manley's *Death Valley in '49* (1894), which describes a tortuous overland approach; and Horace Bell, referred to by a contemporary as a "black-mailer, murderer, thief, house-burner, snake-hunter, and defamer of the dead," whose *The Reminiscences of a Ranger* (1881) was the first clothbound book to be printed in Los Angeles.

The pivotal work in southern California's literary history was, of course, Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* (1884). Intended to expose the plight of Mission Indians, the book ironically became the major factor in the creation of a romanticized mission past. Judging by the number of people who today claim to *know* the Ramona story is true, this appears to be an instance of myth, concocted by promoters and desperate settlers, filling an historical vacuum.

The second of Hazzard's stages, the industrial frontier, did not emerge from Southland writing until the 1930s, but when it did, a powerful new force in American fiction was the product. Although other strong, more conventional approaches to industrialization were produced in the state—books by Markham, Steinbeck, McWilliams, and Sinclair, for example—and although Dashiell Hammett's work in the Bay Area may be said to be a precursor, it was nonetheless in southern California that detective novels became a major mode of examining the effects of urbanization, industrialization, and resultant frustration. James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, and Ross Macdonald produced novels significant enough to demand serious critical attention, as well as a new sense of the price exacted by obdurate urban reality. As Chandler himself explains, his stories are set in "a world gone wrong where the law was something to manipulate for profit and power."

Today, the Southland is a cultural hodgepodge—wild, woolly, unpredictable, and exciting. It is fitting, then, that Bukowski is the region's best known contemporary writer. But there are many others: Kate Braverman, Gerald Locklin, Wanda Coleman, Rafael Zepeda, Mitsyue Yamada, Frank Chin, and M.F.K. Fisher—another varied collection, most of whom would not be caught dead in the waterfront bars that nurtured Bukowski.

Southern California's boundary with Fantasy California is Hollywood, that land of dreams. As Franklin Walker points out, although the nearly 2,000 novels about the movie industry vary greatly, "nearly all agree that the life in the movie colony is artificial, the art meretricious, and the industry the graveyard of talent." Few have complained about the money, however.

The mountains north of Los Angeles constitute another border, for over them can be found the state's principal agricultural realm. Although they boasted virtually no significant literary history prior to the 1930s, California's vast farming stretches, which I lump under the sobriquet Heartland, have become in the past fifty years notable literary regions. The great Central Valley, Heartland's apotheosis, the world's most productive and diverse agricultural region, has attracted an ethnically and socially diverse series of migrants to work in its fields: Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese,



Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885). Although only a brief visitor to the state, "H.H.H."—as she signed her works—was a leader in reforming federal policies regarding former mission Indians through such exposés as *A Century of Dishonor* (1881). Her widely-read novel *Ramona* (1884) is credited with setting in motion the wave of interest in California's Hispanic past that culminated in the restoration of the missions and the popularity of the Spanish Colonial Revival movement in architecture. CHS Library, San Francisco



"The Land of Little Rain,"
Death Valley,
Inyo County, ca.
1940. CHS Library,
San Francisco

Sikh, German, Filipino, Mexican, Okie, and Black — over ninety groups in the Sacramento area alone.

If it appears that the valley has typified the California Dream, however, it is a different dream, for in it virtually the only path to a better life for most emigrants has been hard physical labor, whether on the farms or in the oil fields, on the streets or in the orchards. This is not the California most dreamers have envisioned, so it has tended to attract the tough, the determined, possibly the desperate.

Since the emergence of three Heartland natives, William Saroyan, William Everson, and John Steinbeck, the region has produced a steady stream of innovative literature that defies the state's stereotype. Much of this writing starts with the soil, the physical reality from which so many people wrest their livings. The Salinas Valley division of Heartland, of course, produced Steinbeck, considered by many to be the state's greatest writer. Just as hard urban realities have shaped much writing from California's cities, so have the Heartland's harsh rural realities shaped literature produced there, limiting illusion without harming expression. Or limiting much illusion, for, as native daughter Joan Didion shows, parochialism and xenophobia are certainly not unknown in writings from the region. A list of recent writers from the Heartland is impressive: Everson, Didion, Valdez, Soto, Kingston, McDaniel, William Rintoul, Leonard Gardner, Robert Duncan, Art Cuelho, David Mas Masumoto, Frank Bidart, Larry Leavis, David St. John, Dewayne Rail, and Sherley Anne Williams. The latter four, plus Soto and a large cadre of others, constitute the Fresno Poets, an internationally renowned creative cluster nurtured by a major paleface poet, Phillip Levine.

On the edge of the Heartland there still exists considerable open country. Outsiders do not always understand the dimensions of our state's undeveloped land. The Mojave and Colorado deserts border it to the east and south. A remarkable and varied coastline marks the west. The north is Bigfoot

country, with virgin and second-growth forests as dense as any in America; northeast is a volcanic moonscape. Moreover, California is spined by mountains: the Sierra Nevada, the Cascades, the Coast Ranges, the Tehachapis.

Most interesting in the distinguished body of writing produced about Wilderness California is that it combines elements of Hazzard's first and third stages of frontier; that is, in the work of the finest writers, the topography of the land is never far from the topography of the soul. Look, for example, at the literary reclamation of the desert. Those barren lands were crossed by pioneers too intent on survival to notice the unique beauty surrounding them. By the turn of the century, however, the arid lands could be studied and sometimes romanticized. It was one of those interesting cases where changing circumstances allowed people to *re-vision* an area.

John C. Van Dyke's *The Desert* (1901) was the first in a series of books that changed the way those ostensible wastelands were viewed. J. Smeaton Chase and George Wharton James also contributed important volumes, but the finest of all desert books, the most mystical and eloquent, is Mary Hunter Austin's *The Land of Little Rain* (1903).

California's mountains and forests boast as distinguished a cadre of authors as do its deserts. The master here, of course, is John Muir. His work ranged from romantic to scientific. In books such as *The Mountains of California* (1894) or *My First Summer in the Sierra* (1911), his prose soared toward poetry. My own favorite book in this category is William Henry Brewer's *Up and Down California, 1860-64* (1930); when he wrote his notes, nearly all the state was still Wilderness California. I find it a continuing delight.

Sometimes ignored when considering Wilderness California is its impact on poets and novelists, yet the region has inspired some of the state's finest literature. For instance, much of Jeffers' remarkable poetry — say, "Roan Stallion" — dem-

onstrates the symbolic power of California's coastline and hills. George R. Stewart wrote of the Sierra forest in two memorable novels, *Storm* (1941) and *Fire* (1949), and one of Walter Van Tilburg Clark's strongest and most magical novels, *The Track of the Cat* (1949), is set in eastern Sierra cattle country.

Unlike those books set in definite wilderness regions, much writing about California deals not with real places and real people but with the gap between what newcomers expect and what they find. This body of writing explores not a particular locale, but a region of the mind I call Fantasy California.

It is this fabled region, where expectation and realization blur, that remains an open and dangerous frontier, where disappointment looms like a prairie coulee, because in it dwells not the state's reality, but its symbolic power.

Fantasy California's existence entered the popular American mind in the very first English-language writing about the province. For many, Fantasy California remains the *only* California, a land of sun-bleached blondes on roller skates hurrying to hot tubs after working in their marijuana fields or, in the last century, a place where gold nuggets could be scooped up by the shovelful and fruit burgeoned year around. Sang Deanna Durbin and Robert Paige in a 1945 movie:

The climate is better
The ocean is wetter
The mountains are higher
The deserts are drier
The hills have more splendor
The girls have more gender
Ca-li-for-ni-ay!

Such hyperbole frequently leads to disillusionment. Wrote Alonzo Delano in 1849: "The greatness of California! Faugh!" Both extremes, while nonsensical, may reflect some private state of mind, the churning of an unclosed conceptual frontier.

Fantasy California has, in any case, produced an intriguing body of literature. To it I assign books as diverse as Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (1948), Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), and Cyra McFadden's *The Serial* (1977). The apotheosis of Fantasy California's literature, however, is Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939).

As Lawrence Clark Powell explains, West wrote the novel "to formalize a tragic view of life. He perceived Hollywood and its product as the pure epitome of all that is wrong with life in the United States." *The Day of the Locust* is not about California; it is a book about Nathanael West's response to a world gone mad, as reflected in one small section of the state. A hint of his attitude may be gleaned from a letter he wrote to Josephine Herbst in 1933, shortly after he had become a screenwriter:

This place is Asbury Park, New Jersey . . . In other words, phooey on Cal. Another thing, this stuff about easy work is all wrong. My hours are from ten in the morning to six at night with a full day on Saturdays. There's no fooling here.

In any case, West produced a novel that typifies this imaginary realm, a dark mirror limning the gap between expectation and reality. It is the area's greatest work because it combines those very elements with West's unique talent and sensitivity, extrapolating to national and international dimensions toward a powerful surreal vision, all in the guise of California. As West demonstrates, artists can find in the Golden State's complexity vehicles for writing about virtually anything.

There is a real California, of course, and it is both varied and unique. Moreover, because it remains a seeker's state, California invites, if not redefinition, then expansion of the very concept of frontier. Those who would limit notions of a frontier to a static time of trappers, cowboys, or schoolmarms misunderstand that such were only symptoms of a far deeper quest, the soul's search for the possible.

If the closing of the physical frontier in 1890 created a pervasive sense of loss, it did so principally among those who required a physical boundary to evoke spiritual limits; however, the physical frontier was an effect, while the spiritual frontier was a cause, the quest itself. The sense of loss in California is less for missed historical opportunities than for the forfeiture of cherished illusions.

The quest continues, though some mourn the romanticized trappings of earlier excursions because they fail to realize that Tamsen Donner and Ma Joad were embarked on a continuing human expedition; as the latter says, ". . . we're the people—we go on." Even today, it is people like Ma Joad, whether they speak Hmong or Spanish or Tagalog, who not only venture to California but who also "go on," because they have the necessary grit. This new El Dorado has come to represent the cusp of the possible, a physical correlate for the spirit's enduring frontier. [CHS]

See "Selected Readings" beginning on page 261.

Gerald W. Haslam is an author, literary historian, and Professor of English at California State University, Sonoma. He has written or edited, among other works: *Western Writing* (1974), *Okies*; *Selected Stories* (1975), *California Heartland: Writing from the Great Central Valley* (1978), *Snapshots: Glimpses of the Other California* (1985), and *Voices of a Place: Social and Literary Essays from the Other California* (1987).

III. Literary California

Nathanael West, Raymond Chandler, and the Los Angeles Novel

by David Fine

In John Fowles's novel *Daniel Martin*, the title character, an Englishman transplanted in Los Angeles, greets a British actress arriving at Los Angeles Airport with the advice: "You have to decide one thing here—which is real, you or Los Angeles." This collapse of the boundary between reality and illusion, fact and fantasy, has been the central theme of novels about Los Angeles and Hollywood from the 1930s to the present. For novelists drawn to the film capital, unreality, impermanence, and instability have been the chief characteristics of the place.

Although there were novels and stories about Los Angeles and Hollywood before the 1930s, the real beginnings of the region's fiction can be traced to the writers lured to the West Coast as screenwriters in that decade. The invention of sound movies at the end of the twenties created a demand for writers who could construct dialogue—as well as for actors who could speak it. Studios scoured the nation (and England) for writers. Among those who would turn their West Coast experience into fiction were James M. Cain, Horace McCoy, John O'Hara, Nathanael West, Aldous Huxley, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Christopher Isherwood, Evelyn Waugh, and William Faulkner.

As outsiders, these writers had a distinct way of

"reading" the city. Usual definitions of literary regionalism begin with the assumption that the regional writer must be born in, deeply rooted in, and intimately connected with the region about which he or she writes. The Los Angeles novel, by contrast, is for the most part the product of newcomers, of outsiders, of writers born elsewhere, but who lived and worked for a time in the region. Most of them never felt at home in southern California, and it is their estrangement, their sense of displacement, that provides both theme and ambience to their works and distinguishes the Los Angeles novel from novels of other regions.

Regions, of course, have temporal as well as spatial existence. Frequently in regional fiction, the present is set off against the past. The Midwest of Sherwood Anderson and the South of William Faulkner come to mind. Again, Los Angeles fiction offers an exception. The counterpoint is not between the region's present and past, but, implicitly at least, between the West Coast present and the present or past of a different region. The contrast is between the place discovered and the place left behind. The past is elsewhere; history is in the East. Novels about California are, thus, about the East too, more specifically about the complex interaction between East and West, past and present.



Los Angeles beach club scene, ca. 1930. Throughout the Great Depression, Los Angeles continued to advertise itself as a place unscathed by the economic disaster. In addition to the movie industry, best known for Busby Berkeley extravaganzas and Fred Astaire in his "top hat, white tie, and tails," the city touted its recreational advantages, especially weather and beaches. Scenes such as this, which were widely used in promotional tracts of the period, extolled the good life, while disregarding the city's problems. With its mystique of success and pleasure, Los Angeles was a fitting ironic backdrop for the bleak novels of West and Chandler. *CHS Library, San Francisco*



Downtown Los Angeles, 1929. While the center of Los Angeles was much like any other big city, writers of the 1930s turned their attention away from the skyscrapers, and toward the mythical city, especially Hollywood. Courtesy Huntington Library

Between the 1880s and the 1930s Los Angeles was the best-advertised city in America. It was hyped by real estate speculators, railroad promoters, and city boosters as the New World Garden, the new El Dorado, the place of the fresh start and unlimited opportunity. Hundreds of thousands came, and by the end of the thirties the population swelled to almost 1.5 million people, twice as many as lived in San Francisco. The coming of rail transportation, an aqueduct supplying water from the Owens River, a man-made harbor, the discovery of oil, and a flourishing movie industry brought successive population booms. The California Dream, which in the mid-nineteenth century centered on San Francisco and the Mother Lode, migrated south to Los Angeles.

Above all, though, what brought people and sustained the myth of paradise regained was climate and its association with health. Miraculous powers to cure any ailment were attributed to the warm, dry Mediterranean climate. The lure of weather and the relative ease of railroad migration combined to attract a vast number of health seekers to Los Angeles. The region absorbed more than its fair share of invalids, the aged, and the ailing. In their wake came the healers, spiritualists, quacks of every sort, and cults. There were movements bearing such names as the Mighty I Am, Krotona,

Mankind United, and Ham and Eggs. Among the charismatic leaders who set up shop in southern California were Guy Ballard with his futuristic ray gun, Katherine Tingley, the Purple Mother of Point Loma, and Sister Aimee Semple McPherson of the Four Square Gospel. While it is tempting to exaggerate the influence of cults and sects on the region's development, it is hard to deny its appeal to the novelists. Spiritualists, medical quacks, cultists, and exotic healers run rampant through the fiction of West, Huxley, Waugh, and Chandler. It was all part of the illusion and deception that characterized the place. In West's *The Day of the Locust*, the artist-protagonist Tod Hackett, seeking out local color for his painting, "The Burning of Los Angeles," visits a number of cults:

... he took his pad and pencils on a continuous hunt for other models. He spent his nights at the different Hollywood churches, drawing the worshippers. He visited the "Church of Christ Physical" where holiness was attained through the constant use of chest weights and spring grips; the "Church Invisible" where fortunes were told and the dead made to find lost objects; the "Tabernacle of the Third Coming" where a woman in male clothing preached the "Crusade against Salt"; and the "Temple Moderne" under whose glass and chromium roof "Brain Breathing, the secret of the Aztecs" was taught.

Hackett, trained at Yale's Art School, is both unnerved and amused by what he finds in Hollywood. He measures what he sees against his New England past and training. "He would," he muses, "never again do a fat red barn, old stone wall or sturdy Nantucket fisherman." Hollywood, the town itself, looks like a vast movie lot in West's novel. It is as if the studio sets had spilled over onto the surrounding streets. Hackett confronts a built landscape dominated by eclectic, deceptive fantasy houses aping every style in history. The past, thanks to the movies, has been transformed into parody, into a pastiche of period architecture. People have come west to escape the past, to begin again, but the past is grotesquely mocked in an architectural landscape of Chinese pagodas, Tudor cottages, Egyptian temples, and Mediterranean villas.

Fantasy architecture is linked in *The Day of the Locust* to the compulsive role-playing of its characters. Claude Estee, the screenwriter, lives in an ersatz Mississippi plantation home; he saunters back and forth on his veranda, ordering a mint julep from his black servant and getting the scotch and soda he really wants from his Chinese butler. Harry Greener, ex-vaudeville performer, tap dances his way through Hollywood selling silver polish,

suffers a heart attack, plays it as pure melodrama, and then dies. Fay Greener shuffles her deck of dream cards and plays a different role every day, from daddy's girl in a white sailor suit to a tough whore. The novel is a fun house of distorting mirrors in which all the characters play characters; movies are always going on in their heads and they invent and reinvent themselves as the cameras roll in their brains. Role playing has become indistinguishable from living. Life, like a movie extra's career, is one costumed role after another. The line between reality and illusion has disappeared.

When West turns from the architectural and human landscape to the natural landscape, he persistently describes it in terms of images drawn from the unnatural, the artificial world. Even nature is a made object. The edges of trees burn at dusk with a "pale violet" light, like neon tubes. The moon puts in an appearance as an "enormous bone button" poking through a "blue serge sky." Even the colors of food, under the spotlights of a market, are heightened and distorted. Oranges look red, fish pale green, steaks rose, and eggs ivory. The organic landscape has been pre-empted by the inorganic; it is again the landscape of the movie set, produced by technical knowhow, carefully placed props, and effective lighting.



Van de Kamp's first "Windmill" bakery store, Los Angeles, ca. 1930. Los Angeles builders became famous for yanking architectural styles out of context and putting them to bizarre uses. CHS Library, San Francisco

At precisely the same time West was launching the Hollywood novel, another kind of California fiction rooted in deception and masquerade was emerging: the tough guy detective story pioneered in San Francisco by Dashiell Hammett, but given a home in Los Angeles by Raymond Chandler. The hard-boiled L.A. detective story was in part an urban updating of the traditional western with its self-reliant hero, in part a response to the tough realities of the Depression decade, and in part a response to California realities—to the crimes made possible in a place that was up for grabs and where fortunes were made in the exploitation of water, land, and oil.

Chandler's hard-boiled detective novels differ significantly from the traditional detective novels of Agatha Christie or Dorothy Sayers. Crime in this new mode is not an aberration from an otherwise orderly society—a "murder in the vicarage." It is endemic, pervasive, and corporate. There are no neat solutions in Chandler's world. The division between good and evil is never clear. Cops are on the take; doctors are often drug pushers; rare book dealers are smut peddlers; the beautiful, innocent-looking young client is really a ruthless killer. No one can be trusted; nothing is what it appears to be. Deception is everywhere present. In such a world, the detective has to go it alone, trusting only his own eyes and instincts.

Crime in the southern California version is ordinarily an act carried out in the past and hidden behind a respectable façade in the present. One escapes the consequences of past acts by switching identities, changing names and neighborhoods in a rootless, fluid society. California permits, even encourages, such transformations. Crime provides wealth and wealth provides anonymity. Respectability comes with the large house in the hills. Barricaded behind high walls, Chandler's criminals are insulated from the past. It is the job of the detective to penetrate the façades, expose crimes hidden in the past, separate illusion from reality, deception from truth.

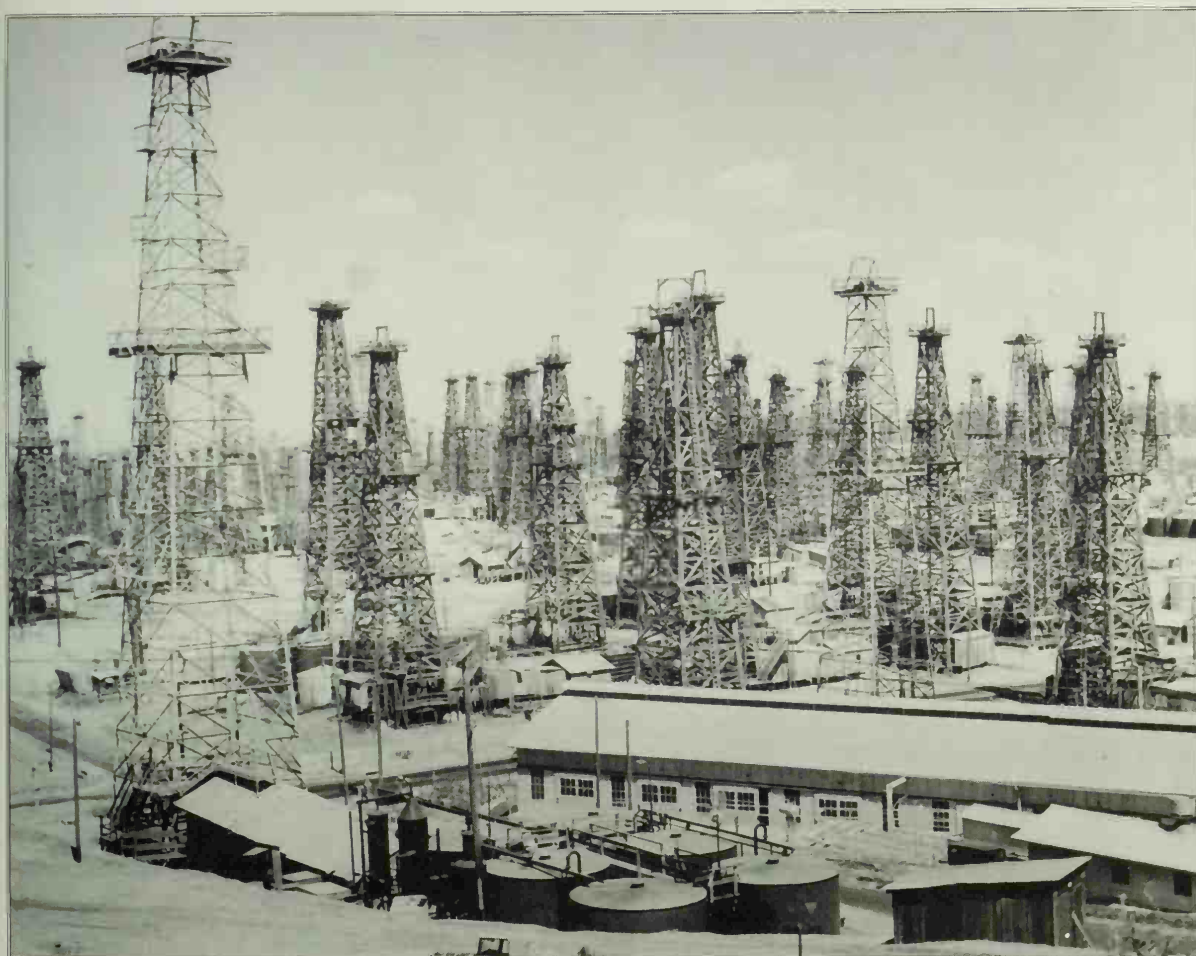
Blackmail in such fables becomes the central event because it is what happens when someone knows another's secret, his or her past, and uses that power to extort money. The criminal is suddenly vulnerable, and to retrieve this invulnerability he/she makes the blackmailer the next victim. Like the blackmailer, the detective uncovers true identities beneath false ones, but for justice, not for personal gain.

In *The Big Sleep*, published in 1939, the same year as West's novel, Chandler established the detective novel formula. General Sternwood, not himself a criminal, has nonetheless made his fortune by exploiting the oil reserves beneath the city. He has raised two ungovernable daughters and is being blackmailed, presumably for the gambling debts of the older of them. What detective Marlowe discovers about the Sternwoods, though, runs deeper than gambling debts and the family's tangled relationships with gangsters. The central act, the crime buried in the past and hidden even from the general himself, is the murder committed by Carmen, the younger daughter, of the man who jilted her. By the end of the novel there are six corpses, including the man that Carmen shot in the oil fields beneath the Sternwood mansion. Marlowe himself is almost murdered in the same way, in the same place, and for the same reason. The oil fields, hidden in a park beneath the house, are both the source of the Sternwood wealth and symbol of the family corruption. Marlowe looks out from the house to the oil fields below:

On this lower level faint and far off I could just see some of the old wooden derricks of the oilfield from which the Sternwoods had made their money. Most of the field was public park now, cleaned up and donated to the city by General Sternwood. But a little of it was still producing in groups of wells pumping five or six barrels a day. The Sternwoods, having moved up the hill, could no longer smell the stale sump water or the oil, but they could still look out of their front windows and see what had made them rich. If they wanted to. I didn't suppose they would want to.

The passage offers a clear instance of Chandler's symbolic, moral California geography. The oil field is the family secret, the house above an elaborate mask that Marlowe, as detective, must rip off to discover the truth hidden in the oil fields and recover some sense of order on the landscape. But his success is only partial. Crimes are not easily or neatly solved in Chandler's world. Marlowe is able to keep Carmen from doing any more damage, but the jigsaw puzzle is not completed. Some pieces are left over and others don't fit. Chandler, always more interested in style and atmosphere than in the solution of crimes, once said that a good detective story is one "you could read even if you knew someone had torn out the last chapter." The solution was "the olive in the martini."

Each in his own way, Chandler and West set the



The Signal Hill Oil Field between Long Beach and Los Angeles in the 1930s. During the industry's boom years, wells were drilled wherever companies found oil, even in residential neighborhoods. Oil derricks loomed over the Sternwood estate, where detective Philip Marlowe faced death in Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. CHS Library, San Francisco

L.A. novel on the course it would follow for the next fifty years. They showed us the dark, shadowy side of the American—and California—Dream, that we can escape the past and reinvent our lives, be what we dream of being, live the lives we fantasize. The writers who followed—Waugh, Schulberg, Mailer, Didion, Dunne, Kaminsky, and others—took their starting points from the same sense of the dream gone haywire. The land of the new beginning could also be the land of the disastrous finale, the place where the American road ends and turns back on itself at the edge of the continent.

CHS

See "Selected Readings" beginning on page 261.

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III. *Literary California*

William Saroyan in California

by Margaret Bedrosian

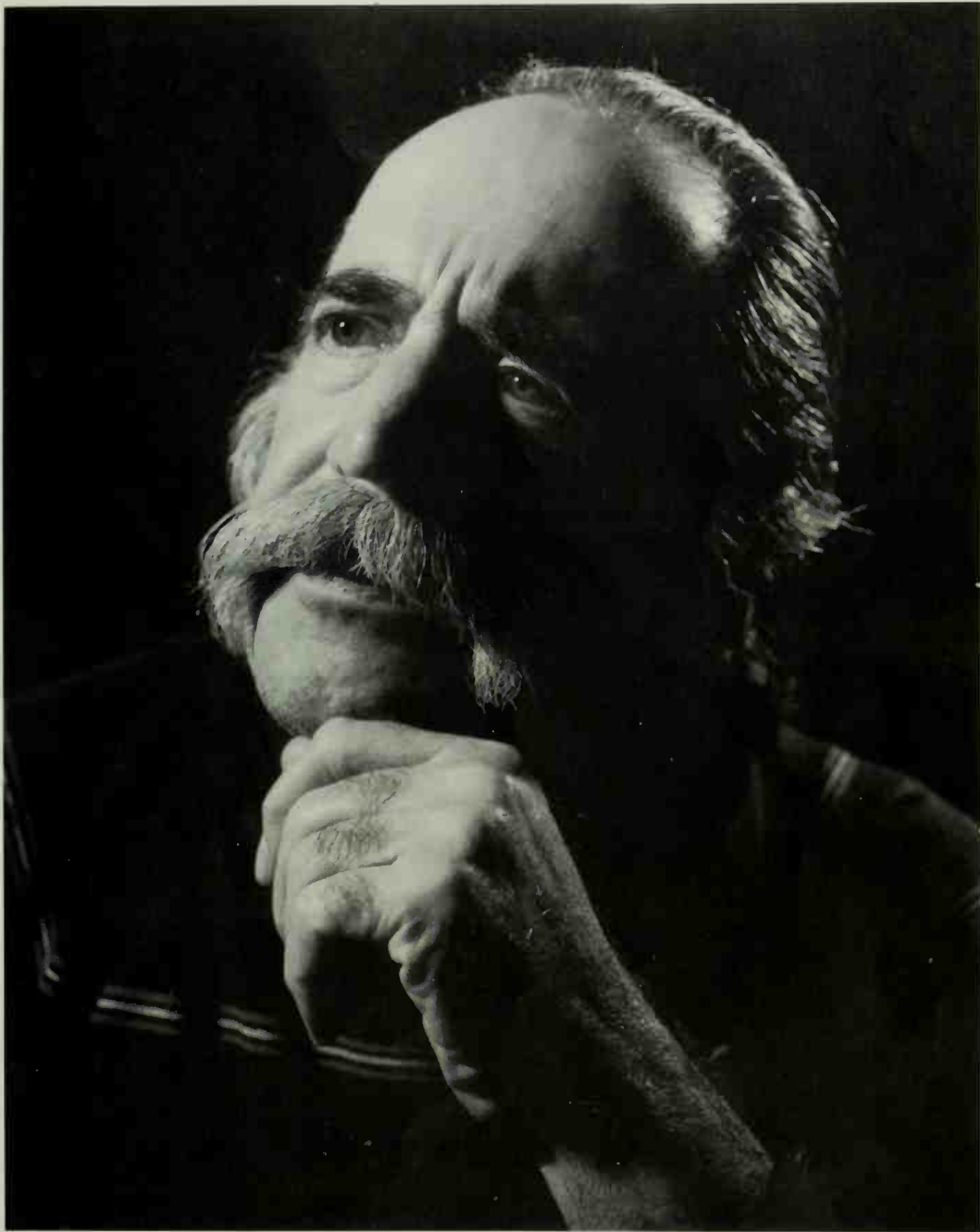
Like other writers who have depicted the Golden State in their work, William Saroyan seemed to describe a fantasy-land as much as an actual terrain. The California that appears in his short stories and novels fluctuates in imagery: at times it lulls us with the pastels and mist of a romantic watercolor; at other times, the imagery becomes gloomy and the landscape itself seems to brood on tensions that preoccupied Saroyan through much of his life. The sources of these tensions cannot be separated from Saroyan's family and cultural past. Much of what he experienced as an individual reflected the social and psychological challenges other Armenians faced in California during the earlier decades of this century. Saroyan's evasion of and confrontation with these challenges forms one of the central dialectics in his writing; in turn, this pattern offers a unique view of California's heartland, where landscape and aspects of local color selectively reflect the distinct currents of a writer's imagination.

Armenians first immigrated to California from the northeastern United States in the 1890s. The portion of California that attracted them most strongly was the San Joaquin Valley, a region that reminded them of their homeland in the heart of the Ottoman Empire. Here they could acquire land and farm, a simple enough desire, but one which had been suppressed for centuries in their native land, where Turkish overlords set limits on their freedom. In the next few decades, the imagery of California as a promised land of agricultural plenty spread through the Ottoman interior, while Armenian peasants dreamed of a time when they

might migrate to California and start anew. Though deportation and massacre in the 1890s and most fatally in 1915 would prevent many Armenians from realizing their dream, the image had been so firmly implanted that in many cases survivors, especially children of slain parents, carried the vision of California as their final destination when they managed their escape to the United States.

No matter how they arrived in the Central Valley, once there the Armenians lost no time making up for economic deprivations experienced in the Old Country. Their primary desire was to save enough money to buy land. All manner of comfort and leisure was sacrificed to this goal. Women worked in packing houses in the summer, men hired out for labor, and nothing extra was spent on housing. A common saying of the time was "no house can produce a farm, but a good farm can produce a house." But in the process of exerting their long-suppressed will, the Armenians managed to arouse some of the most antagonistic feelings of any ethnic minority in California. As Fresno was entering a period of full-blown prosperity, enjoying the wealth that agriculture bestowed, the pillars of the community became protective of their image as an up-and-coming All-American city, and jealous of their power to guide the area's fortunes.

Among the most aggressive of any ethnic minorities in their push to improve their fortunes, the Armenians drew most of the hostility of the "Americans" in the San Joaquin Valley. The bitterness of old-line Americans and the bemused response of the Armenians were amply documented by the sociologist Richard Tracy La Pierre in his doctoral



William Saroyan as photographed by Paul Kalinian, 1976. A very private person, Saroyan usually refused to be photographed, and images of him are rare. When he befriended Fresno photographer Paul Kalinian, however, he allowed Kalinian to interview and photograph him in 1976. Since Saroyan's death in 1981, Kalinian's photographs have been celebrated around the world. Kalinian is currently writing, directing, and producing a documentary film on Saroyan, including his childhood reminiscences and partly narrated by Saroyan himself. The film is scheduled for completion late in 1990, and after a premiere in Fresno, will be shown in cities across the United States. *Courtesy Paul Kalinian, Paul's Photography Studio, Fresno*



Downtown Fresno in 1911. When seven-year-old William Saroyan and his family arrived in 1915, the city had entered a period of robust growth. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

study, "The Armenian Colony in Fresno County, California," completed in 1930. A brief sampling of some of the comments made about the Armenians by La Pierre's interviewees suggests the range of anger and distaste directed at the group:

They always want eggs, butter, sugar, etc., at lower prices than others pay . . . except when they sell it they want a cent or two more.¹

If you treat them civilly they are ungracious. If you are brutal and rough with them, they respect you. Very few of them ever smile—they have a sour countenance as though every thought was mean, *not sad*, just mean. If their conduct in Turkey is as it is here, no wonder the Turks kill them. Many, many Americans long to run them out of the country (p. 341).

You can't go into a show or any amusement place without running across a bunch of loud-mouthed Armenians that are trying to start a row. They have to be in a bunch about 6 to 1 or they are yellow. They ought to be out in a part of the town separated from us as the Russians and the Chinese who at least are keeping their places (p. 342).

In one comment that summed up the anti-Armenian feelings, one woman from Fowler (a town near Fresno) stated: "They are the only foreigners in Fowler who think they are just as good as we are. I don't know why they aren't, but we think they aren't" (p. 346).

Bearing the brunt of such hostility, the Armenians might occasionally find scapegoats of their own. La Pierre reported that Aram Saroyan, William's maternal uncle, laid the discrimination against his people at the door of the Jews, who knew that "the Armenians will become their strongest rivals in commerce" (p. 408). More commonly, though, Armenians were at a loss to explain how they had aroused such dislike. One Armenian told La Pierre, "I have mulled it all over for so long, and so often, that it has become magnified ten-fold and the prejudice existing as a reality in my mind is probably far greater than the prejudice actually found against me" (p. 413). Another, a lawyer, stated that the prejudice "has unquestionably made us self-conscious, even timid, in the presence of

non-Armenians and has . . . modified the personality of all of us who have many non-Armenian contacts" (p. 413).

It was into such a social milieu that William Saroyan's immediate family moved when he was a boy of seven. By the time they came to Fresno, Saroyan and his siblings had already spent five years in an Oakland orphanage while his mother worked as a live-in maid during the week (his father had died when Saroyan was three years old). The resulting feelings of emotional deprivation, which gnawed at Saroyan for most of his life, were alternately soothed and exaggerated in the new surroundings. The Fresno that Saroyan came to know became the backdrop for a personal melodrama that resembled the trapeze act of the metaphor in his most famous short story: at one pole were those images of laden vineyards and fruit trees that shaded the Armenians from the valley sun, and at the other pole were the images of stark loneliness and loss. The former realm he rendered faultlessly in *My Name Is Aram* (1937), a collection of short stories that to this day appeals to more readers than anything else Saroyan wrote. The reason these stories are so well-liked has as much to do with what Saroyan avoided saying in them as with what he actually described. At one with nature, frozen in time and nostalgia, eating peasant fare and drinking the good water of Fresno, the book's Armenians and other ethnic characters belong to a fairy tale about how things ought to have been. Saroyan characterized Fresno in his

introductory note as "the ugly little city containing the large comic world," and he leaned heavily on the comic to transform the ugly.²

Perhaps the most well-known story in *My Name Is Aram* is "The Pomegranate Trees." This piece is noteworthy from several points of view. At one level, it reads much like a parable about the relationship between the land of the Central Valley and the farmers who willed agriculture—and agribusiness—onto it. Early in the story, the narrator, Aram, describes the land his uncle has bought at the foot of the Sierra Nevada:

It was full of every kind of desert plant that ever sprang out of dry hot earth. It was overrun with prairie dogs, squirrels, horned toads, snakes, and a variety of smaller forms of life. The space over this land knew only the presence of hawks, eagles, and buzzards. It was a region of loneliness, emptiness, truth, and dignity. It was nature at its proudest, driest, loneliest, and loveliest (p. 36).

This passage neatly brings together typical strains in Saroyan's work; first and foremost, it recognizes the overpowering "truth" of the desert. As the story progresses, the reader sees that this geography is much more implacable than the human will to transform it. The pomegranate trees that Uncle Melik has so poetically and romantically planted become an absurdity, totally out of place in the vastness of the dry land. Even more disheartening, their jewel-like fruit, so treasured by the Armenians, is mostly unknown to salesmen and markets. Read as a commentary on the destiny of agriculture in



Fresno area country home and fig orchard, ca. 1925. Armenian Americans brought both their farming expertise and their native crops to California. Saroyan's Uncle Aram grew pomegranates, while other families cultivated figs or grapes in the hot Central Valley. CHS Library, San Francisco

the valley, the story carries a strong suggestion: it is water that makes the lush illusion possible, and it is the absence of water that will eventually shrivel the fruit orchards into a barren memory that leaves one silent.

At a more personal level, the passage cited above and the story as a whole underline Saroyan's desired relationship with that land and the psychological reality it symbolizes in his own life: the "loneliness, emptiness, truth, and dignity" that are so impervious to pomegranate trees nevertheless offer a model of comportment through an emotionally desiccated life. Orphanhood is never mentioned in this story, nor anywhere else in *My Name Is Aram*, but the code of conduct required of orphans is indirectly alluded to in bits and pieces; it is a code predicated on an unsentimental appraisal of ultimate ends and a debonair creativity that responds "what the hell!" It is this resilience that unites diverse characters in other stories of the collection, such as the sad Uncle Jorgi of "A Journey to Hanford," who sits all day under the tree and plays the zither, indifferent to his father's demands to make money harvesting watermelons in Hanford; or Locomotive 38, the Ojibway Indian who patronizes Aram and takes him fishing for the sheer fun of relieving their shared boredom.

This view of life is expressed with delightful zest in "The Three Swimmers." Here Abbott Darcous, an old man educated at Yale, runs a grocery store in Malaga, an old farming suburb of Fresno, for the sake of "casual poetry." Much of Darcous' stylishness as a human being (and style was a quality Saroyan greatly admired in himself and others) emerges in the way he interacts with the three young swimmers, "foreigners" who nevertheless identify themselves as Californians. As the boys supply the grocer with information about their backgrounds, Darcous responds to each with the poetry of local color. Learning that Mourad was born near the Southern Pacific tracks, he gushes, "Well, I'll be irrigated." To Joe's comment that "we ain't educated," he replies "Well, I'll be picked off a tree and thrown into a box." And at the news that Mourad speaks Armenian, he bursts with, "Well, I'll be cut off a vine and eaten grape by grape by a girl in her teens" (p. 157). This interchange and the story in general suggests the prevailing mood of "The Pomegranate Trees"; although Malaga is not located in the desert foothills, neither has it ever been recognized as a cosmopolitan hub. Yet the charm of this story lies in the incongruity of such "different" individuals coming together by chance for a brief while and managing to create a memorable event, partaking in a communion of canned beans and water. It is this mood of "casual" serendipity that gives many of Saroyan's stories and

plays their unique appeal, most notably *Time Of Your Life*, which is essentially a series of "found" moments.

But behind the generally appealing and affirmative images of *My Name Is Aram* and a host of other short stories that extol the momentary victories against emptiness are a host of other Saroyan vignettes and longer narratives that present a more sober view of the geographical and spiritual landscape. One of Saroyan's best-known stories, "Seventy Thousand Assyrians," takes us part of the way into this more twilight perspective. Significantly, this story about annihilation, American-style, takes place in a city, San Francisco, rather than in farm country, where this subject can be more easily evaded. The piece centers on an encounter between an Assyrian barber and Saroyan, a meeting that rephrases the dialectic between the void and the creative moment echoing through *My Name Is Aram*. Here, the barber represents an entire people diminishing in numbers by the forces of assimilation. Somewhat like the pomegranate orchard in the midst of the un pitying desert, the Assyrian barber, Theodore Badal, is a filament of life hanging on before an inevitable end comes to his people and to himself. As he himself recognizes, "we have no writers, we have no news—well, there is a little news: once in a while the English encourage the Arabs to massacre us, that is all. It's an old story, we know all about it." Although Saroyan ends the piece with a brave note of affirmation, saluting all those unknown individuals who carry the "dignity" and "brotherhood of things alive," the final image of Badal, "standing in a barber shop, in San Francisco, in 1933, and being, still, himself, the whole race," leaves a lingering sense of loneliness and emptiness in the reader's mind.³

Poised against these numerous stories and sketches that are basically positive in mood are others that more directly address Saroyan's ambivalent feelings as a young Armenian orphan growing up in Fresno. At times he is very indirect in describing the hardships his family and the Armenians in general experienced in Fresno. A chapter from one of his innumerable autobiographies, *Here Comes, There Goes, You Know Who* (1961) is representative. Entitled "The Cat," it offers a short allegory of his family's situation far away from the homeland. Describing the play of the predator cat with a mouse, Saroyan concludes: "Excelsior, the cat, the caught mouse, and us. There we were in America, never to see Bitlis again."⁴ Though he continues by detailing some of the more endearing aspects of their house, such as the leaking ceilings, there is little doubt that he and his family resemble "the caught mouse" more than they resemble the cat.

A more direct description of the realities facing



Fresno area irrigation canal, ca. 1925. Irrigation canals were major factors in the social and economic development of Fresno and other arid regions and by the early twentieth century had become prominent features of the landscape. The verdant edges of the canals are important settings in Saroyan's writings. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

immigrant children in unfriendly Fresno schools in the 1910s and 1920s appears in a chapter entitled "The School." Many teachers took their role as assimilators quite seriously; during an era when the child's native culture and language were not valued in the classroom, confrontations between teachers and Armenian children could be fiery. In this sketch, Saroyan presents a classic encounter between himself in the role of feisty and clever Armenian schoolboy, and Miss Chamberlain, flirtatious yet adamant guardian of the American creed. In a running monologue that might have come from the pages of *La Pierre's* study, she berates Willie for not helping her keep order among the foreign children, whom she describes in the following fashion:

. . . the kids of immigrants, Armenians mainly, but others, too, a few Syrians, a few Assyrians, dark people with dark eyes you never could really understand. They kept to themselves, you never knew if you were getting through, they were still in another world, even though they were born in Fresno, and why did I encourage them to stay that way instead of opening up and being teachable, and *here*, instead of far away? (p. 68).

The little boy's retorts to this barrage reach a climax when he asserts: "But we're here, too, now, and if you can't stand the only way we can be Americans, too, we'll go right on being Armenians" (p. 69).

Behind such bravado, though, lurked a sensitiv-

ity to the pain that all children suffer when they are not accepted for who they are. A vignette in an early short story called "The Death of Children," which also takes place in Emerson School, contains some of the most touching passages Saroyan ever wrote. Introducing these sketches of children with the line, "There were all kinds of us," Saroyan captures the loneliness and victimization that children face. He describes Rosa Tapia, the little Mexican girl, who sings a song in her native language as if to substitute for all the "pointless things" she did not know; Alice Schwab, the German-Jewish girl most likely to succeed, yet least liked, who dies before she has fully lived; and most unforgettably, Carson Sampler, the sullen-faced castoff child of "no-account Southerners," whose pinched face haunts Saroyan's dreams, reflecting the depth of his own childhood deprivations.

Indeed, what the adult Saroyan took as the cost of "being Armenian" entailed much more than an occasional battle with a grammar school teacher; it was much closer to the shivers he felt watching Carson Sampler's starving face and bare feet. The rough-and-ready pose he assumed for public consumption hid considerable guilt, insecurity, and anger toward his family and his ethnic group.⁵ *Rock Wagram*, an autobiographical novel from the early 1950s, suggests the tensions that Saroyan felt in mid-life. Set in Fresno, the story concerns the return home of an Armenian, Rock Wagram, who

has made it big as a movie actor. Although most of the plot focuses on Rock's failed marriage and the split he feels between his Fresno "self" and the slick *chic* of Los Angeles and New York, the deepest source of the protagonist's unease lies in his past as the son of Armenian immigrants to Fresno. The story is peppered with references to Fresno's homey values and farmers' perennial worries about the water level, as well as formulaic refrains that praise grandmother and the meals of "tea, flat bread, white cheese, black olives, parsley, mint, and sliced sun-dried beef."⁶ But underneath this quaint façade, Rock feels a simmering ambivalence and estrangement from his family. Although Saroyan lost his father at the age of three, he grew up in an environment where Armenians clung to unyielding family values. His father's fulfilled life in California as a minister and a would-be writer became the sore that Saroyan himself continually reopened as he flailed himself in his work. As described by his brother-in-law Aram, Armenak Saroyan's "whole ambition in the Old Country was to be able to teach the kids to learn, to obey, and to be a *man*."⁷

In the novel, Rock's unresolved feelings, his underlying doubts about *how* to be a true Armenian man, aggravate his marital problems. Asked by his aunt if he has not yet found "a nice Armenian girl to marry," Rock retorts, "Do you know one?" The woman's response again demonstrates how much separates Rock from his Fresno past:

"One?" the woman said. "There are hundreds, and most of them are here in Fresno. Girls are not lacking. To marry a stranger is perhaps an adventure, but the question is, Can the daughter of people who do not understand us be a true wife to one of our sons?" (p. 83).

Symptomatic of the xenophobia that marks many immigrants, this comment also offers a measure of the psychological distance between Rock and the place of his birth. Filled with marriageable Armenian girls willing to fall into duty, Fresno is the place of inbreeding, and by implication, sterility. But doubling the ambivalence is Rock's relationship to his own roots; rejected by his father, he is no longer a "true" son. As a result, he is not prepared to meet the challenge of relating to a non-Armenian wife either. As he struggles with the decision to "take her back," to ignore her threats and desires, it becomes obvious that the forgiveness he never found in his father eludes him as well, keeping him swimming in a current that never carries him to security, or maturity. As he leaves Fresno on a trip with his grandmother, Rock comes to a bridge where long ago a young Armenian friend drowned as he tried to get to the other side of the river. Rock's thought applies as much to his

own dilemma as to his dead friend's: "If he's swimming the San Joaquin River, all he's got to do is get across. All he's got to do at any time is not drop dead" (p. 169). Having entered a stream that has carried him far from his origins—both as a son of immigrants and a bartender in a city whose values are fixed—Rock Wagram has yet to find rest, especially through the family meaning he claims to want. The novel ends with Rock in barely purposeful motion, racing to catch the sunrise, devoid of hope and family, clutching a token of counterfeit humor.

The deep-seated futility that periodically engulfed Saroyan's work reaches a nadir in his succeeding novel, *The Laughing Matter* (1953), his most pessimistic story. Here the brooding vineyards of the San Joaquin Valley form an apt backdrop to the torment and bitterness of the main character, who significantly envisions his ethnic group, the Assyrians, as a dying race. Though, characteristically, Saroyan would no sooner find himself in such a pit than he would take a flying jump to the other extreme, these polarities suggest just how complex his view of California, the Armenians, and his family was. Fundamentally at odds with himself, his depictions of the Armenians, other ethnic groups, the "mainstream," and the San Joaquin Valley are given many distinct shadings in his work. What remains consistent in his writing, beginning in the earlier works and trickling into the very last ones, are the sentiments of a local boy shaped by the tensions common to other Armenians of his generation in California. Like them, Saroyan tried to hold onto a pugnacious, absurdist, and perhaps absurd, creed that made the best of exile in the Golden West. As Father Kasparian, a character in his play, states,

Armenians in dispersion all over the world, but especially here in California, in Fresno, will continue to be Armenians, they will not become so foolishly American that being also Armenian will ever be an embarrassment to them, and something to forget as quickly as possible, by marrying foreigners and bringing up children who neither know nor care that they are Armenian.⁸

However, as Saroyan was all too aware through his own childhood and his experience of marrying outside the tribe, life in California only highlighted millenia of history, wherein Armenians did not always have the choice of carrying the banner of their identity intact. Instead, they, like he, took refuge in self-images, spirited, yet contradictory, that enabled them to take leaps of faith into a landscape where illusions can thrive—until the basic void closes in, and leaves them speechless. CHS



Kearney Avenue, Fresno County, ca. 1925. With its lush, irrigated, Middle-Eastern atmosphere, Fresno appealed to the Armenian immigrants. Though Saroyan's fictional character, Rock Wagram, drove an automobile, he would have passed between rows of palm trees such as these on his trip from the bright lights of Hollywood to the serene and secure Armenian community of Fresno. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

See notes beginning on page 261.

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Dust-Bowl refugee migrant workers picking cotton in California during the 1930s. This illustration and others in this article are by the great American artist Thomas Hart Benton, from the Limited Editions Club edition of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University

John Steinbeck's Spatial Imagination in *The Grapes of Wrath*: A CRITICAL ESSAY

by George Henderson

Introduction: Representation as Social Action.

The winter of 1937-38 was especially wet in the San Joaquin Valley. Steady and heavy rains saturated the San Joaquin flood plain, particularly in cotton-growing Madera County. In February of that winter John Steinbeck wrote to his agent Elizabeth Otis:

I must go over into the interior valleys. There are about five thousand families starving to death over there, not just hungry but actually starving. The government is trying to feed them and get medical attention to them with the fascist group of utilities and banks and huge growers sabotaging the thing all along the line and yelling for a balanced budget. In one tent there are twenty people quarantined for smallpox and two of the women are to have babies in that tent this week. I've tied into the thing from the first and I must knock these murderers on the heads. Do you know what they're afraid of? They think that if these people are allowed to live in camps with proper sanitary facilities, they will organize and that is the bugbear of the large landowner and the corporation farmer. The states and counties will give them nothing because they are outsiders. But the crops of any part of this state could not be harvested without these outsiders. I'm pretty mad about it. No word of this outside because when I have finished my job the jolly old associated farmers will be after my scalp again (Steinbeck and Wallsten, 158).

For several years Steinbeck had been eyeing the situation of migrant agricultural workers in the "interior valleys." In October 1936 *The San Francisco*

News ran "Harvest Gypsies," a series of Steinbeck's articles, commissioned by the paper's chief editorial writer (see St. Pierre, 79-81 for excerpts). In those brief pieces a reader could find most of the major themes about California agriculture that Steinbeck would later chronicle in *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939.

Shortly after "Harvest Gypsies" was printed, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and *In Dubious Battle* appeared in the bookstores. *In Dubious Battle* was selected by the Book of the Month Club, and within a month one hundred thousand copies had been purchased. Both novels concerned the social costs and unique social formations that Steinbeck attributed to the system of corporate agriculture in the valley (St. Pierre, 81). Thus, by the time Steinbeck began *The Grapes of Wrath*, his vision was keen and his hand well practiced.

The new novel began to take on a spectacular life of its own. Six months after publication, when two hundred thousand copies had been sold, *Commonwealth* magazine noted that "when a book sells like that, and when it causes the comment and controversy this book has, it becomes a cultural phenomenon of important dimensions. The literary and critical industry of the country is not really geared to handle it" (quoted in St. Pierre, 98-101). The critic lamented the lack of attention to the book's literary merit. Most readers only wanted to know whether or not California resembled Steinbeck's depiction (see Kappel, for example, on the novel's ban in Kern County). Too much criticism, both good and bad, had been geared to assessing the factual

content and background of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Only in later years did the "pattern of criticism" turn to an assessment of the novel's relationship to themes, such as biblical allegory and the "Wagons West" idiom.

During the late thirties anyone who cared could have corroborated the general events, if not the details, provided by Steinbeck—the Hoovervilles and Resettlement Administration camps, grower-induced labor surplus, crop specialization by region, the migrant trek from the Dust Bowl states, the vigilantism and the relief work, and the importance of cotton as *the* new speculative crop.

The release of *The Grapes of Wrath* could not have been better timed in relation to the publication of Carey McWilliams' *Factories in the Field* (1939). In broadly supported and convincing prose, McWilliams wrote a mirror text for Steinbeck's novel, although the two writers did not collaborate. Although many contemporary readers apparently did, they did not need to refer to the novel in order to understand the historical reliance of much of California's agricultural production upon a migrant labor class. Yet *The Grapes of Wrath* did fulfill a role as a regionalist and social realist interpretive text. The novel stands as a document of social change. Nonetheless, more can be asked of it.

For example, it might be interesting to turn to a problem of the human condition that Steinbeck apparently set up in *The Grapes of Wrath*. One of Steinbeck's fundamental concerns was to represent the migration of white midwestern families to California as part of that recurrent human condition, while arguing that the human condition itself is shaped by historical and social contingencies. He asked what relationship the laws of nature had to human-made situations: nature does not transcend or determine history, nor does history supersede nature. This idea, I think, accounts for the immortal qualities of some of Steinbeck's characters. At the same time, only the historical moment, the intervention of social relationships, could reveal what might be enduringly true: Ma Joad's heroic will to survive—to humanize the natural survival instinct—was only manifested by economic threat. Tom Joad's and Casy's ultimate belief in a transcendent human family was hammered out only by virtue of their ability to gauge just how far power relations had penetrated the local situation. Steinbeck's adeptness at elevating demoralized and beaten migrants to the epochal level of history-makers, and inverting social relations by phrasing specifically local questions in terms of grandiose themes, fueled his detractors, who would not have

dared to vest moral authority in a rootless, landless class. The point, then, is that Steinbeck registered the duality of history and nature in terms of a social inversion.

One of the devices by which Steinbeck infused his work with this thematic content was to saturate his readers' minds with an understanding of the genetic, formative *processes* that seemed to push the story along in such a way as to make every character and every action part of an enveloping process. This point seems to lie behind Peter Lisca's observation over thirty years ago:

Kenneth Burke has pointed out that "most of the characters derive their role, which is to say their personality, purely from their relationship to the basic situation." But what he takes to be a serious weakness is actually one of the book's greatest accomplishments (Lisca, "*The Grapes of Wrath* as Fiction," 736).

The Grapes of Wrath was indeed relentlessly didactic, even formulaic, but by ensuring that the readers grasped the processes involved (or the "basic situation," as the above quote would have it) Steinbeck could then suggest how different orders of experience represented and contained others by virtue of the overarching causes; for example, attachment to land represented a wholesomeness of body and spirit. What is inherently geographical also turns out to be inherently social, both constituting, and constitutive of, the same processes. It is from social and geographical relationships that meaning radiates, rather than from an individual character or action.

In this way small details were charged with representing *and* bearing out larger processes. This seems like just the sort of thing befitting a philosophical argument of naturalism. But it should not be forgotten that it was the *modernization* of agricultural production and its attendant forms of consciousness that, Steinbeck argued, brought about this state of affairs; in particular that aspect of modernization whereby technological change loosens boundaries, brings into contact formerly discrete things and persons, and allows for a seemingly small event to be nested inside something more significant. The particular importance of the modernizing process as detailed by Steinbeck was that it foreshadowed representation (the power to grasp cognitively the rending and reshuffling of traditional social bonds) itself as a precursor to social action. A fundamental dilemma for the Joads was the inappropriateness of their own daily thought and practices to an interpretation of the new political and economic order. Nowhere was

this contradiction more evident than in the endless bickering over the value of talking over their problems. Steinbeck himself took on the problem of representation insofar as the interchapters re-narrated the story as a form of documentation. Moreover, representation became by the end of the novel *both* a narrative strategy *and* a form of social action.

Taking these general points, I want to explore how they conferred a particular kind of imaginative process to Steinbeck's writing of the *The Grapes of Wrath*. This imagination orchestrated the geographical sites and the *situation* of characters depicted in the novel, the particular social processes as they unfolded across space, which only people swept up in the modernizing process could have understood.

The *Grapes of Wrath* cannot be understood fully unless the characters are seen to develop in relationship to the places through which they moved—places that they also reconstituted, if only momentarily. This approach is meant to be a general, illuminating one and not necessarily an argument to be sustained for each character. Rather, the interpretative approach addresses action in the novel as a totality. Since Tom Joad carries a large proportion of the thematic load of the novel from such a perspective, the bulk of my discussion will focus on him.

Steinbeck's primary thesis, in geographical terms, was that you cannot understand what is going on inside California unless you know what is occurring outside. This notion was borne out by the novel's overwhelming concern with mapping the Joads' migration across the western states. Given the family's goal of obtaining a family-size farm in California, it could be argued that the Joads never really got where they were going. The migration upon which they embarked has no conclusion in the novel other than an ironic symmetry between beginning and ending. The literary "map" charted in *The Grapes of Wrath* was finally not just a geographic product, but was laden with social meaning. It is important, then, to move the line of questioning away from how the Joads got from one place to the next, and by which routes, toward how meaning is produced, controlled, and disseminated with regard to social and workaday space. Also, we need to discover where Steinbeck sat in regard to a general theory of place formation in capitalist society. Specifically, I would like to show how Steinbeck demonstrated his awareness of social/geographic space as the medium and the outcome

of certain processes: the division of labor along class and gender lines; the territorial demands of capitalist agribusiness; and family and community needs to appropriate space for their own production, reproduction, and private fulfillment. These processes, conditioned by the modern era, were brought to bear on the Joads' travails as they encountered the wider social world and it, in turn, received or resisted their arrival.

In a sense my outlook may be criticized as too economic. Let me state at the onset that I am familiar with some of the common cultural and ideological idioms of Steinbeck's work, including the myth of the garden, the family farm as a *reformist* ideal, and the closeness of women to nature. While Steinbeck appeared to have left these myths intact, and indeed to have relied upon them, he dismantled others of a specific local and regional character: the innocence of California's agricultural bounty, the myth of an egalitarian frontier in the West, and the family farm as a basic unit of democracy. Instead of treating each of the above concepts explicitly, I will simply let them inform my thinking, drawing on them as necessary or appropriate.

Steinbeck, I think, *structured* the meanings of the places in which the book's characters were situated on two levels. First, each place took on meaning through its dynamic relationship with an opposite kind of place, either real or imagined. Second, the interaction of these polarities transformed or overturned social relations.

How can two places "interact"? Contradictions among the processes of the division of labor, capitalist agribusiness, and small social units arise as each asserts its territorial demands for space—critical to its very continuation—and brings the novel's places and characters into a dialectical relationship. With the notion of dialectically interacting places in mind, I would, then, posit three sets of oppositions which typify the relationships among the primary settings in *The Grapes of Wrath*. These oppositions constitute major literary devices through which Steinbeck represented the processes of the creation of social/geographic space. The three sets of oppositions are:

1. The tension between places where power is centered—or represented—and places of socially marginal activity for peripheralized people;
2. The contradiction between California as a visible, knowable, Edenic landscape and the Joads' invisibility and ignorance within it;
3. The conflict between divergent modes of transforming nature and producing humane habitats.



California growers' exploitation of migrant laborers in the 1930s was made possible by support from public authorities. In this illustration from the Limited Editions Club edition of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), Thomas Hart Benton portrays a state policeman halting the Joad family truck. The police were assisting Tulare County farmers by convoying "scabs" through picket lines set up by striking field workers. Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University

Places of Centralized Power and Marginalized Activity.

The geography of power and disenfranchisement is relatively straightforward in *The Grapes of Wrath*. A primary distinction is drawn between towns and banks, on the one hand, and Routes 66/99 and the migrant camps on the other hand. The implication, which comprised the fundamental antagonists in Steinbeck's book, was that finance capital, fixed in places (the banks), and the entrenched urban settlement pattern were both hostile to the "independent" and dispossessed rural smallholder and migrant worker. Oklahoma banks extended their domain to foreclose on small or mid-size farms, while California towns resisted the onslaught of the displaced migrants. Migrant families were thus pushed from two directions: away from their homelands and away from the small-town sanctuary of the farmers and merchants. Bankers, big farmers, and town-dwellers alike feared that the Joads would find a place in which to belong. Fixity translated into power, whereas uprootedness was the best assurance of continued disenfranchisement. From this point, Steinbeck wrote what might be called a drama of settlement.

The settlement drama has two dimensions in the novel. In one, Steinbeck imagined a reinvention of a natural, organic society formed by the exigencies of the highway life along the "Great American Roadside." This new, transitional society both chal-

lenged and rivaled the exclusive claims to authenticity held by the historically validated, pre-existing settlement pattern, in which moral authority and political power were vested in fixed centers, either towns or farms. Steinbeck reversed this notion and outlined a vision of moral purity and impending political power as they were taking shape on the road:

The cars of the migrant people crawled out of the side roads onto the great cross-country highway, and they took the migrant way to the West. In the daylight they scuttled like bugs to the westward: and as the dark caught them, they clustered like bugs near to shelter and to water . . . Thus it might be that one family camped near a spring, and another camped for the spring and for company, and a third because two families had pioneered the place and found it good. And when the sun went down, perhaps twenty families and twenty cars were there.

In the evening a strange thing happened: the twenty families became one family, the children were the children of all . . .

Every night relationships that make a world, established; and every morning the world torn down like a circus . . . gradually the technique of building worlds became their technique. Then leaders emerged, then laws were made, then codes came into being . . . (p. 264-5).

Steinbeck wrote into the situation a sort of moral

regeneration of American society, borne on the backs of its most beleaguered members. At first, the new society seemed a parody, a "circus", but it was simply that the basic social rules, forgotten by the dominant society, must be learned anew. This proposed change was resisted by those who were socially well-placed: the haves against the have-nots. A manifestation and medium for this struggle was the new spatial form of social relations overlaid on the landscape of the new, depression-era West:

The families, which had been units of which the boundaries were a house at night, a farm by day, changed their boundaries. In the long hot light, they were silent in the cars moving slowly westward; but at night they integrated with any group they found.

Thus they changed their social life—changed as in the whole universe only man can change. They were not farm men any more, but migrant men (p. 267-8).

The struggle to which Steinbeck implicitly alluded, at this point in the novel, was one over legacy, over historical authenticity, over the notion of "free" land in the West. Migrant culture stretched out into a great protective net across the roads of the west. No longer was land the democratizing element. Rather, geographical mobility was the great social leveler, because its laws had been revised to accommodate lives as lived on the road. In the new landscape, the trucker was the benefactor. Steinbeck was enamored of the new roadside culture—the diner, the truckers, the truckstops—just as he ridiculed its transgressors—the fee campgrounds, the salesmen peddling used cars for ill-gotten profits.

The other dimension of the settlement fantasy is the raising of individualized forms of consciousness to the level of class. Steinbeck wrote that "one man, one family [is] driven from the land." The single migrant is "alone . . . and bewildered." But then something happens. Two men meet, "squat on their hams and the women and children listen. . . ." This meeting, Steinbeck pointed out, is the "mode" of revolution. "Here 'I lost my land' is changed . . . [to] 'We lost our land.'" (p. 206). Steinbeck continued the reasoning in the succeeding passages to foretell a day of revolution, unforeseen by large propertied interests because they were still in an "I" frame of mind, not yet liberated into communal consciousness.

The author presented a pattern of fragmentation of the rural freeholder class which moved toward a portentous regrouping on the road. The road in this role is transformed from nemesis to necessity,

if history is to follow the contradictory logic of modernization. Yet the road maintained ambiguous status in the novel. It beckoned at the same time as it restrained.

Route 66 was essential for the formation of the migrants' new social consciousness, yet for all its symbolic and cultural weight, it led the Joads down a circular path in their search for house and garden. After the Joads' scrape with the law in the first California "Hooverville" they came to, they made a narrow pre-dawn escape *down* Route 99. It is tempting to think that Steinbeck was manipulating the route numbers themselves to reveal their symbolic content (p. 384). Turning south on "99" inverted the route number to "66." The Joads were far from home, but essentially on the same highway that used to lead to their old front door.

The Joads' Invisibility and Ignorance within a Visible, Edenic Landscape.

A critical juncture in the book arrived as the Joads were astride the top of the Tehachapi Mountains, looking out over the Central Valley toward Bakersfield. They had just endured the disappointment of Needles ("Gateway to California"), a funeral procession through the Mojave Desert, and the agricultural inspection station at Daggett:

Al jammed on the brake and stopped in the middle of the road, and, "Jesus Christ! Look!" he said. The vineyards, the orchards, the great flat valley, green and beautiful, the trees set in rows, and the farm houses. . . The distant cities, the little towns in the orchard land, and morning sun, golden on the valley. . . The grain fields golden in the morning, and the willow lines, the eucalyptus trees in rows.

Pa sighed, "I never knowed they was anything like her."

. . . Ruthie and Winfield scrambled down from the car, and then they stood, silent and awestruck, embarrassed before the great valley. . . and Ruthie whispered, "It's California" (p. 309-10).

This moment, when they were faced with the spectacle of California, was foreshadowed in the novel when the Joads took a respite outside Needles. Tom Joad wondered then whether the image of California would pan out in reality: Pa said, "Wait till we get to California. You'll see nice country then." Tom admonished, "Jesus Christ, Pa! This here *is* California" (p. 278).

Moments later Tom talked with a man versed in the subtler aspects of the California landscape. He told Tom what to expect, and although he was leaving California, he encouraged Tom to go see for himself:

"She's a nice country. But she was stole a long time ago. You git across the desert an' come into the country aroun' Bakersfield. An' you never seen such purty country—all orchards an' grapes, purtiest country you ever seen. An' you'll pass lan' flat an' fine with water thirty feet down, and that lan's layin' fallow. But you can't have none of that lan'. That's a Lan' and Cattle Company. An' if they don't want ta work her, she ain't gonna git worked. You go in there an' plant you a little corn, an' you'll go to jail!" (p. 279)

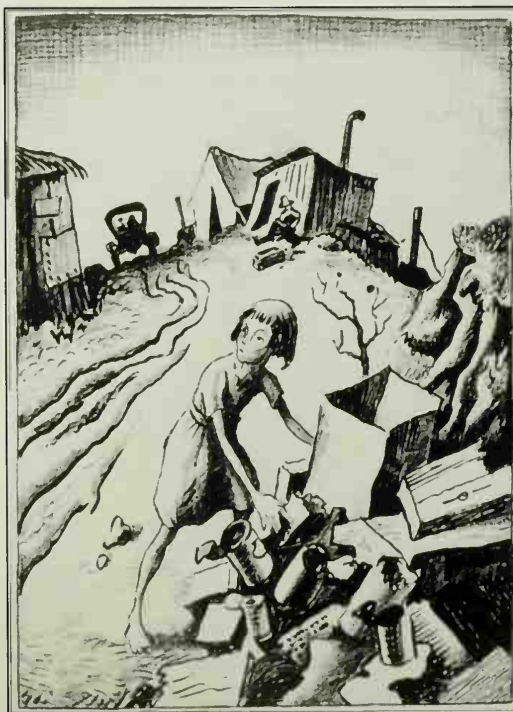
The migrants had seen pictures of California—a rural paradise draped with a snow capped background (p. 271). In the scenes depicted above the Joads are brought to confront and question that image. But even when the visible landscape seemed to fit the pictorial myth, the social and economic reality had brutal implications. The landscape, a spectacle, as presented to the observer from the crest of the Tehachapis, concealed the enveloping contradiction between the subsistence potential of the soil and the monopolistic tendencies of the large landowning companies.

Still, however, the Joads asserted their blind, almost masochistic fortitude, (that evidence of the survival instinct bordering on animal drive—bugs "crawl," the Joads "crawl") which flew in the face of everything they had heard along their migration. They were distrustful of "words" and "talk":

[Uncle John by the riverbank outside of Needles] ". . . We're a-goin' there, ain't we? None of this here talk gonna keep us from goin' there. When we get there, we'll get there. When we get a job we'll work, an' when we don't get a job we'll set on our tail. This here talk ain't gonna do no good no way" (p. 283).

Indeed, Uncle John foresaw the truth of their experience in the great valley. Yet he could not have seen any of the particular features and would not have been able to map out the continuation of their journey from the vantage point at the pass in the Tehachapis. The crisis of representation here had two expressions. One was the inability of the Joads to convey to each other what they were getting themselves into. The other expression of the crisis was the very landscape that lay before them. The power of the landscape, to represent future events as they would be shaped by social/power relations and to lend predictability to the migrants' lives, rapidly diminished. The landscape ambiguously revealed *and* concealed its contents. All along, the Joads had been making the equation between the visible and the possible, between reality and representation. The notions of "there" and "here" as points on a map, or as elements of the field of vision that could be identified and reached, were continually obscured because the Joads were lured in the first place by the spectacle of California. Or,

Thomas Hart Benton's rendition of one of California's "Hooverilles," ramshackled Depression-era settlements on the outskirts of rural and urban communities that sheltered tens of thousands of Dust-Bowl migrants like Steinbeck's Joad family. Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University



rather, California was revealed to them only as a spectacle. What they found, in fact, was a parallel, though peripheralized, world.

The apotheosis of the peripheral world was the Hooverville. A parody of the American small-town ideal and a continuation of Steinbeck's settlement myth, these squatter settlements could be found outside of every "real" town: "The rag town lay close to water; and the houses were tents, and weed-thatched enclosures, paper houses, a great junk pile" (p. 319-20). The "rag town" was really nothing but the discharge point of the effluvia of the social order: "a great junk pile." The description alluded to the flow of goods, but the Hooverville made a mockery of real economic exchange. The flow of goods was uni-directional. And the settlement was illusory—houses were merely tents and paper constructions.

Yet it was in Hooverville that the Joads comprehended the basic contradictions that drove the plot forward. The migrant camp on the outskirts followed the "mother of invention" dictum, but the camp was an essential geographical instrument for concentrating surplus labor in a region where one extensively planted crop ripened all at once over a broad area. In Hooverville, Tom Joad is lectured to by a world-wise, old hand about how the gathering of surplus workers enabled employers to pay miserably wages. "S'pose them men got kids . . . Jus' offer 'em a nickel—why, they'll kill each other fightin' for that nickel." The men had been lured by handbills, and "You can print a hell of a lot of han'bills with what ya save payin' fifteen cents an hour for fiel' work," explained Tom's instructor. He continued:

"They's a big son-of-a-bitch of a peach orchard I worked in. Takes nine men all the year roun'." He paused impressively. "Takes three thousan' men for two weeks when them peaches is ripe . . . They send out han'bills all over hell. They need three thousan', an' they get six thousan' . . . Whole part a the country's peaches. All ripe together. When ya get 'em picked, ever' goddam one is picked. There ain't another damn thing in that part a the country to do. An' then them owners don' want you there no more. . . . So they kick you out, they move you along. That's how it is" (p. 334-5).

The California spectacle was revealed as a horrific production racket involving key combinations: a division of labor with a painfully seasonal and spatial underpinning, extensive mono-cropping, and the short term needs of migrant families and individuals to keep the diurnal body and soul together. Although any *one* Hooverville was a temporary arrangement in the migrant world, Hoover-

villes were to be found on the edge of every town. Each was fragile over time. Over geographical space they were extensive and threatening. Thus, they had their hand in a dialectical turn of events: "every raid on a Hooverville, every deputy swaggering through a ragged camp put off the day a little and cemented the inevitability of the day [when the land will belong to the workers]" (p. 325).

Just as the Joads were awed and inspired (*embar-rassed* too) by the view of the landscape from atop the Tehachapis—a vision of an ordered, productive, and beneficent world—the owners of property, the producers of that landscape and the image of California as a haven for the dispossessed, wished to keep the migrants moving. The landscape itself was to be a fixed, closed entity, and the idea of keeping the outcasts moving was to keep from thinking of them as part of the real picture. The point was to define the laborer merely as a means of production rather than as inheritor of the rewards of an agrarian tradition, one of which would be the very privilege of belonging to the landscape by being a landholder.

Steinbeck attached a particular form of consciousness-historical knowledge—to land ownership. Ironically, it is the great landowner who understands the lesson that when there are masses of dispossessed, revolution will surely follow. But workers need to grasp their role in the historical process. How does the worker in *The Grapes of Wrath* come into that consciousness? How do the Joads as peasants know that they have become "workers"?

The Joads were not ascribed any potential for social mobility. In addition, their spatial mobility was almost thoroughly restricted, if not prescribed. Thus, a plunge into the self brought about a realized relationship to history and society. In spatial terms, seclusion was required. Steinbeck carefully chose places that gave a character a renewed and empowering vantage point from which to see social relations as fraught with contradictions (p. 571-2). Characters must be placed in a position from which to view their world upside down, with the social order reversed. Invariably, these places were marginal, both in the productivity of nature and in the hierarchy of human habitats.

Divergent Modes of Transforming Nature and the Production of Humane Habitats.

Steinbeck tried to capture the historical place and time in which putting land into production meant different things to different classes of people. The primary event that set *The Grapes*

of *Wrath* in motion was the Joads' loss of their homestead to a bank that foreclosed on the property. Steinbeck drew a fundamental distinction between a spatial proximity of a people to their land and, conversely, a spatial disjunction:

[Muley Graves] "Place where folks live is them folks. They ain't whole, out lonely on the road in a piled-up car. They ain't alive no more. Them sons-a-bitches killed 'em' " (p. 71).

[Later, a fragment from an interchapter] The man who is . . . walking on the earth, turning his plow point for a stone, dropping his handles to slide over an outcropping, kneeling in the earth to eat his lunch; that man who is more than his elements knows the land that is more than its analysis. But the machine man, driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love, understands only chemistry; and he is contemptuous of the land and of himself. When the corrugated iron doors are shut, he goes home, and his home is not the land (p. 158).

Steinbeck was very keen on establishing the notion that an emotional relationship to land depends on close physical contact with the soil. Because Muley Graves did not join the Joads, he failed to recognize the opportunity for renewal in the experience of migration. However, he *was* clever enough to recognize the ways and means of survival in a land wholly given over to an alien system of agricultural production. In an early scene on the old Joad homestead, Muley explained to Tom and Casy the fine art of hiding in a land where there was supposedly nowhere to hide (p. 77-8). Cotton had been planted so extensively at the old farm that it likened flushing out the fugitives to looking for a needle in a haystack. To a degree, their invisibility in the cotton field opposed the inability of the small farmer to pin the responsibility of foreclosure on a real *person*. Each side was a stranger to the other. The modern system divided them, as it brought them together.

Ultimately "tractor farming" became the small landholder's nemesis. The small farmer could no longer make the land support a crop. Under a system of modernized production, extensive monocropping of cotton engulfed the Joads' farm.

The Reverend Casy and young Tom stood on the hill and looked down on the Joad place. The small unpainted house was mashed at one corner, and it had been pushed off its foundations so that it slumped at an angle, its blind front windows pointing at a spot of sky well above the horizon. The fences were gone and the cotton grew in the dooryard and up against the house, and the cotton grew close against it . . . They walked toward the

concrete well-cap, walked through cotton plants to get to it, and the bolls were forming on the cotton, and the land was cultivated (p. 54-5).

In a number of such passages Steinbeck brought together potent images of two rural orders in conflict. The new large cotton farm annihilated all former distinctions between the various micro-places of the Joad farm: no more fences, no dooryard, no clear path to shed, outhouse, or trough. There were no places even for "proper weeds that should grow under a trough." The phrase "proper weeds" seems like an oxymoron, yet gets the point across that the old rough and tumble homestead was part of a good and natural scheme.

It was such a scheme that the Joads and others dreamed of reproducing in their exile. The idea that land should be used and occupied, rather than left fallow, was stymied, however, by the power of the large landowner to let arable land remain idle:

. . . And along the roads lay the temptations, the fields that could bear food.

That's owned. That ain't our'n.

Well, maybe we could get a little piece of her. Maybe—a little piece. Right down there—a patch. Jimson weed now. Christ, I could git enough potatoes off'n that little patch to feed my whole family!

It ain't our'n. It got to have Jimson weeds (p. 320-1).

Any attempts to cultivate the "secret gardens" fail—unless the New Deal intervenes (p. 321). Outside of Bakersfield the federal government established the migrant labor camp, Weedpatch.

Weedpatch is reminiscent of both the "secret gardens" and the "rag town" Hoovervilles. The government camp provided momentary respite, even appeared idyllic. Yet in the final analysis it was little more than a glorified sanitary facility and could not support the desire for a permanent, humane habitat:

Tom walked down the street between the rows of tents . . . He saw that the rows were straight and that there was no litter about the tents. The ground of the street had been swept and sprinkled . . .

Tom walked slowly. He neared Number Four Sanitary Unit and he looked at it curiously, an unpainted building, low and rough (p. 393).

Weedpatch was the vector of several important themes in the novel. It drew on the idea of geometric orderliness and cleanliness as support for the moral authority of the American small town. Its setting resonated with a secure and bounded rural propriety. It was a point from which the power of the migrant "folk" could emanate amidst the enveloping enterprise of agribusiness. Most



Thomas Hart Benton's drawing of a dance for residents of the federal camp for migrant workers at Weedpatch.

Government camps, though designed only for temporary housing, provided a measure of protection for the Dust-Bowl refugees. Local vigilantes opposed to the "Okies' " presence were foiled in their plot to disrupt this particular dance in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University

powerfully, Weedpatch was the overlapping space of three "institutions": the short term needs of the migrant workers, federal relief policy, and large-scale capitalist agriculture. For all its importance in bringing these systems together, however, Weedpatch remained a marginal place. It was a holding area for the worker in a place where employment was scarce after the harvest. Inside, the migrant community was strong and thwarted the attempts of local vigilantes to incite a riot. Ultimately, though, it was agribusiness that set the rules. The Joads and others like them were forced to leave and look for work.

If the "secret garden" failed to sustain the myth of yeoman independence, Steinbeck experimented with the notion that it is in the seams, or cracks, in the agricultural landscape (the in-between places where the *process*, rather than the final outcome, of the appropriation of nature can be viewed), where the self can retreat and become empowered through contact with nature, fragmentary though it may be. In *The Grapes of Wrath* this idea was expressed in the context of the agricultural production process. In this way Steinbeck located in a specific time and place what otherwise would be an ahistorical notion. He took pains to explain that modern farming in Oklahoma and California entailed forms of subordination and social control

(p. 50-1; 316-20). Steinbeck's whole point, of course, was to suggest how these consequences can be resisted.

In order to understand how these arguments work in the novel, we can examine certain events as they occur in irrigation ditches and hedgerows—two types of seams, or cracks, in the agricultural landscape that represent gaps in apparently seamless power relations.

Tom Joad, the primary character of the novel, experienced two baptisms in irrigation ditches. The first was performed by Casy when Tom was a boy and Casy a revivalist preacher. His first baptism did not mean too much to young Tom. Its meaning only became clear when Tom was *re*-baptized—this time by himself—after doing something out of conviction and a sense of social justice. In this scene, Tom's actions were less blind, more than merely the result of the things that he was always bumping into. Tom had just discovered Casy and a number of other labor organizers. In a scuffle with a group of vigilantes who were tailing them down a stream, Casy was killed. Tom fatally struck down the killer, was himself struck, and made his escape up the embankment:

He bent low and ran over the cultivated earth; clods slipped and rolled under his feet. Ahead he saw the bushes that bounded the field, bushes

along the edges of an irrigation ditch. He slipped through the fence, edged in among vines and blackberry bushes. And then he lay still, panting hoarsely . . . He lay still on his stomach until his mind came back. And then he crawled slowly over the edge of the ditch. He bathed his face in the cool water . . .

The black cloud had crossed the sky, a blob of dark against the stars. The night was quiet again (p. 527-8).

This second "baptism" was more figurative and secular than the first, but Steinbeck meant them to be parallel events. In each instance Tom and Casy were present. In each case Tom's baptism followed some form of violence. The first baptism occurred under conditions which were too naive to lend any meaning to Tom's life. The second, however, marked his passage into a period of solitary resolve and spiritual rekindling. For the moment he was emancipated—"The black cloud had crossed the sky . . . The night was quiet again." That the baptisms occurred in irrigation ditches was simply consistent with the setting of the story. Yet their location has something to say about sites of spiritual renewal and resistance in a space of seemingly total social control.

The irrigation ditch is an essential feature and instrument of agriculture in a semi-arid environment. It is part and parcel of the transformation of nature, and hence, of the production and labor process (one of the few jobs Tom gets is digging an irrigation ditch). The ditch of the second baptism is at the field's edge, protected by water-seeking bushes. As much as it represents evidence of the dominant class's mastery over nature, it remains its own kind of environment, with water so elemental that its restorative properties are unsullied. The water, unlike the social and economic system that manipulates it, is not selective about to whom it gives life.

The second environment of solitary reflection, and precursor to resistance, is the hedgerow at the margins of the cotton fields. Like the irrigation ditches these micro-environments help build the novel's architectural symmetry. And similarly they see Tom's movement from a state of partial denial to affirmation of his role in social change. Twice the reader finds Tom Joad hiding at the edges of cotton fields. The first time is with Muley Graves at the Joads' old farm, when Tom and Casy follow Muley



By the end of *The Grapes of Wrath*, California's agricultural system had stripped the Joads and other Dust-Bowl migrants of their pride and possessions and reduced them to primitive survival. A great storm finally swamped their truck and flooded them out of the abandoned boxcars in which they had taken refuge. Illustration by Thomas Hart Benton. Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University

to a place where they can stay the night. It turns out to be a cave in the bank of a water-cut. ". . . Joad settled himself on the clean sand. 'I ain't gonna sleep in no cave,' he said. 'I'm gonna sleep right here.' He rolled his coat and put it under his head" (p. 81-2).

Tom is in hiding despite his pride and deliberations to the contrary, but he falls short of entering the cave as Muley does. The scene presages Tom's future exile in a similar situation in California: Muley warns Tom that he will be hiding "from lots of stuff." Tom himself dug the cave at the edge of the field when he was a youth "Lookin' for gold"—what more appropriate place in which to end up than California at the edge of a cotton field.

After Tom escapes with this family from the peach orchard (where they were working at the time of Casy's death), Muley's prediction comes true:

Al turned right on a graveled road, and the yellow lights shuddered over the ground. The fruit trees were gone now, and cotton plants took their place. They drove on for *twenty miles* [italics mine] through the cotton . . . The road paralleled a bushy creek and turned over a concrete bridge and followed the stream on the other side. And then, on the edge of the creek the lights showed a long line of red box-cars, wheelless; and a big sign on the edge of the road said, "Cotton Pickers Wanted." Al slowed down . . .

". . . Look," he [Tom] said. "It says they want cotton pickers. I seen that sign. Now I been tryin' to figger how I'm gonna stay with you, an' not make no trouble. When my face gets well, maybe it'll be awright, but not now. Ya see them cars back there. Well, the pickers live in them. Now maybe they's work there. How about if you get work there an' live in one of the them cars?"

"How 'bout you?" Ma demanded.

"Well, you seen that crick, all full a brush. Well, I could hide in that brush an' keep outa sight. An' at night you could bring me out somepin to eat. I seen a culvert, little ways back. I could maybe sleep in there" (p. 550-1).

While Tom was secure in the hedgerow above the creek by the cotton field, he could not only reflect on the recent events, but represent them to his mother in their full meaning. In his hiding place he found his kinship to a humanity beyond the family boundary, and came into a sense of overarching social purpose. Steinbeck intimated that Tom would follow in Casy's steps (p. 570).

By repeating the hiding pattern established earlier in the novel, Steinbeck foreshadowed the internal change in Tom's character. Steinbeck played seclusion and personal empowerment against the geographically extensive and demoralizing agricultural

working conditions. The spatial reach of agribusiness in the thirties, which seems to have levelled the distinction between one worker and another, is shown in *The Grapes of Wrath* to have enough cracks to allow certain people to individuate themselves. These cracks reflect on the contradictions of the production process, sustaining the idea of unexploited nature as a reserve for the human spirit during historically specific and dehumanizing conditions. Thus, Tom Joad had to be alone *in a particular kind of space*, in a special relationship with nature, before he could realize that, after all, he is part of a social group, of an historical moment—before he could grant authority to the representational and political value of language.

In *The Grapes of Wrath* Steinbeck appeared to praise the values and unswerving pragmatism of the migrant workers and families. Through Tom Joad, however, who finally discovered in his hideout that talking, thinking, and language are worthy tools for understanding practical predicaments, Steinbeck also criticized the shortcomings of the Joad family's "common sense," in which discussion and the very idea of representation seemed overly precious. What the Joads needed instead was to recognize the value of representation—not as learned in myth, but as relearned in the kinds of spaces where the individual can represent first to himself, then to others, a version of reality closer to the truth. In order for the human family to unite, the boundaries of the nuclear family had to be loosened. Ma Joad's "fambly" could not remain intact. She realized that, while her family had land, they were a bounded, cohesive entity. Without it they were falling apart (p. 536). However, only through their disintegration would they really think and act beyond themselves.

Finally, we are left to wonder how Steinbeck ultimately appraised the situation of the "Okie" migrant worker. To his credit Steinbeck did not see the migrant class as a monolith, but rather as differentiated. For example, toward the conclusion of the novel Ma and Pa Joad have taken divergent, gender-based viewpoints. Pa became preoccupied with looking backwards, so nostalgic for a time when he was head of the household division of labor that he could not participate in the present. Ma was forward looking, acknowledging that the land in California was, after all, better than their Oklahoma farmland. She rose from the ashes of a burnt-out household, the vehicle for Steinbeck to expose the pitfalls of patriarchy. Pa remained stuck in the historical moment, if not in the past itself.



Rose of Sharon, sister of Tom Joad, the leading character, in *The Grapes of Wrath*. One of the major themes in Steinbeck's novel was the manner in which economic inequality and exploitation undermined the status of men, who earned self-respect by being "breadwinners." On the other hand, women, according to Steinbeck, were less ego-involved in the economic productive system, more in touch with spiritual and life-giving forces of nature, and thus more adaptable to adversity. Reflecting this theme, in the novel's heart-rending, enigmatic, and controversial conclusion, Rose of Sharon, who had just suffered the still-birth of her child, suckled a starving strange man at her breast in order to save his life. *Courtesy The Limited Editions Club and the Steinbeck Research Center, San Jose State University*

Ma, as a woman, adapted readily to changing situations, accepting life as a "flow." However, the positions ascribed to Ma and Pa are not based on an ahistorical sense of masculine and feminine. For both Pa's nostalgia and Ma's philosophy of "flow" were occasioned by their entrapment in an historical and geographical flux. It was Ma, while still in Oklahoma, who first experienced nostalgic attachments. The tragedy of the migrants' situation, therefore, seems not so much that they had to leave home, but that California did not yet offer the permanent place they thought it promised.

Steinbeck took the view that migrant workers were caught in a complex of relations modernizing the western states, that the particular features of their experience also depended on the forms of consciousness and practice that they brought to situations, and that rules and ideologies set by modern capitalism also relied in part on a laboring class such as the Joads represented. I have suggested that Steinbeck was keenly aware that the division of labor, agricultural production within capitalist agribusiness and the family farm, and the consciousness of individuals and social groups,

all had requirements that grew out of and were projected onto contradicting geographical spaces. The particular oppositional motifs, a series of tensions, that I think Steinbeck used to convey his argument, were: the spaces of power and disenfranchisement, the ambiguity of the landscape as a depicting *and* concealing agent, and the conflicting modes of transforming nature.

These oppositional motifs were the means by which Steinbeck created a space for certain characters to resist the oppressing forces. The Joads were never completely marginalized; power was not *all* powerful. The attempts to make the Joads invisible in the landscape, a cog in the production process, contributed in some sense to their redemption. Nature was never entirely mastered nor subdued, and it was by virtue of its transformation by the class in power that restorative gaps were left. ☐

See "References" beginning on page 262.

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IV. Policy

The “New” California

by Dan Walters

The very term “twenty-first century” conjures up celluloid images of robots performing household chores or space travelers dressed in funny costumes. But the twenty-first century is just around the corner, and social, economic, technological, and demographic forces already being felt in California will shape its reality.

Change is California’s only constant, and whatever the state has been in the past and whatever it is today, it will be different tomorrow. Those who prepare themselves for those changes—most importantly those youngsters who are entering the school system now—will survive and perhaps prosper. Those who are ill-prepared will, in the harshly competitive socioeconomic environment developing in California, fall by the wayside, destined for low-paid, dead-end jobs. This year’s second-graders are the high school graduating class of 2000, although experience tells us that quite a few of them will not make it.

To fully understand what is happening in California and what is likely to occur between now and 2000, one must also understand what has happened in the recent past, ever since California was jerked out of its semi-agrarian slumber by World War II. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor forced

America, for the first time, to pay attention to what we now call the Pacific Rim, but then called the Pacific Theater of Operations. The nation was compelled, in effect, to look westward toward the East and that meant California, which became the staging area for the war in the Pacific. Overnight, it seemed, California became an industrial powerhouse, filled with the aircraft factories, shipyards, and other installations needed for the war effort. Simultaneously, hundreds of thousands of persons came into the state to work in the war industries or to undergo military training.

The war touched off an extended period of economic and human growth in California that has continued, with a few brief lulls, for nearly a half-century. The state’s cities developed suburban appendages that bulged with people. It is hard to believe now, but Anaheim had just 32,000 residents—about the size of Ridgecrest—when Walt Disney chose it as the site of his Kingdom ruled by a fictional mouse. It became a staple quip of television comedians that just about everyone in California was born somewhere else, most often in a midwestern or southwestern state. It was a slap-happy period in California, the two decades that followed World War II. Job opportunities were



Kids, Yettam (1984). Hispanic children, pictured here in the San Joaquin Valley town of Yettam, are part of the future of the "new" California.
Photograph by Stephen Johnson



The Harbor Freeway in downtown Los Angeles, shortly after opening, 1954. The early freeways dramatically changed California's cities after the 1940s. Today, skyscrapers have sprouted up in downtown Los Angeles, and enormous population growth and urban sprawl in the region have made its forty-year-old roads obsolete. *Courtesy California Department of Transportation*

expanding, people were coming into the state from everywhere, homes were being occupied even before the paint had dried, and everywhere one looked, new freeways, schools, and colleges were being built.

But even as California basked in industrial prosperity, there were signs of the coming socioeconomic and demographic change. Some young engineers, working in their garages, were putting together the first solid-state computers. Japan, which had been devastated by World War II, was beginning to send a few of its cars to California, cars with funny shapes and even funnier names. And some businessmen in New York, Chicago, Akron, and Detroit were beginning to pull back, beginning to close or pare down those industrial plants that had sprouted like weeds in California.

The period of rapid industrialization that had transformed the California landscape was beginning to give way to a new kind of economy, a post-industrial hybrid economy rooted in services, in trade with the nations of the Pacific Rim, and in certain kinds of highly specialized manufacturing, much of it connected to space exploration and military needs. Many industrial plants, unable to compete in a global economy, shut down, even as the state's economic power was growing to nation-like dimensions. One statistic illustrates that trend:

between 1972 and 1987 there was an 85 percent decrease in the number of Californians working in the tire-manufacturing industry, as all but one of the state's tire plants shut down; but there was a 100 percent increase in the number of hotel workers. Californians are buying just as many tires as before—many more, in fact—but more and more of those tires are being built in other states or, more likely, in other nations.

In a sense, what's happening to California is exactly what many Easterners always thought would happen: the state is falling off the edge of the continent, at least in economic and social terms. It is becoming disconnected from the rest of the nation as it assumes a pivotal role in the emerging Pacific Rim economy; what happens in Tokyo or Mexico City may well have more impact on California than what occurs in Washington or New York.

As California's economic transformation began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, so did a transformation in California's population. Population growth slowed markedly in the 1970s. The state, which had surpassed New York to become the nation's most populous in the 1960s, was still growing at a fairly rapid clip, but slower than it had been. The industrial job opportunities that had attracted so many from other states had become fewer. But in the late 1970s, population growth picked up again. California's post-industrial economy was as attractive to immigrants from other nations as its industrial economy had been to immigrants from other states. During the first eight years of the 1970s California created some three



Lockheed Missile and Space Division, with Stanford University in background, Santa Clara County, in the 1950s. Since the 1940s, California's electronics, aerospace, and defense industries have been closely related to the state's educational and research institutions. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

million new jobs, more than all of western Europe. The state became the destination of choice for millions of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and dozens of other global locales, seeking economic and personal opportunity. California became the new American melting pot, with dozens of languages—100 spoken in Los Angeles area schools alone—and hundreds of cultural strains. The state became, in short, the most culturally complex society ever seen on the face of the Earth. Only in California would one find, as he can in mid-town Los Angeles, a Kosher burrito stand operated by an immigrant from Korea.

During the 1980s, California has experienced astonishing population growth, from 24 million to 29 million and still climbing toward an estimated 35 million by 2000. California's growth in this decade has represented a quarter of all the population growth experienced in the United States, and in some years it has been as much as one-half. The current population-growth rate is nearly 2,000 people a day, half of them immigrants and most of the remainder the offspring of recent immigrant groups. As one might expect, virtually all of that growth is among non-Anglo peoples. The Asian

population of California has doubled in the last decade. Enrollment in the state's elementary and high schools is increasing by 140,000 youngsters a year, and in 1988, for the first time, a majority of the state's K-12 students were non-Anglo, which also underscores the fact that the non-Anglo population is markedly younger than the Anglo population.

Effectively, California's population growth has been a two-staged phenomenon. The newcomers to California are settling in its central cities. Los Angeles is more than 35 percent Hispanic already, for example. And as that occurs, Anglo Californians continue to flee into the suburbs. But the first tier of suburbs, such as Orange County and the San Fernando Valley in southern California and Santa Clara and Contra Costa counties in the north, are giving away to a second tier. What seems to be happening is that as California's economy continues to undergo its conversion, jobs have become more portable. It is easier, for example, to move an insurance claims processing operation than it is a steel mill. And those jobs moved out of the central cities and into the suburbs.

The suburban areas that had experienced rapid



San Francisco's Japanese American community celebrates the Japan Festival, ca. 1974. California's long-time Chinese American and Japanese American residents have been joined by more recent immigrants from Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Korea, as well as newcomers from other countries of Asia and the rest of the world. The state's population and culture are easily the nation's most diverse, creating challenges, as well as great opportunities. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

population growth in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s began to experience slowdowns of population growth—in part because housing costs were skyrocketing—as they felt increases in employment. Twenty years ago, people lived in Orange County and commuted to Los Angeles. Today, increasingly, people live in Riverside County—where one can still find a single-family home for less than \$100,000—and commute into the new employment centers of Orange County. Twenty years from now, they may be living in Barstow and commuting to Riverside.

New development patterns, population growth, and California's nonstop love affair with the automobile, meanwhile, have been creating traffic problems of historic dimensions. While California's population was growing at a rapid clip, its population of vehicles was increasing even faster—a 50 percent increase in the last 12 years alone.

None of these fundamental trends is likely to change in the next generation and thus the California that the graduates of the Class of 2000 face is likely to be:

—a denser society, with well over 30 million people, perhaps as many as 33 million.

—a more culturally and demographically complex society, in which Anglos are likely to become a minority group within a few years.

—a more competitive society with expanding opportunities in managerial, technical, entrepreneurial, and professional fields at the upper end, expanding needs for low-skill service workers at the lower end, and relatively fewer middle-income opportunities; indeed, given the high school dropout rates among black and Hispanic youngsters, some experts are predicting a shortage of trained and trainable labor in California by about 2010.

—an older society; the over-65 age group is already California's fastest-growing population group, and the aging process will accelerate as the baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1965—move into middle age and beyond; but it is a phenomenon that is confined largely to the numerically stagnant Anglo population, because immigrants are for the most part young and have relatively high birth rates.

—a more frustrating society; average freeway speeds in Los Angeles are 35 miles per hour now,

and even if every highway project on the books is built, transportation experts say, speeds will decline to 19 mph by 2010.

—perhaps a more dangerous society, given such phenomena as escalating gang warfare in the inner cities and freeway frustration manifesting itself in random acts of violence.

—a more expensive society, especially when it comes to housing; home construction costs and market values are rising far faster than income, meaning that fewer and fewer Californians can afford to buy traditional single-family homes; when the Class of 2000 is ready to enter the home buying market, about 2010, only a few of them will be able to do so, and the vast majority will be compelled to settle for a rented apartment or, at best, a small condominium.

—a more sprawling society; the suburbs will continue to march outward from the central cities as job opportunities continue to spread outward and as Californians continue to search for that most elusive of commodities, the affordable home within commuting distance; already one-time farming communities such as Manteca and Turlock are becoming suburban enclaves, and as jobs become more prevalent in the San Fernando and Antelope valleys, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Bakersfield area will become home to commuters. —politically, a society that continues to edge rightward as the dominant Anglos (85 percent of the voters) continue to age and vote in a self-protective mode, but one in which the social tensions of the larger society are felt keenly.

And all of that is assuming that California does not have a big earthquake that wipes out everything.

It will be exciting.

CHS

A journalist and author, Dan Walters writes the state's only daily newspaper column devoted to California politics, appearing in The Sacramento Bee and more than 40 California newspapers. He has written extensively for other publications, such as Time, Wall Street Journal, and California Journal. In 1986, California Journal Press published his book, The New California: Facing the 21st Century. He is now writing a book about the California Legislature.



Suburb near Concord looking north from Mt. Diablo, with Suisun Bay at the top, 1984. In the 1970s and 1980s, new development occurred in places that used to be considered remote from cities. Population boomed in desert areas around Los Angeles, such as the Antelope Valley. In the northern San Joaquin Valley, Tracy, Manteca, and Modesto were transformed from farm towns into middle-class suburbs, with residents commuting by car into the San Francisco Bay metropolis. Concord and other northeast Bay Area suburbs spread eastward into the agricultural Delta region.
Photograph by Stephen Johnson



Pioneer Elementary School students doing the "Tinikiling," a dance from the Philippines, at "Marching On," the New Haven School District's annual musical extravaganza in the mid-1980s. The district, in Union City, is typical of California's increasingly ethnically diverse suburban school districts. By 1988, about 70 percent of its 11,500 students were from ethnic minority groups; 25 percent were Hispanic. Sixty languages other than English were spoken in the students' homes, and 15 percent of school children have limited English proficiency. In addition to celebrating the children's ethnic cultures in school programs and district-wide events such as "Marchin On," the New Haven School District, with much community support, offers classroom instruction in English as a second language, Spanish, and other languages. *Photograph by John McNamara*

UNIFORMITY OR DIVERSITY?

Recent Language Policy in California Public Education

by Ronald J. Schmidt

Few public issues generate stronger feelings than does language policy. People seem to care unusually deeply about which languages they speak and hear, and which languages are encouraged or discouraged by the state for use in both public and private discourse. Several years ago this fact was brought home in a tragic way when one young man waiting in line at a southern California fast food restaurant was shot to death by another because he refused to speak to his companion in English rather than in Spanish. While not usually so violent, the intensity of public feeling over language issues is clearly widespread and increasingly volatile for those making public policy for the state. The purpose of this paper is to assess in a systematic way the root issues and value conflicts that underlie battles over language policy in California.

Language policy has been an issue in California at least since the beginning of statehood. Just prior to statehood, of course, Spanish was the dominant language. The defeat of Mexico in the Mexican-American War, however, culminated in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), in which one-third of the defeated nation's territory, including California, was ceded to the United States. Our first state Constitution, adopted in 1850, provided for bilingual public discourse in both Spanish and English, guaranteeing the language rights of the recently annexed Mexican residents of the state. The state's second Constitution, enacted in 1879 following anti-Asian immigrant agitation by the San Francisco-based Workingmen's Party, however, removed the language rights of Spanish-speaking Californians and adopted the "neutral" silence of

the federal law on the question of an "official" language.¹

Following a period of relative quiescence, language policy has again become a "hot" issue in California during the past two decades, particularly with respect to bilingual education and so-called "bilingual ballots." Signifying the increased feeling about the issue, the state's voters in 1986 overwhelmingly adopted a constitutional amendment (Proposition 63 on the November ballot) making English the sole "official" language of the state. At the center of the lengthiest and most widespread public debate over language policy in California, the controversy over bilingual education reflects the central conflicts underlying language policy generally.

The Politics of Bilingual Education in California

Bilingual education re-emerged nationally as a policy issue in the early 1960s. In 1968, Congress adopted the Bilingual Education Act as an amendment (Title VII) to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The 1968 Act established a small demonstration program that was expanded and strengthened in 1974, following the landmark *Lau v. Nichols* U.S. Supreme Court decision of that year. In addition to the federal policy, by 1981 twenty-six states had adopted policies requiring or authorizing bilingual education for language minority students.²

California's first bilingual education laws were adopted in 1972 and 1973, sponsored by Assemblyman Peter Chacon (D-Coronado).³ Both bills established relatively small demonstration programs supporting local school district bilingual

programs. In 1976, the state's bilingual education program was substantially strengthened and revised with the passage of A.B. 1329, again under the leadership of Assemblyman Chacon. This law, also known as the Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act, provided the foundation for California's program for over ten years, and established the state's mandatory bilingual education program as one of the most stringent and comprehensive in the nation.⁴

In California, as elsewhere, the major impetus for enacting bilingual education policy came from growing recognition among educators and policymakers that the traditional "submersion" of language minority children in regular classrooms had not worked, and that large numbers of them experienced educational failure. Increased pressure from Latino political activists, along with statistics demonstrating continuing growth of the non-English speaking student population, led policymakers to recognize that something had to be done.

Another major stimulus was the *Lau v. Nichols* decision of 1974, cited above. In that decision on a class action suit on behalf of San Francisco's Chinese-speaking students, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that attempting to teach students in a language they cannot understand is a violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Later that year, in addi-

tion, Congress codified the Court's language in the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunities Act, Section 1703(f).⁵ Though neither the Court nor the 1974 legislation mandated bilingual education as *the* remedy, political forces and a consensus on the part of the educators involved at that time assured that it became the teaching method of choice for language minority children, both nationally and in California.

By the time of its expiration in 1987, California's mandatory bilingual education program was serving over 600,000 limited English proficient (LEP) students, constituting some 14 percent of the state's overall elementary and secondary enrollments. Statewide, almost 75 percent of LEP students were native Spanish-speakers, with the other one-quarter representing more than 85 languages.⁶ While this data shows the significant number of California children affected by bilingual education policy, equally striking is the rapid increase in numbers of these students since the inception of the program and projections for future increases. Thus, the number of LEP students in California more than tripled between 1973 and 1987.⁷ This astonishing increase is accounted for by the largest wave of immigration to the United States since the early 20th century, and by continuing relatively high birth rates, especially among Latinos. Moreover, there is every indication that these trends will continue in the future.

Student body of the all-Chinese school in San Francisco, ca. 1890. Ethnic diversity has been a hallmark of California society and culture since early settlement of the state. The problem of educating peoples of many languages and backgrounds is as old as the Spanish missions. For decades after statehood in the nineteenth century, the caucasian majority insisted that non-white children—Indian, black, and Asian—be excluded from the normal public schools and be required to attend their own segregated institutions. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, governmental action and lawsuits by minority parents gradually declared segregated schools to be illegal. *CHS Library, San Francisco*



Most stunning is the continued growth of the Latino population. A survey by the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that the U.S. Latino population increased by 34.4 percent from 1980 to 1988, a growth rate nearly five times greater than that of the rest of the population. This is especially significant for California because this state has by far the largest Latino population of any state (6.6 million, compared with 4.1 million in Texas, the next largest). Almost 34 percent of the nation's 19.4 million Latinos resided in California in 1988.⁸ In view of these demographic trends, it came as no surprise, then, that State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig announced at a press conference on September 6, 1988, that as of the 1988-89 school year, Anglos made up a minority of the state's 4.6 million public school students.⁹ Based on available population projections for California, it seems safe to assume that the educational needs of language minority students will continue to require the attention of the state's policymakers and educators well into the next century.

Despite, or more likely because of, this rapid increase in language minority students in California, the state's bilingual education policy has been the subject of intense political controversy almost since its inception. Only three years after the adoption of the far-reaching 1976 Chacon-Moscone bill, the program was subjected to a vigorous campaign to reduce its scope and requirements significantly. While the program escaped from its 1979 legislative battle relatively unscathed, it was subject to almost yearly attack thereafter.

With the controversy rising, and with the program due to "sunset" in 1987, the state legislature and governor set up a broadly representative, bipartisan state commission to seek a consensus on resolving the conflicts over this policy. The commission's 1986 report recommended that the program be continued, though with several relatively minor changes. A subsequent bill embodying the commission's recommendations, carried by Speaker Willie Brown, passed both houses of the legislature, but was vetoed by Governor Deukmejian, apparently under pressure from Republican legislators. With the sunset deadline rapidly approaching in 1987, the state commission again endorsed a similar bill sponsored by Speaker Brown, which was subsequently passed by the legislature, only to be vetoed again by the governor.

Thus, as of July 1, 1987, California no longer had a state law mandating bilingual education for its language minority students. While school districts must still adhere to State Department of Education guidelines interpreting the remaining federal and state mandates, they have considerably more

flexibility in educating language minority children and are no longer required to provide bilingual instruction *per se* to LEP students.¹⁰ A 1988 legislative effort to revive the policy was abandoned when it became clear that the governor would veto the measure a third time.¹¹ Most California school districts have continued their bilingual education programs, but the future of bilingualism in the state's schools is very uncertain.

Political Issues

Given its stormy history, it is not surprising that a complex set of political issues has surrounded the policy of bilingual education. Three issues seem most significant, and all are quite technical, at least on the surface. First, there was a protracted controversy over entrance and exit criteria for bilingual classes, with the program's supporters seeking criteria resulting in larger numbers of students in bilingual classes and opponents arguing for the opposite. The second major political issue involved credentialing criteria for teachers. Supporters of bilingual education sought strict enforcement of regulations that required qualified, i.e., certified, bilingual teachers. Opponents, citing school district claims that the supply of qualified teachers was woefully inadequate, persistently argued for a generous "waiver" program under which uncertified teachers were given six years in which to meet the requirements for full certification. Never resolved, this issue created strong pressure on policymakers to alter the pedagogical principles underlying the bilingual education program.

Closely related to these issues was an ongoing controversy over the pedagogical effectiveness of bilingual education. Beginning with a 1977 evaluation report prepared by the American Institutes of Research, bilingual education programs have been the subject of a protracted debate by educational researchers over the effectiveness of the program in providing genuine educational advancements for LEP students.¹² Not surprisingly, critics of the program cite evidence questioning its effectiveness,¹³ while supporters point to a wide array of studies demonstrating its worth.¹⁴ Even a 1987 finding by the U.S. General Accounting Office, disputing Reagan Administration claims that bilingual education programs had not been demonstrated to be successful, failed to quell the controversy.¹⁵

Native Language as the Central Issue

The debate on the three issues surveyed above has often been quite "technical" in nature. Central to each issue, however, has been the role of the LEP student's native language in



Bilingual teacher Frank Hernandez presents some lessons in both English and Spanish to second-grade students at Searles Elementary School, New Haven District. *Photograph by John McNamara*

the educational process. Nearly all bilingual education's supporters and detractors agree that a primary pedagogical goal for language minority students must be mastery of the English language. Similarly, virtually all of the program's critics have conceded that traditional "submersion" of LEP students in English-only classrooms would violate the Supreme Court's *Lau* decision and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and that some type of special program is therefore required for them. Where the two sides disagree again and again, however, is on the place of the students' native language in the educational program.

The significance of the student's native language in policy debates becomes even clearer when placed in the broader perspective of the evolution of language policy in the schools over the past two decades. That is, at a broader, more ideological level of debate, the controversy over bilingual education in the 1960s and 1970s centered on a tension between two versions of that pedagogical method: "transitional" bilingual education and "maintenance" bilingual education. The goal of "transitional" bilingual education is a student who will prosper in a monolingual English-speaking classroom; here students are taught "bilingually" only until they have

mastered English. Whether or not the student becomes a bilingual person is not the concern of the public schools. The "maintenance" version of bilingual education, on the other hand, has the goal of creating bilingual-bicultural students. Language minority students are to master the English language in this approach as well, but classroom instruction is designed to enable them to develop and maintain their native languages and cultures as an additional goal.

The "transitional" versus "maintenance" debate of the 1970s was closely linked to a larger national debate over "cultural assimilation" versus "cultural pluralism" in American society, as will be discussed below. The point here, however, is that as the terms of this debate came to the attention of policymakers and the larger public, bilingual education legislation increasingly was specific in its support only of the "transitional" version of the program. The 1980 amendments to California's bilingual education program, for example, specified that "the primary goal of all programs under this article is, as effectively and efficiently as possible, to develop in each child fluency in English," and the Act authorized only ". . . when necessary, academic instruction through the primary language."¹⁶

This refinement, however, failed to mollify critics of the use of non-English languages in the public schools. Based upon increased public resentment toward non-English languages and doubts about the effectiveness of bilingual programs, pressure began to build in the early 1980s to abandon bilingual instruction altogether or, at the very least, to allow school districts to "experiment" with other approaches. A favorite alternative touted by bilingual education's critics was "English immersion," modeled after highly successful "French immersion" programs for anglophone children in Quebec.¹⁷ Though experts continually pointed to basic differences between the language "minority" educational challenges in Quebec as compared to the United States, critics of bilingual education were persistent in their efforts to support greater "experimentation" with this method in California and in other states. Throughout the 1980s, defenders of bilingual education have fought a "rear-guard" struggle to maintain even minimal use of non-English languages in the education of language minority students in California's public school classrooms.

Language and the Minority Struggle for Equality

In order to appreciate the central importance of the native language to advocates of bilingualism, it is necessary to understand the frame of reference from which they typically view the conflict over language policy. The contemporary movement for bilingual education began in the 1960s in a larger political context, an assertive minority group struggle for equality in American society. By the time the federal Bilingual Education Act was adopted in 1968, more than ten years of the Civil Rights Movement had passed through the television screens and before the eyes of the American public. During those years, a steadily increasing political pressure was built for sweeping away the barriers to equality caused by racial discrimination in both private and public life.

Partly as a result of these movements for equality, there emerged a new appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity in American life. By the late sixties, many of the younger leaders of the movement for equality for black people had begun to question the sufficiency and moral worthiness of "integration" into white society as the primary goal of the movement.¹⁸ The slogans "black power" and "black is beautiful" symbolized this questioning and generated strong reactions in all quarters of American society.

Among other minority groups also seeking greater equality, e.g., Latinos, American Indians, and some Asian groups, language and culture came to occupy

a more central focus of attention than was true in the black movement. Latino activists, for example, recounted numerous instances in which primary school teachers had "anglicized" their names or in which they had been punished by school authorities for speaking Spanish to their playmates on the school grounds. School officials' denial of Hispanic identity was seen as a form of cultural and linguistic discrimination that had harmful consequences for the individuals affected. The conviction grew that the language, culture, and bronze skins of *la raza* must become sources of pride and strength if Chicanos and other Latinos were ever to achieve equality. The primary assumption of this perspective was that, in the Southwest at least, the Spanish language and the Chicano people and culture were more "native" to the region than English and the Anglo Saxon-based culture of "mainstream" America.

The calls for bilingual education in the public schools by Latinos and other minority group activists, then, emerged in the 1960s within a context in which the struggle for equality by American minority groups was increasingly seen as incompatible with the goal of "assimilation" into an "Anglo-conformist" culture and as requiring support for the alternative concept of "cultural pluralism."¹⁹ The apparent assumption of the public schools that culturally different students must "disappear" via the "melting pot" into the "mainstream" of American society was viewed in this context as *prima facie* evidence of discrimination and unequal treatment. Proponents of bilingualism pointed out that the United States had never been a monolingual, monocultural nation, and they argued that efforts by state agencies, such as public schools, to unify it through "forced" assimilation into the dominant culture amounted to nothing less than "cultural genocide." Many Latinos and other minority group activists wanted to be treated as full and equal members of American society without having to give up their linguistic and cultural identities.²⁰ As one participant in the debate over bilingual education in the 1970s put it: ". . . my ethnic culture is a part of this American culture."²¹

One of the most articulate advocates for bilingual education from this perspective has been Eduardo Hernandez-Chavez.²² Citing the discrimination and "structural inequality" minorities have suffered in this country, for example, he argues that ". . . the full and equal participation of language minorities in American society requires not that these groups try to become indistinguishable from the white majority, but rather that they strengthen themselves from within — culturally, socially, politically, and economically." Further, he argues, members of language minority groups have the right to define



A parent volunteer teaches students a Mexican dance, Searles Elementary School, New Haven District. Photograph by John McNamara

their own educational interests, and this entails their freedom to maintain distinctive linguistic and cultural ties. If this right were fully realized, "the goals of education would surely change from an emphasis on mainstreaming and assimilation to cultural pluralism and ethnolinguistic solidarity." It is important to emphasize here that Hernandez-Chavez, like virtually all other U.S. advocates of bilingualism in public school classrooms, does not argue that language minority students should not learn English. Rather, he insists that we should aim toward *bilingual* and *bicultural* students who would feel at home *both* in their ethnic communities and in the dominant Anglo-based language and culture.²³

In summary, then, preserving the native language is central to the aims of many proponents of bilingual education because it symbolizes for them the very essence of the drive for equality for linguistic and cultural minority groups in the United States. Denial by public institutions of the languages and cultures of these groups, several of which have older claims on this region than the majority culture, represents a public denial of their right to equal membership in the American polity. Aiming for a pluralistic conception of equality,

they view the right to retain and develop one's native language and culture as a fundamental civil and political right.²⁴

The Response of Critics

Some opponents of bilingual education, especially its "maintenance" version, have responded to these proposals by arguing that linguistic and cultural pluralism is incompatible with equality. In a 1976 editorial on bilingual education, for example, the *New York Times* warned against "a misguided linguistic separatism that, while it may seem to promise its advocates limited political and ideological power, can only have the effect of condemning to permanent economic and social disadvantage those who cut themselves off from the majority culture."²⁵ In this vein, many supporters of the "English immersion" alternative to bilingual education have argued that classroom time spent on languages other than English can only hinder the English language educational development of language minority students.

This common-sense argument is based on at least two important assumptions. *First*, ignoring the emphasis placed by bilingual education's supporters

on bilingualism and biculturalism, it assumes that educational development in native language *takes away from*, rather than adds to, the student's educational development in a second language (English in this case). That is, the argument begins from the assumption that bilingualism and biculturalism are not really possible, and that the development of one language necessarily creates a deficiency in the other. This being the case, the *second* assumption of the critics is that development of a language other than English by the public schools is really aimed at linguistic and cultural "separatism" on behalf of minority communities. Proponents of bilingual education, accordingly, are accused of seeking to push our society toward the linguistic "divisiveness" of countries such as Canada, Belgium, and Spain. Based upon these two crucial assumptions, the debate is shifted onto an entirely different footing by the most vociferous opponents of bilingual education, away from an issue of equality and toward an issue of social unity.

Ethnicity, Language and the Fragility of Social Unity

While the spark that ignites the emotions of bilingualism's supporters is discrimination against minorities and its resultant inequality, the emotionally intense feelings against language diversity seem to be set off most surely by the fear of disharmony and social conflict. Thus, the same New York *Times* editorial cited above warned that "the disconcerting strength gathered by separatism in Canada contains a lesson for the United States and its approach to bilingual education." And that lesson, the *Times* concluded, was

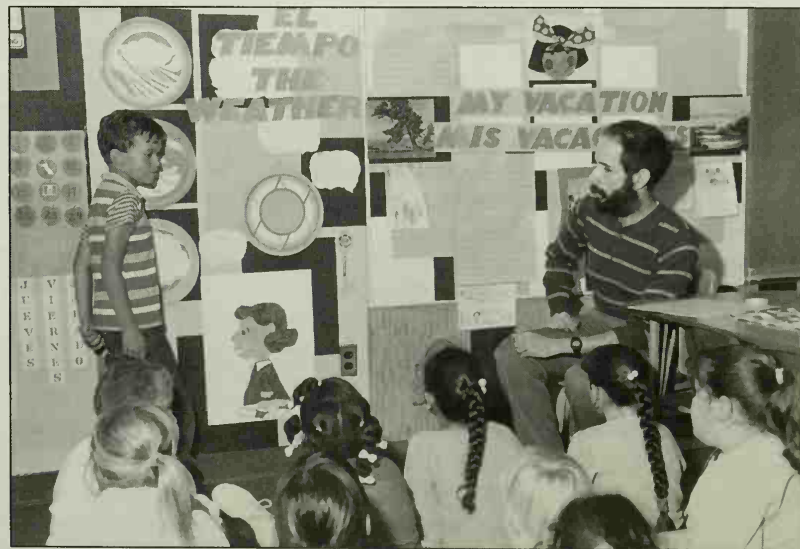
that trying to make "Spanish-speaking enclaves" permanent "points the road to cultural, economic and political divisiveness."²⁶ A similar point, more hysterical in tone, was made by Tom Bethell in a 1979 *Harper's* article: "Bilingual education is an idea that appeals . . . to those who never did think that another idea, the United States of America, was a particularly good one to begin with, and that the sooner it is restored to its component 'ethnic' parts the better off we shall all be."²⁷

This theme of the incompatibility of publicly supported bilingualism with national unity has been the central argument of the "Official English" movement as well. The 1986 state ballot argument in favor of California's Proposition 63, making English the "official" language of the state, for example, read in part:

The State of California stands at a crossroads. It can move toward fears and tensions of language rivalries and ethnic distrust. Or it can reverse that trend and strengthen our common bond, the English language. . . .

Our American heritage is now threatened by language conflicts and ethnic separatism. Today, there is a serious erosion of English as our common bond. This amendment reaffirms California's oneness as a state, and as one of fifty states united by a common tongue. . . .²⁸

Assemblyman Frank Hill (R-Whittier), one of the leading sponsors of Proposition 63, pointedly vowed to make the elimination of bilingual education a prime goal for implementation of the amendment following its passage.²⁹ And less than one year after Proposition 63 was passed by California voters, of course, the Chacon-Moscone law was allowed to "sunset."



Bilingual teacher Frank Hernandez and class, Searles Elementary School, New Haven School District. Photograph by John McNamara

Is there a way to work through these emotionally-charged and deeply divided views toward a consensus among the most engaged participants in the debate over language policy? While it is certainly not possible to allay all fears or to assuage all hurts, we may at least focus clearly on the questions that remain to be resolved. A good place to begin is to recall the points of agreement between the two sides in the debate over bilingual education. As noted above, both proponents and opponents of bilingual education agree that legally, if not morally, special educational efforts are required on behalf of language minority students in order to meet the requirements of the *Lau* decision and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. Second, both proponents and opponents agree that mastery of the English language must be a primary goal of education for language minority children. The large question still unresolved is the appropriate role of the student's native language in the educational process and, more generally, in public life.

Is there a resolution to this question? With respect to language minority education, there is increasing evidence pointing toward a common solution for all sides. That is, all persons in the state of California have a common interest in the educational success of language minority students. California's economy has remained vibrant and healthy in no small part because of its increasing technical innovation and sophistication, and because the state has remained committed to the public support of an educated workforce capable of continuing that economic growth.³⁰ Given this need for an educated workforce, and given the historical patterns of disproportionate educational failure of minority students in the public schools, all sides in the debate over language policy must surely agree that the changing demographic composition of the state represents a severe challenge to the public schools for the foreseeable future.

A further economic reason for common concern over the educational success of language minority students lies in another demographic phenomenon, the relatively high immigration and birth rates among Latinos and the dramatically extended life expectancies of the entire population. This demographic trend means that within a short period of time a disproportionately Latino, "young" population will be asked to support a disproportionately Anglo, "aging" population throughout the country, especially in California.³¹ Thus, the economic success of today's Latino students will translate directly into tomorrow's economic security for our entire population. If for no other reason, all Cali-

fornians share a common economic interest in the educational success of language minority students.

With that thought in mind, let us return to the crucial assumption made by opponents of bilingual education: that bilingualism and biculturalism are really not possible and that, therefore, education in the student's native language detracts from, rather than adds to, mastery of English as a second language. Kenji Hakuta has recently traced the intellectual history of the belief that bilingualism is not compatible with high levels of intellectual accomplishment, and has marshalled the basic research which seems clearly to establish the fallacy of that belief.³² Indeed, Hakuta cites elaborate evidence indicating that, in some respects, bilingual individuals exhibit *higher* levels of intellectual competence than do monolingual persons. In other words, the research indicates that it is those who speak *only* English or *only* Spanish, for example, who are intellectually "behind" their potential, not those who speak both languages.

Of equal significance to the debate, recent research reported by linguist James Cummins suggests that *building upon*, rather than supplanting, the native language of LEP students may be the *only* way to increase the effectiveness of educational programs designed for them.³³ In what he terms the "interdependence principle" Cummins writes that if students have not reached a certain "threshold" of competence in their first language (L1), efforts to teach them in a second language (L2) will be less successful than if they had reached that threshold.³⁴ This is especially true, Cummins has shown, for members of "caste-like" subordinate groups in the society, whose languages and cultures are generally "devalued" by dominant groups.³⁵ Thus, maintenance and further development of native language skills may be necessary to enable language minority students to have an equal opportunity for academic success generally in the public schools, quite apart from the emotionally loaded question of assimilation versus cultural pluralism. Indirectly supporting this analysis, there is a large body of social and behavioral science research literature which identifies self-esteem as a crucial factor for both emotional and physical well-being, and shows it to be a critical variable in academic success. Bilingual education, then, need not be seen primarily as a self-serving program for minority teachers and ideologues. Rather, it may well be necessary for the future well-being of all segments of the state's population.

Despite this apparently "neat" solution to the underlying value conflicts between proponents and opponents of bilingual education, however, there is little likelihood that these protagonists will soon agree to public financing of "maintenance" bilingual



In California schools, minority children are introduced to American folk culture. New Haven District first and second graders performed the "Virginia Reel," at the "Marching On" musical program, ca. 1987. Photograph by John McNamara

education programs as mandated by the state of California. A major stumbling block here is that this solution does little to mollify apparently widespread public fears among the dwindling Anglo majority that "foreign" languages and cultures have "invaded" the state on a massive scale, and that this "invasion" portends "separatism," "divisiveness," and social disintegration. Expressions of these fears in newspapers, by elected officials, and in voter-backed initiatives, can only continue to feed minority group fears of Anglo hostility, racism, and discrimination, thereby stimulating the very divisiveness feared by its perpetrators.

The melding of ethnic and linguistic diversity into a cohesive society of equals is never going to be an easy task. To my knowledge, no other society on earth has ever attempted such an enterprise on this scale. Given the high immigration rate into California, it is clear that we must launch a major effort to integrate these newcomers into our society, economy, and polity. The linguistically and culturally diverse newcomers to California, including both school children and their parents, must be encouraged to become "Americans," and the public schools have a major role to play in this activity.

In saying this, however, my ultimate point is that we should not mistake *uniformity* for *unity* in defining the meaning of the evolving "American" identity. This is an old mistake and deceptively convenient under conditions of change. While every political community needs common values and practices to bring it together and focus the attention of its members on their shared interests and

destiny, this need for unity should not be interpreted to mean an absence of diversity or conflict. To the contrary, the absence of diversity and conflict signifies the absence of a genuinely *political* community, as the record of totalitarian states makes clear.

Based on the historical record and the political demands of *American* racial and cultural groups, there is little reason to fear the growth of "separatist" political movements among them. Indeed, if those in the majority culture could gain the security to see our state's linguistic and cultural diversity as a valuable resource, there are grounds for believing that policies designed to preserve that diversity would strengthen the unity and legitimacy of our political community. By including linguistic and cultural minority communities in our definition of the political community, and by including the members of those communities in the political processes by which public policies are made, we strengthen the bonds by which we are held together as a nation. CHS

See notes beginning on page 262.

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AMERICAN DREAM?

Changing Earning Opportunities and Prospects of Middle-Class Californians, 1967-1987

by Nancey Green Leigh

Introduction

The search for the middle-class American dream has attracted a continuous stream of immigrants to California, a stream that shows no signs of abating. The exact character of that dream is nowhere precisely defined, though the image of its modern variant was presented with great effect by Hollywood television shows from the 1950s and 1960s such as "Ozzie and Harriet." Any adequate definition of the middle-class ideal would have to be a continually revised definition that reflects the development of new ways of life, new goods and services, as well as relative changes in the prices of goods and services consumed within a middle standard of living. At the present time, we could say roughly in quantitative terms, that this standard includes "such material goods as a single-family home, one or two cars (including a new one), a washing machine and dryer, a dishwasher, a color TV, raising and educating children, [and the provision for] a lengthy period of retirement."¹

Today, in California and across the nation, there is increasing concern that the middle-class dream is less and less attainable for working people. In fact, some of the greatest recent policy concerns have arisen over what is seen as the growing inability of the "Ozzie and Harriet" household (a mar-

ried couple with children and one breadwinner) to attain a middle-class standard of living. Historically, the assumption that the earnings of one full-time worker, through his or her earnings and labor achievement, could purchase a middle standard of living for the worker's household has been an assumed feature of the middle-class dream. By focusing in this paper on the changing experience of the California full-time worker between 1967 and 1987, we shall demonstrate how this assumption has become increasingly unrealistic and the promise of the middle-class living less attainable for a growing number of California's hard-working dreamers.

Because of the state's relative standing in the nation, changes in California's economy and earnings distribution provide essential input to the national debate about the disappearing middle-income group. California is the nation's largest state, accounting for more than 11 percent of the entire population in 1987. During the 1980s, population grew twice as fast as the national average. The percent of this growth that is due to net immigration is four times higher than the average across the nation.² The state's population is, arguably, the most diverse in the country. In California, aggregate ethnic minorities will soon constitute the majority.

California's economy is also the most productive in the country and, in fact, contributes even a larger share to the gross national product (nearly



Since the nineteenth century, the ideal of American middle-class life has included a single-family home, such as this one in San Jose in the 1960s. In the last two decades, that ideal has become threatened from many sides. *CHS Library, San Francisco*

13 percent) than it does to the nation's population.³ Indeed, California has been called a *nation-state* and one of the largest industrial economies in the world. This economy has always been on the leading edge of post-war industrialism. "High technology" originated in California's Silicon Valley. Not unrelated, the defense industry has always had a strong presence in the state, a presence that firmly established itself with the ship and aircraft industries of World War II.

From its combination of population and economic growth and new cultural styles, California

has projected to the rest of the nation and the world

potent images of high technology and innovation in products, work, and lifestyle that have captured the imaginations of policy makers and ordinary people alike. . . . The image of the good life holds enormous power to attract migrants from both rich and poor countries, as well as from other regions of the U.S. . . .⁴

In their study of the state's economic transformation, Michael Teitz and Philip Shapira go on to observe that while "California seems teflon-like in

its ability to ride out even such storms as the twin recessions of 1979-1982 . . . [its] aggregate growth conceals great turbulence."⁵ The familiar glossy picture of California prosperity hides the effects of massive recent deindustrialization, with high levels of plant closures and worker layoffs. This picture also hides the fact that California's economy has become increasingly vulnerable to national and international economic uncertainties and to political turmoil.

How have "growth and turbulence" in California's population and economic structure affected the labor force, its earning opportunities, and its ability to attain a middle standard of living? To answer these questions, it is useful to look at data from the Current Population Survey.⁶ Specifically, we shall look at the distribution of earnings within California during the last two decades and at changing earnings patterns for full-time and part-time workers. We will also focus on changes in the levels of educational attainment and in the broad industry groups that employ California's workers. We will conclude by relating changes in earnings to changes in fringe benefits and the cost of homeownership.

The principal findings of this study can be summarized as follows. During the last two decades, two significant trends have emerged for Califor-

nia's workers in their quest for the middle-class dream. Consideration only of earnings patterns reveals first, that California's full-time workers have done well over the last twenty years, and that the major costs of economic growth and turbulence have fallen on part-time workers. However, when we also consider two important consumption items associated with the middle-class standard of living—fringe benefits and homeownership—we discover a second trend in which full-time workers in the state are also facing great difficulty.

Change in the Earnings Patterns of California's Labor Force, 1967 and 1987

Over the last twenty years, more than 5.6 million workers have been added to the California economy. The state's workers have consistently earned more than those in the nation as a whole.⁷ When the state's full-time workers are divided into low-, middle-, and upper-earner groups, we find for the late 1960s, that the percentage who were low and middle earners was less than that nationwide, but that the percentage who were upper earners (37 percent) was 12 percent greater than the national figure. At that time, more so than in the rest of the nation, California's workers were concentrated in higher-paying jobs.

The prosperity of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s resulted in phenomenal expansion of residential districts. As suburban sprawl continued, it collided with earlier agricultural developments. Sprouting along the paths of extending freeways, tracts of detached, spacious, middle-class homes encroached on farmland in Orange County and the San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys in southern California and, as shown here in 1959, in the new Alameda County city of Fremont. *Courtesy California Department of Transportation*



Over the next two decades, California's distribution of low, middle, and upper earners changed very little, while the national distribution came to look much more like California's had been in the 1960s. As a result, although California's full-time workers are still in a superior earning position compared to the rest of the country, their relative advantage is slipping as their earnings distribution has not experienced the national upward shift.

The major issue here is not, however, that the national earnings distribution has come to look more like California's. It is, rather, that there has been a divergence between California and much of the nation in the ability of workers to purchase the middle standard of living. In this trend, which we will discuss shortly, the rest of the nation has attained a superior position to California's. In addition, part-time workers in California present a different and bleaker earnings pattern from that sketched above. The majority of part-time workers have always been low earners. Part-time workers today are, however, becoming polarized: over the last two decades, they have shifted from the middle group, their historic position, into the low- and upper-earner groups.

In general, it appears that the part-time workers' position in the state's labor market is eroding. The expansion of the low-earner segment of the working force is one indicator of this erosion. The other indicator is found in a comparison of median earnings of part-time workers. Again using the nation as a reference point, little change occurred over the last decade in the ratio of median earnings for California's part-time workers to the entire nation (the figure was 38 percent in 1977, and 37 percent in 1987). Significant changes did occur, however, among different demographic groups within the part-time labor force. Specifically, and depending on the part-time workers' ethnicity, California males' earnings dropped 8-9 percent, while females' earnings increased 1-4 percent.

In contrast, the median earnings figure for California's full-time workers was 45 percent higher than that for the nation in 1977. By 1987, that figure had increased to 64 percent. Full-time white males' median earnings, which were 75 percent higher than those of the national median, grew to over one hundred percent higher during that period. California's full-time women workers have done well, although they still lag considerably behind males. In 1977, their median earnings figure was basically the same as that for the nation. Ten years later, the median earnings for full-time women in California had risen to 30 percent higher than those of the nation's.

Among California's workers, we find that full-time earners in the state have high levels of postsecondary education relative to other large states such as New York, Illinois, and Texas. A much larger proportion of California earners have some college education, though not necessarily a bachelor's degree. In the last two decades, however, the earning potential of uneducated workers eroded significantly. Between 1967 and 1987, the earnings distribution for California's full-time workers who did not have high school degrees dramatically shifted downwards. Twenty-three percent of this group were upper earners in 1967, compared to only 9 percent in 1987. In contrast, the percentage of uneducated workers who are low earners has increased from 7 percent to almost 14 percent. The earnings distribution of full-time earners with bachelor degrees has also shifted downwards substantially. Sixty-five percent of college graduates were upper earners in 1967, compared to 55 percent in 1987. California's full-time earners with postgraduate training have the highest levels of earnings; nearly three-quarters are in the upper earner group.

For California's full-time and part-time earners alike, the shifts in levels of educational attainment have been paralleled over the last decade by shifts in earnings distributions. For example, full-time workers employed in the broad social infrastructure sector (health, education, social services, and government) have seen upward shifts in both earnings distribution and levels of educational attainment. The same trend has occurred for transportation and trade workers. In contrast, workers in natural resources, construction, and traditional manufacturing have experienced downwards trends in earnings distributions and education levels. Among part-time workers, a decline in the level of educational attainment of workers in the largest employing sector, transportation and trade, has accompanied a downward shift in its earnings distribution. Part-time workers in the social infrastructure sector, on the other hand, show the opposite trend. Their already high levels of educational attainment have increased further; and a growing percentage of their ranks are upper earners.

The trends of the last decade in California appear to bolster a prediction made for the nation that: "Inequality in education may well become the most significant source of wage inequality."⁸ In general, full-time workers' levels of educational attainment have increased significantly and so have their

earnings. Part-time workers' overall levels of educational attainment have improved somewhat, but not in all sectors. Further, the percentage of part-time workers without high school degrees is twice as high as that for full-time workers, and the part-time earnings distribution has actually shifted downwards.

In the future, levels of education attainment will have an even greater role in determining individual economic status. Projections indicate that the share of total employment held by occupations requiring the highest education levels will increase through the end of this century, while the share for occupations requiring the least amount of education will decline. The three major occupational groups whose workers have the highest educational attainment (including executive, administrative and managerial workers, professional workers, and technical and related support workers) are expected to continue to grow faster than average. In contrast, occupations requiring low levels of education, such as administrative support workers, farming, forestry and fishery workers, laborers, and manufacturing operators and fabricators, are expected to grow slowly or actually decline in numbers. This downward projection stems from such continuing trends as office and factory automation, as well as from increasing preference among American consumers for imported, rather than domestic, products.⁹

In general, blacks and Hispanics account for a greater proportion of persons employed in those occupations with unfavorable growth rates. These are the same occupations with the lowest education requirements. At the same time, blacks and Hispanics are under-represented in the occupations projected to grow the fastest and which require the greatest amount of education. The implication for California policy-makers is that attention must be given to helping its economically disadvantaged minorities increase their levels of educational attainment so that they can pursue the most favorable job opportunities. If their levels of educational attainment are not raised, the primary source of employment for disadvantaged minorities will be increasingly in the service worker group.

California Workers' Ability to Attain a Middle Standard of Living

On the surface, the earnings data for California's full-time workers indicate that they have a high or upward-skewed distribution of earnings. But when we look beyond earn-

ings, first to how workers' pensions and health care are provided for, and second to the ability of earnings to purchase housing, it quickly becomes evident that California's full-time workers have fallen into a much inferior position relative to the rest of the nation.

First, California's workers, both full-time and part-time, have experienced across the board declines in the pensions and health benefits during the 1980s.¹⁰ The biggest declines have occurred in the percentage of full-time workers who are included in employer group health plans. These declines have occurred in all three earnings groups. However, lower earners—those who can least afford to pay for health coverage themselves—have experienced the greatest drops.¹¹

Second, even though benefit levels are dropping generally in California, it might appear that, since 37 percent of the state's full-time workers are upper earners compared to 30 percent nationwide, these workers would have relatively less difficulty purchasing a house than people elsewhere in the nation. To the contrary, the housing affordability index for the state in May of 1989 was close to one third that of the nation overall, declining from a figure of one-half that of the nation's only six months earlier. In December of 1988, 23 percent of California households had the annual income needed to purchase the median-priced single-family home in the state, compared to 47 percent nationwide.¹² By May of 1989, only 15 percent of California households had the annual income needed to purchase the median home, compared to 44 percent nationwide.¹³ The sales price of this median-priced California home was nearly \$202,000, compared to \$93,000 nationwide. In the largest urban centers of the state, the inability of full-time workers to purchase homes has become an even more extreme problem. For example, the housing affordability index for the San Francisco metropolitan area was 9 percent, with the median-priced home close to \$268,000. As a result, the minimum household income needed to qualify for the May 1989 median-priced home exceeded \$90,000 in the San Francisco area, and \$68,000 in the state of California as a whole.¹⁴

Conclusion and Implications for California's Policy Makers

Ironically, California's sustained high levels of population and economic growth appear to have made the middle-class dream increasingly less attainable. Spiraling housing costs around the state



Apartments, San Francisco, 1980. Declining affordability is not the only pressure on middle-class housing ideals. Congestion and rising land values have squeezed building space. Townhouses, condominiums, and apartments have become much more common for many middle-class families, replacing the sprawling homes on large lots. *Photograph by Stephen Johnson*

reflect a housing supply insufficient to meet the demands of the growing population. The Bay Area Economic Forum, made up of a cross section of government, business, labor, and higher education leaders in the San Francisco region, has noted:

The skyrocketing cost of housing—especially housing close to employment centers—has driven up wages, and made it more difficult to recruit and transfer employees in all but the high compensation brackets.¹⁵

Regional government officials and policy-makers, as well as the business leaders, are worried that the state's high housing costs could well trigger an economic decline, as workers will be either unable or unwilling to live in high cost areas, and employers will have to relocate to find labor.

Workers suffer further burdens because the high wages they must demand, in a relatively futile effort as individual earners to keep up with hous-

ing costs, forces employers to look for other ways to reduce labor costs, such as reducing fringe benefits. It is true, of course, that the increasing number of households with more than one earner has allowed homeownership levels to remain high in California. This should still be viewed, however, as an indicator of deteriorating quality of life and decreasing ability to attain the middle standard of living. Households whose homeownership is based on the earnings of more than one worker face lower financial security, in that mortgage payments require more than one earner's income. Thus, the earnings of one household member can not be substituted for another's in the event that one member becomes unemployed. In the case of families with children, the dual-earner households also face greater childrearing expenses.

The trends over the last two decades lead us to conclude that Californians' prospects for attaining

and retaining a middle standard of living are diminishing. Furthermore, if California's role as the forerunner and, indeed, setter of national trends continues, national prospects for attaining and retaining the middle-class standard of living are less than encouraging.

What kinds of policy and planning intervention within California might improve the people's prospects for attaining, or even retaining, a middle-class living standard? To begin with, in terms of homeownership, the solution lies less in changes in the labor market than in changes in the housing market. We have seen that the earnings distribution for California's full-time earners has continued to shift upwards. At the same time, however, the purchasing power of their earnings has dramatically fallen. Why have increases in the costs of homeownership in the state far outpaced increases in earnings levels? To gain a more complete understanding of what can be done to prevent further erosion of the state's standard of living, we need to be able to provide clear-cut answers to this question and to implement policies that will contain skyrocketing housing costs.

The division of responsibilities at federal, state, and local levels of government in this country suggests that it is at the local level that ameliorative policies would have to be implemented. Therefore, research and greater local recognition in California of issues such as influences of the state's changing demographic structure on housing demand, and of the growing discrepancies between the cost of new housing and wages of new jobs created in specific localities (the jobs/housing imbalance), is needed. With regard to changing demographics, we need to determine to what extent dual-earner households are a response to rising house prices, and to what extent rising house prices are a function of dual-earners' income raising the level at which the housing market tops out. Further, how much has the demand for housing by the baby boomers driven up housing prices? In addition, what proportion of rising housing prices can be attributed to exclusionary zoning and planning practices of California communities trying to protect their quality of life and financial investments? Finally, how far have these practices gone to price out smaller, lower-income, and/or nontraditional households?

The response of adding more earners to a household to maintain standard of living can only go so far. Further real rises in the state's housing prices will eventually price out even dual-earner households. Those dual-earner households who are raising children face tremendous additional burdens.

Recognition of these problems and the strengthening of public/private partnerships to ease the burdens of the state's working parents, the group that is also producing California's future labor force, will improve prospects for present and long-run economic development and quality of life.

Inequality in education appears increasingly to be the source of earnings inequality. Historically, education has been funded at the local level. However, as the case of California illustrates all too clearly, property tax revolts, as embodied in the passage of Proposition Thirteen, can severely affect school systems. Ultimately, these revolts are economically self-destructive. Wealthy communities within the state have been quite successful raising private funds or passing special bond issues to supplement their inadequate public school budgets, while the mass of California's children in the poor districts are being inadequately prepared for the labor force. Unless corrective efforts are made, a very large proportion of today's school-age population may be relegated to permanent, marginal economical status, becoming drags on California's future prosperity.

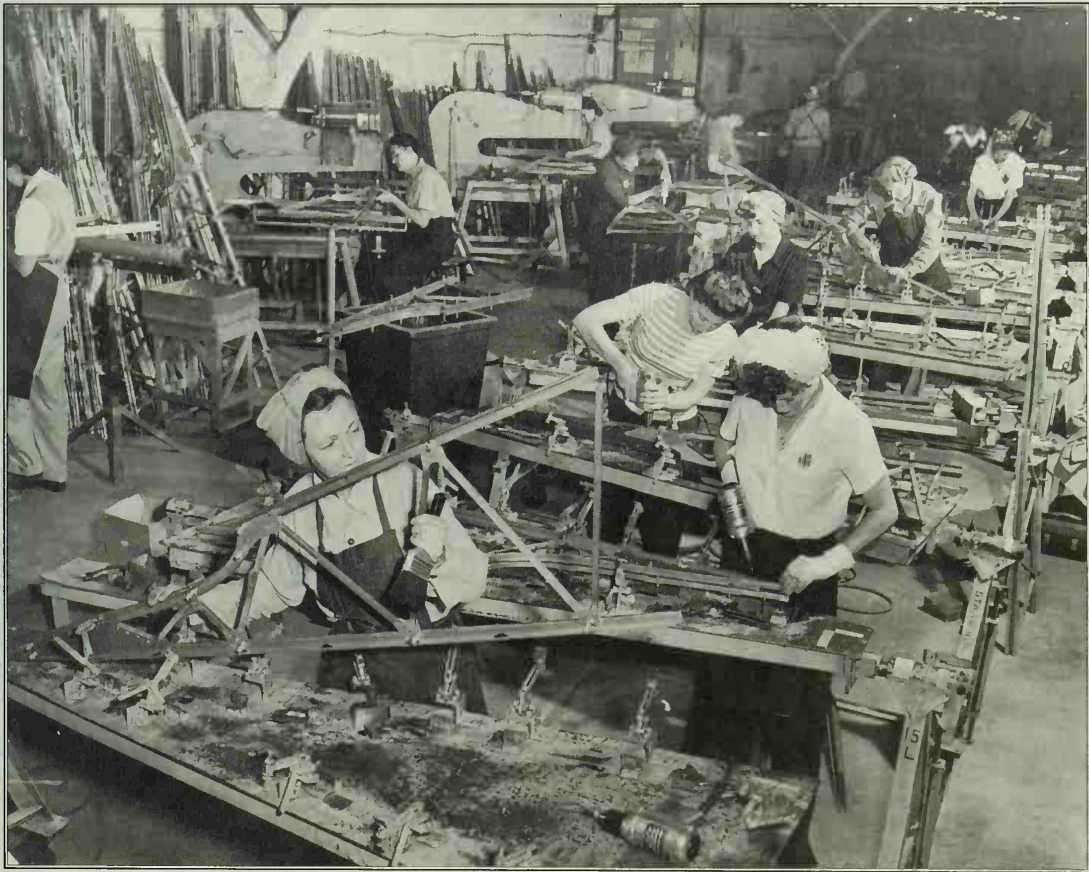
The preceding discussion on needed areas of policy attention for protecting the state's standard of living does not deal with the distribution of earnings per se. However, policy concern is warranted for the directly-related area of fringe-benefit compensation. The reductions in California workers' levels of "unearned" compensation, in the forms of health insurance and pension benefits, do not bode well for the security of the standard of living they have achieved. Taking away these paid benefits is tantamount to reducing salaries. In the case of health insurance, extreme increases in premiums over the last few years are difficult for any one worker (and, granted, many employers) to plan for. Employers feel a profit squeeze, workers an income squeeze; and workers unable to keep up with rising out of pocket premiums are placed in precarious positions in the event of catastrophic illnesses. Perhaps the solution to this particular threat to a middle standard of living can be found only at the national level, through extending the public sector's role in ensuring that all members of society are adequately covered. As the nation's most populated state, however, California should certainly be expected to play an important role in working out this solution.

The promise of attaining the middle-class life has historically been a strong factor drawing working people to California. That this standard of living is increasingly less attainable for growing numbers of California's hardworking dreamers is a phenomena

that deserves leaders' careful attention and response. It has profound implications for the state's future social and economic development. CHS

See notes beginning on page 263.

Nancey Green Leigh completed a dissertation entitled "National and Regional Change in the Earnings Distribution: What is Happening to the Middle?" while earning her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. She is an assistant professor in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. This paper is based on work supported by the National Science Foundation under award SES-8708096. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



These World War II southern California women worked in aircraft plants in part because men were in the army. Four decades later, the granddaughters of this generation work along with their husbands merely to retain a middle-class income for their families. *Los Angeles Public Library*



Maxine Hong Kingston. *Photo courtesy Earll Kingston*

Mah-Jongg:

A radio play based on the novel *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book**

by Maxine Hong Kingston
Radio adaptation by Earll Kingston

Introduction by Earll Kingston

Mah-Jongg, is an adaptation for radio based on chapter five, "The Song of Ruby Long Legs and Zeppelin," from *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* by Maxine Hong Kingston. Mah-Jongg, was performed in workshop at Eureka Theatre in November 1988 and at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento in February 1989 as part of the first "Envisioning California" conference. This is its first publication.

I undertook the adaptation as a member of California on Stage, a group of writers and historians who, through a process of research, readings, and workshops, are dedicated to bringing alive in new works for stage and radio the richness of California history.

Set in the 1960s, this play provides glimpses of Chinese American life, specifically the intergenerational affection and tension between older people who grew up in Chinatowns and their more assimilated children; the characteristic blend of Chinese and English used by the older generation; and the world of Asian American show business that evolved in Chinatowns.

My special thanks go to Ken Grantham and Donna Breed for their assistance and inspiration.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

WITTMAN AH SING	early 20s; American accent
TANYA DE WEESE	early 20s; American accent
RUBY AH SING, Wittman's mother	Chinese immigrant accent
The Aunties:	
BESSIE	soft voice, older-sounding
MAYDENE	very cold voice
MABEL	raucous, sexy
LILAH	low, seductive voice
DOLLY	sweet and caring

NIGHT-CLUB MC, doubles as NEWSCASTER

* © 1988, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

[Hum of car on highway; car interior. Up to establish and hold under dialogue.]

[Sound of car radio: newscast]

NEWSCASTER [on car radio]: President Johnson has authorized the deployment of an additional 50,000 troops in response to—

[Radio switches off.]

TANYA: Wittman? Wittman?

WITTMAN: Hmmm?

TANYA: Were you asleep?

WITTMAN: No, just thinking . . . about you.

TANYA: Oh. [Pause] Well?

[Spacey music interior theme. Up to establish and hold under monologue.]

WITTMAN: [Interior] Lover, love, I love you, love at first sight. Go ahead. Say it. Right out loud. No "uhs" or "you knows" or coughs or conditionals. Just, "Tanya, I love you."

[Interior music out.]

TANYA: Well? What are you thinking?

WITTMAN: Are we legal?

TANYA: [Puzzled] What?

WITTMAN: Did you know Gabe was going to up there at Coit Tower at nine o'clock in the morning?

TANYA: No, I didn't. Honestly.

WITTMAN: Are you sure it's legal? He's a real minister? We're really married?

TANYA: Definitely. He's with the Universal Life Church. Haven't you ever seen their ad in the *Berkeley Barb*?

WITTMAN: I guess so.

TANYA: He's perfectly legal and so are we. [Remembering] "I plight thee my troth."

WITTMAN: Those tourists thought it was a movie. They kept looking around for the camera.

TANYA: Did you see that big guy in the "Cornhuskers" t-shirt? He had tears in his eyes.

WITTMAN: You mean when you were plighting? Just then I was looking at the tears in your eyes.

TANYA: Tears of relief, Wittman. The deferment for married guys is going to stop any day now. I saved you from the draft, lover . . . [beat] . . . I love you, Wittman.

WITTMAN: [beat] Take "Downtown Sacramento," here.

TANYA: Look. We're almost there. I'm getting a little nervous. In just a few minutes I'm going to meet your parents. Aren't you going to tell me anything about them? For example, they speak English, don't they?

WITTMAN: Yes, and Chinese too. Now my father, Zeppelin . . .

TANYA: Who?

WITTMAN: Zeppelin.

TANYA: [Laughing] Like in dirigible?

WITTMAN: Don't laugh. It's a perfectly respectable Chinese given name: Bradford, Stanford, Worldster, Zeppelin. Trochaic, heroic, presidential, solid. Zep, though, was never too solid. He never stuck with anything for long. A war vet, a gambler, gold prospector, cook. He publishes his own newsletter. Used to work backstage at my mother's shows. Now, he does a lot of fishing. Watches "American Bandstand" with the sound off.

TANYA: What's that—your mother's shows?

WITTMAN: Yeah. Ruby, my mother, used to be a showgirl. She was in the line behind Toyette Mar at Forbidden City in Chinatown. That's where she met my father. He was working his way up from Stage Door Johnny to Back Stage Electrician. One look at Mom and he was wired. Don't worry, she'll have the scrapbook in your face before we're in the door. Turn left at the next light.

[Car slows, turns, accelerates. Hold under.]

WITTMAN: [Starts coughing.]

TANYA: Are you all right? [She pats him on back.]

WITTMAN: I'm OK. I always cough when I get near home.

TANYA: It gets me in the stomach. Half a bottle of Kaopectate and I'm ready to see my mother. [Pause.] I'm starting to feel that way now.

WITTMAN: You'll be fine. Turn left here.

[Engine slows.]

WITTMAN: [Coughs.] Pull in behind that green VW.

[Engine slows to idle, turns off.]

[Bird song. Children playing; up to establish, then hold under dialogue (car windows are open).]

TANYA: Wittman, I feel a little . . .

WITTMAN: Don't worry, my father likes blondes. I'll handle my mother.

TANYA: Which house is it?

WITTMAN: The white stucco, across the street, with the green awning.

TANYA: The one with the new Coupe de Ville in the driveway?

WITTMAN: What? Oh, no!

TANYA: And there's another one in front, and . . .

WITTMAN: Christ!

TANYA: . . . another one over there. What is it?

WITTMAN: I screwed up. It's the mah-jongg party. Every week for the last 20 years, mah-jongg. My mother and all her ex-chorus girl cronies, sitting around this big table. My father cuts out. He can't stand it. I don't blame him. I grew up with mah-jongg and I still don't know how to play it and I don't want to learn. [*Intensely.*] Women who don't have anything better to do but sit around all day playing mah-jongg, waiting to die. Their lives are over.

TANYA: [*Nervously.*] Maybe we should come back another time.

WITTMAN: No, come on, let's go. You're going to do great.

[*Car doors opening, closing. Feet on walk. Street sounds (as above) up.*]

[*Interior theme; cross-fade with street sounds; up to establish and hold under monologue.*]

WITTMAN: [*Interior.*] I should have sent a postcard: "Hi, folks. Met her on Saturday, married

her on Monday. More later. Love." My mother's bad enough by herself. Now we have to run the gantlet through the whole damn chorus line. "Always do the harder thing." Right? Wrong. Okay, remember what Gary Snyder said. He went to Japan to meditate for years. Now he can spend five minutes in the same room with his mother. Beat his record. O King of Monkeys, help me in this land of women.

[*Interior theme cross fade to:*]

[*Sound of mah-jongg tiles, lots of ladies' voices come up (room sounds).*]

[*Screen door opening. Room sounds up.*]

WITTMAN: Let me go first.

TANYA: Please.

[*Screen door closing.*]

RUBY: Eeeek!!

[*Aunties' following speeches overlap:*]

LILAH: What is it, Ruby?

MAYDENE: What's wrong?



"Waiting for the [Cable] Cars," by Arnold Genthe, ca. 1900. The play "Mah Jongg" examines affection and tension within the twentieth-century Chinese American family. Actually, though the overwhelming majority of pioneer Chinese immigrants to California were men, family life has been a continuing theme within the Chinese ethnic community since its inception. Arnold Genthe, one of the state's great photographers and one of the pioneers of documentary photography, captured Chinese life—including relationships among women, children, and men—in pre-1906 San Francisco, in a series of images eventually published as *Pictures of Old Chinatown* (1908). CHS Library, San Francisco

DOLLY: What happened?
 LILAH: Who's there?
 RUBY: Eeeek!
 WITTMAN: What's wrong, Ma? Haven't you ever seen —
 RUBY: What have you done to yourself?
[Aunties' following speeches overlap:]
 LILAH: You used to be such a beautiful boy!
 MAYDENE: Too much hair, too hairy.
 RUBY: You go shave. Shave it off. *Hock geen nay say. Gik say nay.* Galls you to death.
 WITTMAN: No act, Ma.
 RUBY: *[Flat.]* Don't say hello to your mother.
 DOLLY: *[Announcing to room.]* Wit Man come to see his momma.
[Aunties' following speeches overlap:]
 LILAH: Good boy.
 DOLLY: Big boy.
 MAYDENE: College grad, haw, Wit Man?
 RUBY: Sit. Sit, you two.
 LILAH: Wit Man, say hello to your Aunt Lilah.
 WITTMAN: Hello, Aunt Lilah.
 DOLLY: He was a cute biby.
 WITTMAN: Hello, Aunt Dolly.
 RUBY: Where I go wrong, I ask you? He was so clean cut. He used to be *soo mun*.
 MAYDENE: Hairy face, fashion on a plate. *[Accusingly.]* You the one sent him to college, Ruby. Hello, Wit Man.
 WITTMAN: Hello, Aunt Maydene.
 RUBY: He takes a lot after his father, neh? So alike. Too alike. *Moong cha cha*.
 DOLLY: *[Calling.]* Here's an empty chair down at this end, honey. Come meet Auntie Dolly.
 WITTMAN: Go ahead, Tanya.
 TANYA: OK. *[Low.]* What's *moong cha cha*:
 WITTMAN: Stumbling around, talking to yourself.
 DOLLY: What's your name, honey?
 TANYA: Tanya.
 DOLLY: Tan-ah. What a pretty name. Russian? Do you play, Tan-ah? I'll show you how to play. This is a very famous Chinese game, mah-jongg. Can you say "mah-jongg"?
 MAYDENE: My name is Maydene Lam. Call me Maydene, dear.
 TANYA: How do you do, Maydene?
 DOLLY: I'm Dolly Chin, Tan-ah.
 TANYA: How do you do, Dolly?
 DOLLY: I've always loved your name, Maydene. Such a pretty stage name. Maydene Lam.

MAYDENE: Thank you, Dolly. Yes, isn't it delicious. There are four little girls named after me in the Valley.
 DOLLY: What beautiful hair you have, Tan-ah. *[Raises voice.]* She's gorgeous, Wit Man! Beautiful hair! You are so fair. Isn't she fair, Maydene? *[Confidential.]* Myself, Tan-ah, I am a blond at heart.
[Room sounds cross-fade with surreal mah-jongg sounds.]
 WITTMAN: *[Interior.]* Every one of them, jet black hair. Why do women as they get older have to have fixed hair? Maybe because of beauty fixed at 1945. These were the glamour girls of World War II.
[Surreal mah-jongg cross-fades with nightclub sounds.]
[Drum roll and rim shot.]
 MC: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Eddie Pond proudly welcomes back to the Kubla Khan, fresh from their triumphant coast-to-coast War Bond tour, the beautiful Wongettes, Chinese Blondes in a Blue Mood.
[Girls singing "Am I Blue" under Wittman's monologue.]
 WITTMAN: Taking after the Soong Sisters and Anna Chennault, who married guys in uniform. Whenever these aunties' pictures show up in the local papers, it says, "the lively Madame Houston W.P. Fong," "the *beauteous* Madame Johnny Tom." Professional beauties. Especially the ones who had been Wongettes.
[Song ends to pretty good applause.]
 MC: How about another round of applause for our lovely Wongettes?
 WITTMAN: Everyone of them, jet-black *dyled* hair. *[Nightclub sounds cross-fade with normal mah-jongg clacks, room sounds.]*
[Aunties' following speeches overlap:]
 LILAH: *Ciao*.
 DOLLY: *Poong*.
 MAYDENE: *Kong*.
 RUBY: Eight ten thousands.
 WITTMAN: Is Auntie Bessie coming, Mom?
 RUBY: She's here. She and Auntie Maybo in the kitchen. *[Side of mouth.]* Who's the girl?
 WITTMAN: My friend. A good friend.
 RUBY: Serious?
 WITTMAN: Sure.
 RUBY: How serious?
 WITTMAN: *[Irritated.]* Serious, OK?
 RUBY: She's so rude; she's not talking to me.
 WITTMAN: Mom.



"The Street of Painted Balconies," by Arnold Genthe, ca. 1900. In this photograph, Genthe caught the contradictions between the old and new worlds of the Chinese in San Francisco. Though probably born in the United States, the two young boys have retained the traditional pigtail, or queue, that signified the wearer's subservience to emperor and his intent to return to China. CHS Library, San Francisco

LILAH: Introduce you gal to you mom, young man.

WITTMAN: Yes, Auntie Lilah. *[Calls over.]* Hey, Tanya. This is my mother. Ruby Ah Sing. Ma, this is my *pahng-yow*, Tanya.

TANYA: Hi!

LILAH: You aren't growing up to be a heart-breaking man, are you, honey boy?

[Interior theme, hold under.]

WITTMAN: Speak for your own self, Auntie Lilah. Still raising hell at 75. I remember what you told me.

[Room sounds fade out, to smaller enclosed interior.]

LILAH: Now, Wit Man, honey, this is on the Q.T. This must not go further than this very room. Can I trust you?

WITTMAN: Yes, of course, Aunt Lilah.

LILAH: I am having a romance. With a 55-year-old *say-yun*, a Western man. He is so distinguished.

All his clothes are from Brooks Brothers. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday . . . *[Coy.]* you know. He is offering to divorce his wife for me, but I don't want to be married. Three times a week is quite enough.

[Room sounds fade up.]

MAYDENE: *[Raising voice.]* I tell you, Ruby. U.C. state-run public school don't teach them to present themselves socially. When my boy Ranceford comes out of Harvard, he can go anywhere.

RUBY: Anywhere, Maydene?

MAYDENE: You'd be surprising, Ruby. As I said to Mayling Soong, I-vee Leak be A-number-one-all-around. They learn how to make money and they learn to go around in society. Very complete.

WITTMAN: That's a true fact, Mom.

RUBY: At U.C. this one learned to grow hair long, grow rat beard, go out *bok gwai noi*. Mixing like cows and chickens.

LILAH: Hair's a big city fashion, isn't it, honey boy?

WITTMAN: Yes, Aunt Lilah.

LILAH: It's a big city fashion, Ruby. But you still got one matinee idol under the hair. I remember when you were yay high. I used to change your diapers. You were deh, Wit Man. [*To Tanya.*] He was so deh.

RUBY: Cut it off, Wit Man. Cut it off. I'll pay you.

WITTMAN: Just. Just.

[*Room sounds cross-fade to surreal mah-jongg sounds. Establish and hold under.*]

WITTMAN: Just lay off me. Let me be. And let me live. Calm down, Wittman, let them play. Be three years old again. Watch. [*Beat—childlike, setting it for the first time.*]

[*Surreal mah-jongg fade up a little.*]

WITTMAN: Their outspread fingers with red nails and rings of gold and jade push and turn the tiles in wheels of bones and plastic, clockwise and counterclockwise.

DOLLY: You in luck *today*, Maydene.

WITTMAN: The sound of fortune is clack, clack, clack.

MAYDENE: Not lucky like you, Dolly.

WITTMAN: They build little Great Walls and tear them down.

DOLLY: *Aiya!*

WITTMAN: Mom fans a tile like putting out a match—hot, the red dragon. Now comes the green dragon. Dangerous. One, two, three bamboo. *Mah jeuk* birds all in a row.

[*Surreal mah-jongg cross-fade to room sounds, as above.*]

LILAH: Wit Man, your mama one cutthroat. You working hard, Wit Man?

WITTMAN: I've been fired, Auntie Lilah.

RUBY: Fired! Fired!

WITTMAN: It's OK, Ma. I didn't like the job anyway.

RUBY: Four years college. What are we to do?

LILAH: He'll get a job again, Ruby. Nowadays they try out jobs, then settle down.

DOLLY: Wit Man be smart. He'll be rich one of these days.

RUBY: He read books when he was three years old. Now look at him. A *bum-how*.

[*Aunties' following speeches overlap:*]

LILAH: Don't worry.

DOLLY: He's one good boy.

LILAH: He be nice and tall.

DOLLY: He'll turn out.

LILAH: And so-o-o much talent. Too much talent. He got upbringing, Ruby; you gave him upbringing he cannot lose. He got foundation.

DOLLY: He's clean, too. Most beardies are dirty. And *bok gwai*.

RUBY: That means "white," Tan-ah. Does he eat regular?

TANYA: Sure. He eats.

[*Swinging kitchen door. Mabel's voice approaches.*]

MABEL: Oooh, Wit Man, hello. You look like one beatnik.

WITTMAN: Hi, Auntie Maybo.

MAYDENE: Wit Man been fired, Maybo.

MABEL: You need a job, Wit Man? I got one gig for you, dear. You come to Florida and do my revue.

WITTMAN: You still doing your revue, Auntie Maybo?

MABEL: Yeah, I do revue. You come, eh, Wit Man. We need a fella in the act.

WITTMAN: In Florida, you dance, you sing?

MABEL: No-o-o. I standup comedy. My gals sing and dance. I train them. Miss Chinatown, 1959, 1962, and 1963, all in my act. All my gals queen of the prom, court princess at least. I teach them. Mothers of junior high gals say to me, "Start her on her make-up, Maybo." I teach them hair and dress. They do not go out in blue jeans or with no gloves.

[*Room sounds cross-fade with nightclub sounds.*]

WITTMAN: [*Interior.*] Yeah, I've met some of the "trained gals." They look like young Auntie Mabels: their hair in beehives, sausage curls hanging over the shoulder, glued-on eyelashes like a pair of dead spiders. She won some beauty contests herself umpteen years ago. Went on to fan-dance, almost top billing, with Miss Toyette Mar, the Chinese Sophie Tucker, and Mr. Stanley Toy, the Fred Astaire of Chinatown, and Prince Gum Low, and Mr. Kwai Tak Hong, the Chinese Will Rogers, who also danced flamenco. [*Awe.*] Your tits, Auntie Mabel, were the very first tits I ever did see. [*Beat.*] Scared the daylights out of me.

[*Drum roll and rim shot.*]

MC: Ladies and gentlemen, Andy Wong's Sky Room is proud to present Miss Mabel Foo Yee, the Chinese Fortune Cookie.

[*Orchestra plays "Limehouse Blues," (40s-sounding recording).*]

WITTMAN: The house lights go out and she comes through the curtain into a red spot. She slinks around the dance floor, snaking her arms and

legs like Greta Garbo and Anna Mae Wong, legs tangoing out of her split dress. Now the light shrinks to head size and the spot holds her face. Chopsticks in her hair. False eyelashes blink hard and the light goes out. She runs around with incense sticks, writing red script in the air. Red lights flash on. The front of her dress breaks away.

[Big high-pitched brassy gong. Twice.]

WITTMAN: Lights out.

[Same gong once.]

WITTMAN: Lights on. Auntie Mabel stands with arms and naked tits raised at the ceiling. I look hard for two seconds; the lights go out.

[Same gong once.]

WITTMAN: Lights on. She kneels with wrists together, tits at ease, eyelashes downcast.

[Big brass finish.]

WITTMAN: Lights out. The End.

[Normal room sounds fade up.]

MABEL: Wit Man, Listen to you Auntie Maybo. Good you get fired from demeaning employment. You get back into show biz, honey. You a good type, Wit Man.

WITTMAN: No thanks, Auntie Maybo.

MABEL: Come on. Sometimes we play Reno, North Shore Lake Tahoe.

WITTMAN: Auntie Maybo? I like Shakespeare.

MAYDENE: You snob, Wit Man. You will be hurt and jobless.

RUBY: No use, Maybo; like his father. *Moong cha*

cha. [To *Maydene*.] *Maydene*, how is *Gail* these days?

MAYDENE: Oh my *Gail*. She is so smart, I hope she won't marry somebody second-rate. The professors gave her a personal invitation to attend Stanford University and pay her to go there. You know S.A.T.? Best S.A.T. in California. Ten thousand points. Her teachers say they never taught a more intelligent girl.

RUBY: You still not get *Gail* married yet?

[Swinging kitchen door. *Bessie's* voice approaches.]

BESSIE: Wit Man! Good to see you! Nice beard!

WITTMAN: Hi, Auntie *Bessie*.

BESSIE: I knew you'd be here today.

WITTMAN: How?

BESSIE: I dreamed about you last night. You were doing a dance for me, making little bows. How come you're not introducing me? Who's this beauty?

WITTMAN: Sorry, Auntie *Bessie*. This is my *pahng-yow*, *Tanya*. *Tanya*, Auntie *Bessie*.

TANYA: Hello.

BESSIE: Hello, *Tanya*. Did Wit Man tell you he's one great soft shoe? Come on, Wit Man, do some soft shoe, huh?

WITTMAN: No, thanks, Auntie *Bessie*.

BESSIE: [Sings.] "I won't dance. Don't ask me. I won't dance. Don't ask me. I won't dance, monsieur, with yo-o-ou." [Flirting.] Not even for your favorite Aunt, honey boy?



"Chinese Family, Monterey, California," by Carleton E. Watkins, ca. 1880. Living conditions for Chinese in small towns were often more primitive than in the large and complex San Francisco Chinatown. CHS Library, San Francisco

WITTMAN: [Soft.] Ssh, Auntie Bessie . . . The rest of them are going to be jealous.

[Chinese "Oklahoma" music or distorted friendly party sounds up to establish and hold under monologue.]

WITTMAN: But it's true. My favorite. She had played Laurie in the Chinese Optimists Club production of "Oklahoma." She wore a white lace Laurie dress with a half-dozen petticoats, her hair dressed out with a wig of black ringlets. She kept her stage make-up on for the cast party. I stood beside her at the group sing around the piano. Up close I could see her powdery wrinkles; but still, I had fallen in love.

[Last cue cross-fade with room sounds.]

WITTMAN: Hey, Auntie Bessie, do you still say "YOW!?" [Prompting her, chanting.] "Okla-Okla-Okla—"

BESSIE: [Sings.] "And when we sa-a-ay 'Yow!' 'Yow! A-yip-I-oh-I- yay, /We're only sayin' / You're doin' fine, Oklahoma, Oklahoma, O.K.!"

[Applause.] [Cries of] "Good Bessie," "More!"

BESSIE: [Sings.] "Don't sigh and gaze at me. Your sighs are so like mine . . . uh . . . [Regroups.] Don't laugh at my jokes too much . . ."

WITTMAN: [In gruff "curley" style] Who laughs at yer jokes?

BESSIE: "People will say we're in love. Don't . . . Uh, rusty, try Wit.

TANYA: [Singing, low.] "Don't dance all night with me . . ."

[Aunties' voices overlap.]

LILAH: Oh, Tan-ah can sing.

MAYDENE: Good.

DOLLY: Help out.

BESSIE: [Joining with Tanya] "Till the stars fade from above. They'll see it's all right with me . . ."

WITTMAN AND ALL AUNTIES: [Joining in.] "People will say we're in love."

[Applause.]

[Over applause.]

LILAH: [Sly.] You in love, Wittman, hmmm?

[Aunties' voices overlap:]

LILAH: Ho-la.

DOLLY: Good, Bessie, Good, Tan-ah.

MAYDENE: Encore.

MABEL: Bessie as good as ever.

BESSIE: Thank you, Tanya.

TANYA: Thank you, Auntie Bessie. You have a beautiful voice.

BESSIE: Wit Man, you never said she's in show business.

WITTMAN: She's not, Auntie Bessie. She's an assistant claims adjustor.

[Chairs being pushed back, footsteps, signaling intermission in mah-jongg.]

DOLLY: Tan-ah, I tell you, that voice of Bessie's helped buy an airplane for World War II.

MAYDENE: And the rest of us too, we were stars. We put on many shows, and so many people paid to watch us dance and sing, we raised enough money to buy an airplane.

BESSIE: We toured nation wide. We had the most active chapter of the Association of Vaudeville Artistes. We had a painting party, and painted our airplane—a Chinese flag and an American flag—red, white, and blue.

RUBY: [Getting into the mood.] That's right, Tan-ah. Auntie Bessie's brother flew it to China, and became a Flying Tiger, and is now a pilot for China Airlines.

TANYA: But Mrs.—uh—Ruby, you mean you raised all that money yourselves?

MABEL: [Naughty and sexy.] Not the only thing we raised, honey.

[All aunties laugh.]

MABEL: [Naughty.] We danced the Pants Dance of the Nations, our big hit. I was Miss France.

TANYA: What?

LILAH: Tan-ah darling, we wore undies with the flags of the allies on them. I was Miss Great Britain.

BESSIE: I was Miss Belgium. And Maybo was . . .

MABEL: I was Miss China.

MAYDENE: I was Miss Finlandia.

DOLLY: I was Miss . . . uh, you know . . . Down Under?

RUBY: [Dampening it.] You know, of course, Wit Man, who your mother was.

WITTMAN: Yes, Mom.

RUBY: [Grandly.] I was Miss Russia, Tan-ah.

LILAH: [Sings to tune of "Volga Boatman"] Yo-ho-HEAVE-ho. You see, Tan-ah, we each did a solo to honor our brave allies. [Sings to tune of "God Save the King"] "King Georgie had a date. He stayed out very late."

ALL AUNTIES: "God save the King."

LILAH: [Continuing song.] "Queen Mary paced the floor. King George came in at four. She met him at the door . . ."

ALL AUNTIES: [Finishing song.] "God save the King!"

MABEL: And our grand finale—everybody down on her back, legs making "V" for Victory.

[All aunties laugh.]

WITTMAN: [Hastily.] I'm really hungry. Come on, Tanya.

[Footsteps. Kitchen door.]

[Aunties start on "I'd like to get you on a slow boat to China."]

[Kitchen door closes at "China." Fade aunties, other room way down.]

TANYA: God, they're really sassy. I thought for a second they were going to do it—get down on their backs, and—hey, you're blushing.

WITTMAN: What did I tell you? They're embarrassing. They just love to have any . . .

TANYA: [Interrupting.] You told me they were "waiting to die." [Digging in.] I think they're doing fine, enjoying life. And they're not so old. Your mother and Lilah and Dolly—a lot of them are still pretty.

WITTMAN: Well, yea, maybe.

TANYA: [Changing tactics.] And what about Bessie? I saw the way you were looking at her. I don't mean I'm jealous, but . . .

WITTMAN: Okay, you're right. She's really . . . something.

TANYA: I think they are all . . . something.

WITTMAN: Maybe you're right.

TANYA: And they really love you.

WITTMAN: [Understanding.] Yea, they really do.

TANYA: Wittman, what does *pahng-yow* mean?

WITTMAN: [Beat.] Do you want a real short tour of this place? My favorite room.

TANYA: Yes, but what does . . .

WITTMAN: Come on, then.

[Under following speech, 2 sets of footsteps down hall.]

WITTMAN: I have a Granny. She hates mah-jongg too. On game days, my father drops her off at a friend's house on his way to the gambling hall. I'm sure she wouldn't mind your seeing her room.

[Footsteps stop. Door knob.]

WITTMAN: Careful. I'll go first.

TANYA: It's dark. What is that, all over everything? God, it's a spider web!

WITTMAN: No. Wait.

[Window shade going up.]

TANYA: It's not spiderwebs. It's like snowflakes. Sewn together, like lace, floating over everything.

WITTMAN: Watch.

[Window opening, outdoor sounds as before.]

TANYA: It's dancing. Beautiful. Is it lace?

WITTMAN: String. She tats string into these circles and spirals, web daisies. Be right back.

[Footsteps, water in sink. Splashing shaving sounds low and hold under sequence.]

TANYA: [Laughing, calls.] These pictures on the bureau, you?

WITTMAN: [From bathroom.] Yeah. The sumo wrestler, I was about six or so; the Indian costume, about the same time.

TANYA: Is this you too, with the gauze bandages and the dark glasses.

WITTMAN: That was my Invisible Man phase. I made my folks drive me around like that on Sunday afternoons.

TANYA: What's this one, with all the grease paint? Are you supposed to be a monkey?

WITTMAN: Not "Supposed to be." I am.

TANYA: [Laughs.] That's true. Hey, what are you doing? Can I come in?

[Footsteps to bathroom.]

WITTMAN: Sure. Almost done.

[Feet stop.]

TANYA: You're shaving it off!

[Water off.]

WITTMAN: [Cheery.] I'm coming clean, Tanya. The smooth-faced groom. Now Mom'll scream about me not being able to make up my mind. How do I look?

TANYA: You look clean-cut and very sexy.

[Two sets of feet go back into bedroom.]

TANYA: Your grandmother was in show business, too.

WITTMAN: No. Why do you say that?

TANYA: That set model on the dresser.

WITTMAN: Oh, no. Come on, I'll show you. It's really what I brought you here to see.

TANYA: Isn't it a stage designer's model?

WITTMAN: No, Tanya. This is my family's village. Our memory village.

TANYA: [Amazed.] Oh, look, how precise. Everything numbered, labeled, the rungs on the ladders, the steps., These toy pigs, numbered.

WITTMAN: Here, in the plaza, this well is where Gramma fetched water, where she dropped her jug and the men laughed. This is the music building.

TANYA: These trees, . . .

WITTMAN: . . . lichees, . . .



"Chinese Salvation Army," by Arnold Genthe, ca. 1900. CHS Library, San Francisco

TANYA: . . . numbered.

WITTMAN: Thirty-three . . . Twenty belonged to my great-great-uncle, thirteen to my grandfather.

TANYA: Look, the streets, the paths, numbered. I don't understand, Wittman. Why is everything so carefully numbered?

WITTMAN: Because everyone who claimed to have come from here studied this model, memorized it, and described it to Immigration. "How many houses in your village?" "How many lichee trees does your village have?" They asked these questions and compared the answers to the answers of those first frightened immigrants. They wanted to catch us in mistakes and send us back. So we created this village, frozen in time. It's a model of something that doesn't exist anymore really, a memory village. If Immigration ever raided this room, looking for illegals, they could take this model as evidence and deport us. This is it. My land. I am a genie who's escaped from the bottle city of Kandor. I've told you immigration secrets. You can blackmail me. And make me small again, and stopper me up. But if I don't have someone to tell these secrets to, where am I? *[Pause.]* I love you, Tanya.

TANYA: And I love you, Wittman. Thank you for taking me into your family like this. I'll never tell.

WITTMAN: *[Beat.]* Shall we rejoin the ladies, *oi-yun*.

TANYA: What does that mean, Wittman. That's not what you called me in there. You called me . . .

WITTMAN: "*Pahng-yow?*"

TANYA: That's it! What does "*pahng-yow*" mean? You called me that, to your mother and Aunt Bessie. It doesn't mean "wife," does it?

WITTMAN: No, it means "friend."

TANYA: You haven't told them . . .

WITTMAN: Don't worry. I said I'm coming clean, and I am. Let's go show my Mom. Maybe she'll ask me to glue it back on.

TANYA: But what did you call me just now? That other word?

WITTMAN: "*Oi-yun.*" It means "beloved." Let's go show Mom.

[Swinging door; mah-jongg and room sounds up.]

WITTMAN: Mom, what do you think?

RUBY: What do I think about what? You eat enough, Wit Man? You looking skinny.

[Movement, chairs.]

[Aunties' voices overlap:]

DOLLY: Wit Man, stay.

MABEL: Don't go.

LILAH: Bye, Tan-ah.

MAYDENE: You going?

BESSIE: Kiss goodbye, Wit Man.

RUBY: Where you going so fast, young man?

WITTMAN: Going on our honeymoon, Mom.

RUBY: Your what?

WITTMAN: Yeah, we're married, Mom. Bye.

RUBY: Eeeek!

[Aunties' voices overlap:]

MABEL: What?

MAYDENE: What'd he say?

DOLLY: They married.

MAYDENE: Who?

TANYA: Bye Ruby, bye Bessie, Bye Maybo, Dolly, Lilah, everybody.

[Screen door, running feet.]

[Aunties' voices overlap:]

MABEL: 'Bye.

DOLLY: Congratulations!

MABEL: Take care of her, Wit Man.

MAYDENE: They're married?

RUBY: *[Over the hubbub:]* What did I do wrong?

[Fade out room. Fade up outside noises as before.]

WITTMAN: Come on, *oi-yun*. Hurry. We're late!

TANYA: Late for what? Where are we going?

WITTMAN: To the gambling hall. Now you're going to meet my father and *his* friends.

TANYA: Terrific!

[Car doors, engine starting, car pulling away.]

[Original sound track recording, "Oklahoma," song: "People Will Say We're in Love." Include the line "Don't please my folks too much."] CHS

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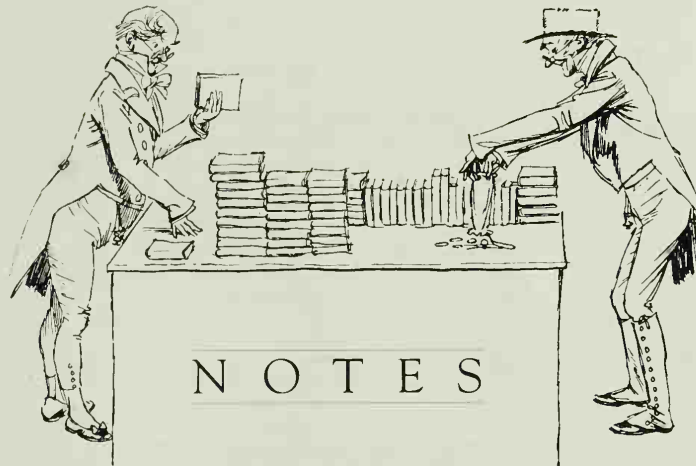
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Selected Readings

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San Francisco's Literary Frontier (1939) and *A Literary History of Southern California* (1950), offer excellent starting points for an examination of our state's literature. Also highly recommended is Lawrence Clark Powell's *California Classics* (1971), as are Kevin Starr's *Americans and the California Dream* (1973) and *Inventing the Dream* (1985). Interesting but less satisfactory because the writer strains too hard to force California into his deductive paradigm is David Wyatt's *The Fall into Eden* (1986).

Among anthologies, John and La Ree Caughey's *California Heritage* (1962) is fine, if dated, and the same can be said of W. Storrs Lee's *California: A Literary Chronicle* (1968). More recent is Gary Soto's lauded anthology *California Childhood* (1988). Now out of print, *California Heartland* (1978), edited by James D. Houston and myself, remains the best collection of Central Valley writing. Floyd Salas has edited a selection of the Bay Area's best work, *Close to Home* (1986), and for the past several years an annual *Southern California Anthology* has been published at the University of Southern California.

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in this paper. The collection contains first-rate essays by scholars on West and Chandler, as well as more recent writers. *Tycoons and Locusts: A Regional Look at Hollywood Fiction in the 1930s*, by Walter Wells (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), is an excellent study of such writers as West, Chandler, Cain, McCoy, and Fitzgerald. For critical and biographical studies of West, see Jay Martin, *Nathanael West: the Art of his Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970), James F. Light, *Nathanael West, an Interpretive Study* (2nd edition, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), and David Madden, ed., *Nathanael West: the Cheaters and the Cheated* (Deland, Florida: Everett/Edwards, 1973). For critical and biographical studies of Chandler, see Frank McShane, *The Life of Nathanael West* (New York: Dutton, 1976), Jerry Speir, *Raymond Chandler* (New York: Ungar, 1981), and Miriam Gross, ed., *The World of Raymond Chandler* (New York: A. and W. Publishers, 1977).

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 10. For example, full-time earners included in a pension plan declined 8 percent, those included in an employer's group health plan declined 8 percent, and those whose employer helped pay for group health declined 7 percent. In general, part-time workers have much lower levels of benefit reciprocity, and these low levels have become even lower during the 1980s.
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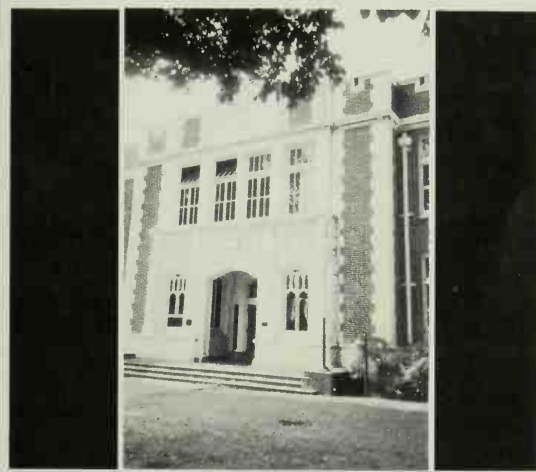
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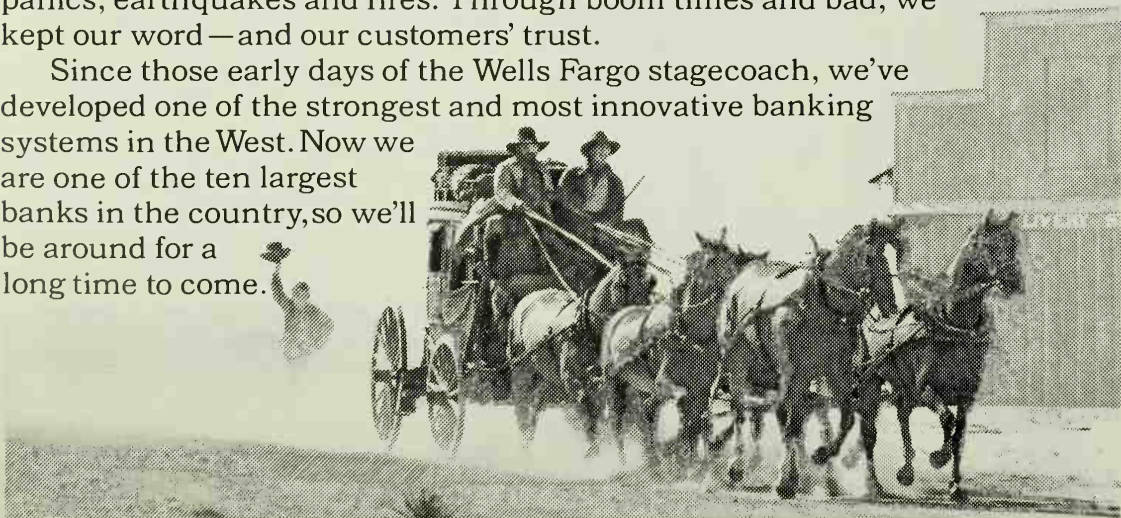
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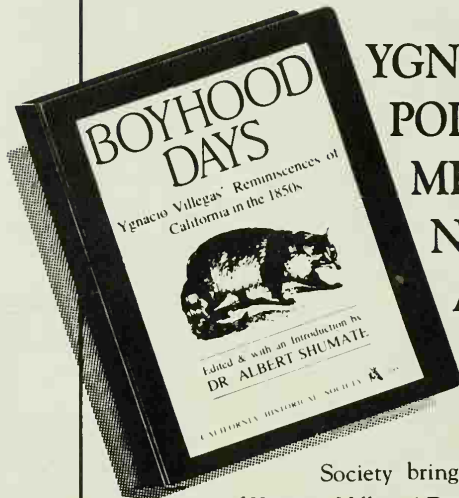
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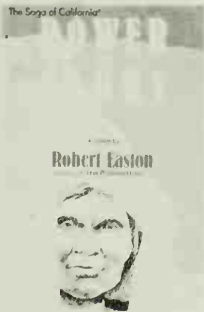
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