

# CALIFORNIA THE NIAN

Magazine of the California History Center Foundation/De Anza College  
A Foundation Supporting the Study and Preservation of State and Regional History



**Feature: Women in the Canning Industry.**

## By The Sweat Of Thy Brow

When we are not in on the beginnings of things, we often take for granted that they were always the way we first saw them. Recent arrivals to "Silicon Valley," for example, must find it difficult to comprehend an earlier "Valley of Hearts Delight," and most of us hardly can imagine a world without automobiles or electricity. Even more elusive, I think, is an understanding of the lives of those who built the world in which we live.

California history textbooks, on which so many of us depend to understand our state's past, present the story of labor in a narrow fashion. One might conclude from them that only on San Francisco's waterfront did labor organize effectively, while the antithesis of organization was in Los Angeles, with the exception of the screen actors guild, the permanent home of the "open shop." It also might be easy to assume that, as the nation moved west, the labor movement became unnecessary. After all, California has never had a steel industry on the magnitude of Pittsburgh or a city devoted to auto manufacturing such as Detroit. So why a union movement?

Of course, if we think about it carefully, such a view becomes rather silly. Vast aircraft, electronics, and textile industries are located in southern California, the lumber industry developed Mendocino and Humboldt counties, and giant food processing plants long have operated throughout the state. Clearly, it is wrong to conclude that the story of labor is confined to San Francisco and Harry Bridges, Los Angeles and the screen actors guild, or Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers. Rather, the entire story seems to be a largely uncharted part of our past.

With this in mind, the history center began to uncover part of this story in 1986 by beginning a study of the history of labor in Santa Clara Valley. Inspired by several workers who participated in the workers' struggles to organize local unions since the 1930s, we began by documenting their lives by doing oral histories and searching through old archives and newspapers. With the help of an intern from U.C. Santa Barbara, scholars from Bay Area colleges and universities, students and community volunteers, we have now assembled a storehouse of knowledge about our valley's workers, their lives, their philosophies, and their organizations.

Now we are pleased to present the results of this work in our newest original exhibition, *By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley*. Its focal point is wage workers in the valley — their lives, dreams, organizations, and contributions to the community. Its aims are to tell the story of the symbiotic relationship between labor and our community since the 19th century, the changing character of labor, and, as retired worker Jeff Boehm puts it, "to pass on to our grandchildren and others how important it is to be able to take pride in your work, in being a craftsman."

From 7 to 9 p.m., Friday evening, October 7, California History Center Foundation members are invited to attend a special preview of *By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley*. I hope you will all join with the foundation's trustees to celebrate this important new exhibition. We will have entertainment, and refreshments will be served. On Saturday afternoon, October 8, we will hold a special public opening.

See you at the festivities this October!

### Jim Williams

Director

*Cover Photo: Packing prunes in the mid-1940s. Photo by Gabriel Moulin Studios, San Francisco, California History Center Collection.*



*Docents were kept busy this spring with many tours of the "After the Gold Rush" exhibit. Hundreds of people toured through on De Anza Day, June 5. Photo by Jim Cochrane.*

# CALENDAR

**9/6 CHC open**

**9/20 De Anza College classes begin**

**10/2 Santa Cruz Discoveries**

9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Naturalist Donna Zetterquist leads an exploration of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, including a stop at the Felton Covered Bridge (1892). Cost to members \$33 and non-members \$42 includes transportation, fees, and honorarium. Payment due 9/26.

**10/7 Exhibit preview for CHC members**

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Members are invited to herald the opening of *By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley*. Donations.

**10/8 Public exhibit opening**

1:00 - 3:30 p.m. Join us in celebrating the CHC's newest original exhibit on the history of organized labor in Santa Clara Valley. Donation requested.

**10/9 Ugly Duckling to Swan: Restoration in San Jose**

12:15 - 3:30 p.m. (optional brunch at 10:15). Through photographs and visits to restored buildings in San Jose, restorationist Norm Koepernik examines the stages of architectural renovation. This fascinating look at the process of preservation includes a presentation on the restoration of Saint Joseph Cathedral. Cost to members \$13 and non-members \$19 includes fees and honorarium. (An additional fee of \$30 includes all costs of an elegant brunch at the Fairmont Hotel.) Payment due 9/23.

**10/15 - 16 Jewish History in the Gold Country**

Bus departs at 8:30 a.m. Saturday and returns 6:30 p.m. Sunday. Instructor Stephen Kinsey conducts a unique tour of the gold country of California, focusing on the Jewish history in the area. Trip includes visits to Jackson, Sonora, Mokelumne Hill, and Columbia State Park (where you will enjoy the festivities of the annual Harvest Festival). Cost to members \$85 and non-members \$105 includes transportation, double-occupancy lodging, fees, and honorarium. Payment due 9/26.

**11/6 Country Living Skills Workshop**

10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at the Trianon. Learn the history of several objects crafted by Native Americans and early settlers then choose to make a tule basket, or use a drop spindle to spin wool, or work with wood or other materials offered in this rare hands-on workshop led by a group of qualified instructors. Cost for members \$18 and non-members \$25

includes honorarium and refreshments; materials fees extra. Payment due 10/24.

**11/11 Veterans Day holiday. De Anza classes do not meet; CHC closed.**

**11/24, 25 Thanksgiving holiday. De Anza classes do not meet; CHC closed.**

**12/15 Last day of De Anza classes**

**12/16 Christmas in the Adobes**

3:00 - 10:30 p.m. Join us for an enchanting holiday celebration in Monterey. Following a no-host dinner in one of the many fine restaurants on Fisherman's Wharf, we will be given a docent-led tour of Monterey State Historic Park, where each building, lit by candlelight, is decorated for the holidays in styles appropriate to the origin of its design. Cost for members \$36 and non-members \$45 includes transportation fees. Payment due 12/2.

**12/19 - 1/2 CHC closed.**

## Of Interest to Members

**Stand By Your Brand**, exhibit, a history of ranching around Willits, Mendocino County, 1888-1988. Mendocino County Museum, Willits, through December 31.

**This Sporting Life**, exhibit focusing on the city of Campbell's "winners" of sporting fame, and on a variety of athletic and recreational pursuits of yesterday and today, Campbell Historical Museum, downtown Campbell, through October 12.

**Telephone Pioneer Museum**, resource for communication history, artifacts such as the first Telstar, the "Dick Tracy" wrist radio, old time switchboards and more, docent tours available, 140 Montgomery St., San Francisco.

**Eastern California Museum**, Independence, Inyo County, exhibit on Manzanar, located six miles north of Independence, one of 10 Japanese internment camps during World War II, continuing.

**"Send Us a Lady Physician: Women Doctors in America, 1835-1920,"** exhibit featuring the pioneer work of women physicians, Oakland Museum, through November 6.

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# CULTURAL PRESERVATION

## The Labor Archives and Research Center San Francisco State University

by Lynn A. Bonfield

The Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University was founded in 1984, the result of years of effort by the Bay Area labor movement to establish a repository for historical documents. The center collects archival and printed materials which document the lives of Northern California working men and women and their unions.

All types of media are collected including primary sources such as office files and correspondence, audio recordings such as oral history interviews, visual sources, especially photographs and posters, books, periodicals, picket signs, banner, badges, and other materials. Material collected is open for education and research purposes by students, faculty, the labor community, and the general public.

Among the collections are the records of the Bay Area Typographical Union, Local 21, the oldest continually existing union in the Bay Area, dating back to 1852 (although the records begin in 1906). Included in this collection are minutes, newsletters and membership cards as well as ribbons from various conventions. In contrast is the San Francisco State University Organizing Collection — materials from the 1950s to the present documenting the union organizing efforts at the University among faculty and staff. Other collections include: Bookbinders and Bindery Women's Union, Local 31-125, 1902-1970; Maritime Federation of the Pacific, 1935-1942; San Francisco Labor Council, predominantly 1965-1975; Sign Display and Allied Crafts Union, Local 510, 1956-1968; and Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality (Union W.A.G.E.), 1971-1982.

Papers of unionists and friends of labor are also collected. On the shelves at the Center are the files of David Selvin, labor journalist and historian, Norman Leonard, labor lawyer for the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Stan Jensen, machinist and international union official, and Walter Johnson, during his activities as president of Department Store Employees Union Local 1100.

Visual images are an important resource for exhibits, media, and researchers who understand the value of a photograph which can often explain an event better than words. The Center's largest visual collection, with nearly 5000 images, is the *People's World* Collection. Smaller collections with visual material are Sign Display and Allied Crafts Local 510, Retail Clerks Local 410R, Department Store Employees Union Local 1100, and the San Francisco Labor Council.

Exhibit cases in the reading room feature displays of photographs, ephemera, and union documents from the Center's

collection. Two diaries of workers are currently on display, one by a Japanese immigrant dating from 1906 and the second a California miner's journal written from 1917 to 1936.

Examples of past exhibits are P. H. McCarthy and the San Francisco Building Trades, New Deal Arts, Wobbly: 80 Years of Rebel Art, The Building of the Golden Gate Bridge, The California Labor School Remembered, and California Working Women in the Decade of the Forties. An exhibit of special



*The Center directed the official history project for the 50th anniversary celebration of the building of the Golden Gate Bridge. Photographs, oral histories, hard hats, and other material came to the Center during the spring of 1987 including a scrapbook on Fred Dummatzen who was one of the workers to die in the accident in February 1937. Here he is clowning on the Bridge for his buddies with the Marin headlands in the background. Courtesy Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University*



*In 1988 the Center sponsored a program on California Working Women in the Decade of the Forties. It included not only the "Rosie the Riveters" shown here but also workers in other occupations which expanded women's employment such as office workers, retail clerks, nurses, union organizers, textile workers, and telephone operators. Courtesy Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University.*

treasures from the collection are on display through the summer of 1988.

The Center is in the middle of a systematic survey of 50 Bay Area local unions, indicating what has been preserved, how currently it is being stored, and what might be transferred to the Archives. The local unions surveyed thus far have been excited by the interest being shown in their history and grateful for advice on records management.

The Center serves as a clearing house for research on Northern California labor by maintaining a data base of primary sources relating to California labor. It is surprising to find these collections as far east as Atlanta, and many are at the Historical Society of Wisconsin and Wayne State University.

The Center is governed by an Advisory Board composed of labor leaders, archivists and librarians, and representatives of the academic community. The staff reports to the Director of the San Francisco State University Library and is an integral part of the California State Library system.

The Archives is open to the public by appointment, and individual and group tours are available. For a brochure and more information, write to the Labor Archives and Research Center, 480 Winston Drive, San Francisco, CA 94132 or call (415) 564-4010.

*Bonfield is director of the Labor Archives and Research Center.*

# Women in the First “Fruit Factories” in the Santa Clara Valley

by Jaclyn Greenberg

*WOMEN AND GIRLS — Do you want to spend two months in the country and earn good wages, with steady work in a fruit cannery? Tents furnished. Working now.*

Every summer in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannery owners in the Santa Clara Valley placed advertisements like this in newspapers to attract women during the busy harvest season. A woman, however unskilled or inexperienced could count on work in the expanding canneries. Women and girls from a variety of ages and backgrounds worked in the early “fruit factories.” They rarely realized their contribution to the valley and state economy. Sometimes they did not even tell the census taker they were employed because they worked only for a month or two. And yet women workers formed the backbone of the canning industry in the Santa Clara Valley, an important cornerstone in the birth of modern American “agribusiness.”

The first cannery workers in the Santa Clara Valley were an elderly Chinese man, two young Chinese boys and a group of native-born women who were neighbors of the Dawson family who started the first cannery. The men did the cooking and made the tin cans by hand, skilled work which would eventually be automated. The women cut the fruit much as they would in their own kitchens. Women would form the core of laborers in the cannery industry, the largest industry in the Santa Clara Valley in the years 1880 to 1920. The women, chatting as they worked, probably never could have imagined that they were first workers in an industry that would employ the most women in the state of California.

A woman also participated in the founding of the canning industry in the valley. Eloise Dawson came West with her elderly husband, Dr. Dawson, and her stepchildren in 1871. After they took up residence on the Alameda between San Jose and Santa Clara she suggested they invest their money in a small fruit-processing enterprise. The valley was dominated by wheat farms then, and the Dawsons drove around in a wagon buying fruit from the scattered orchards. The makeshift cannery in a shed on the edge of a wheat field canned 350 boxes of fruit that first year and changed the economy of the Santa Clara Valley. With a market for their crop, farmers turned to fruit-growing. The fruit industry and the canning industry grew simultaneously as orchards replaced wheat fields. In 1875, as the recently incorporated San Jose

Packing Company, the Dawson cannery packed 25,000 cases of canned goods. Cannery production reached the figure of one million cases by the end of the decade. There were six canneries in the valley by the end of the 1880s. And more were established each decade. By the 1920s forty canneries in the valley packed about one third of the canned goods produced in the state.

Canneries became the main source of employment for women in the valley. In fact, in the state of California, more women worked in canneries than in any other occupation. As the industry grew, canneries hired increasing numbers of women. In the 1870s twenty to thirty women might work in a cannery. In the 1880s a cannery hired from 175 to 200 women. As a harbinger of the future, in 1887, the San Jose Fruit Packing Company, the largest in the valley, hired a workforce of 400 women.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, with many canneries operating at once, the female workforce reached several thousands. To obtain a large workforce, owners began to hire women outside the valley’s rural communities as well as residents. Women from nearby cities like San Francisco and migrant laborers from over the state were enticed to engage in cannery work. Canning corporations supplied tents or cabins and established labor camps to accommodate those women and their families who travelled from outside the area. With some canneries located in



*A corner view of the packing room at J. H. Flickenger’s cannery. These women are pitting, peeling and canning apricots. Photo circa 1890s, California History Center collection.*

the countryside to be near the orchards, even women from San Jose and Santa Clara might stay in the labor camp during the canning season.

For the first women workers, primarily native-born and Irish women, the canneries provided a much-needed employment opportunity. In the wheat economy there had been few sources of employment available to women. And yet, both married and single women were eager to earn money. They wanted to help pay the mortgage on their family farm or save money for their own education. Divorced or widowed women supported themselves and their children. After 1890 Italian immigrants and, still later, Mexican-American women likewise found canneries places where they could secure necessary income.

A look inside the cannery, shows that our usual twentieth century ideas about factory labor need modification. Far from smooth running impersonal assembly-line operations, the early canneries were alive with women and children of all ages, running on a very atypical schedule in a noisy helter skelter environment. The work was seasonal. The canning season began in the warm spring months when the cherries became ripe. Soon the large crops of apricots and then peaches and pears were harvested. In August and until the first frost, tomatoes were picked. Women could expect to find work in the cannery only between May and October.

Even during the summer months, when there was cannery work available to any women who wanted it, the working day was very irregular. The operation of the cannery was dependent upon unpredictable agricultural rhythms. Cool, foggy weather might delay the crop, or a heat spell cause all the fruit to ripen at once. Women might wait around the cannery with little to do in between harvests. But once the harvest started, horse-drawn wagons brought load after load of fruit to the cannery, and women would work well into the night to preserve the perishable fruit.

When the canning season was over women sought whatever kind of work they could find to sustain them through the winter months; cleaning, cooking, occasionally teaching. Some returned to their farms. Girls went back to school. After the turn of the century migrant women with their families travelled to other agricultural areas in California. Cannery work formed a brief intense period of work for women from a variety of backgrounds.

If the work period in the first fruit factories was more erratic than our notion of factory, so too did other conditions of work inside the cannery differ. Within the "fruit factory" relationships



**Del Monte—The Finest Fruits of California's Fairest Valleys**

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And it is only the most skillful preparation, in model orchard kitchens, where the fruit is packed the day it is picked, that can imprison the fresh-fruit flavor and sun-ripened lusciousness that you find in each DEL MONTE can.

And it takes men who have made fruit-canning methods a life-long study,—men who are pioneers in the business,—like those behind DEL MONTE—to know how to pack a whole line of California canned fruits and vegetables; all delicious, all uniform in quality, tempting to the taste and the pocket-book as well.

*The DEL MONTE Shield on every can is your guarantee of California's Finest Fruits and Vegetables.*

**CALIFORNIA PACKING CORPORATION  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

**Del Monte  
BRAND  
EXTRA  
QUALITY**

**CALIFORNIA CANNED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

*Santa Clara Valley received wide-spread recognition for the quality of the fruits grown and processed here, as seen by this advertisement from the "Saturday Evening Post," California History Center collection.*

tended to be personal especially in the nineteenth century. Until the canneries began to come under impersonal corporate control in the late 1890s, not infrequently the cannery owners themselves worked in the cannery and knew members of the workforce by name. Friendship and family relationships were maintained on the shop floor. Young women went to work in canneries with their girlfriends, sisters, mothers and grandmothers. In the summer months there was little separation between work and home life. Mothers whose responsibility for child care had not been modified by wage work brought their young children to work. Before the first child labor laws the children worked in the cannery too, contributing to the family's earnings at end of day.

Later some of the canneries established day nurseries to care for children while their mothers worked.

The actual work in the cannery promoted personal interchange because it was not automated or strictly ordered. In fact, a glance into an early cannery — which resembled a large warehouse — provides a vision of chaos and confusion. At the very beginning of the labor process, after the fruit had been delivered and sorted in rough categories, women stood at tables in a large room and prepared the fruit. Working rapidly, they cut the fruit with knives. At the same time they had to be careful to make sure the fruit was halved with a sharp regular cut so it would be attractive when the consumer opened the can. Then they removed the pit with a spoon-shaped pitter. Each variety of fruit called for different processes. When working on cherries women had to remove the stems; with peaches, peel off the tough, fuzzy skin. Pears were particularly fragile and had to be cored carefully to avoid mush.

A smaller number of women had the task of putting the prepared fruit in cans. Their job was difficult because they attempted to can the fruit quickly and yet keep eight or nine grades in mind. Their wages tended to be higher than the preparers. At the very last stages of the process, a small number of women had the job of pasting labels on the cans.

Cannery work was not entirely women's work in the nineteenth century. Off to the side a small number of male artisans also worked in canneries. They formed approximately one-fifth of the cannery labor force. Skilled workers, frequently Chinese men, cut and made the tin cans by hand. They soldered the sides together and left a hole on the top through which women inserted the fruit. At the end of the day, men called "cappers" soldered the top of the can shut. Other men, called processors, cooked the fruit. The canmakers, cappers and processors were a fiercely independent group of men because their skill was not easily replaced and was necessary to the canneries. Cannery owners, wanting to assert their control, attempted to invent machines to replace the skilled laborers. Over decades canmaking machines were invented which stamped out the tin, shaped it, and finally, which automatically soldered the seams of the tin can. In 1885 all stages of the process were combined in one machine, but in the Santa Clara Valley cannery owners did not use the machines until the first decade of the twentieth century. The canmakers resisted. In the interest of social peace in a community where owners and skilled workers were neighbors, the owners were restrained from displacing the canmakers for two decades. But eventually the canmakers and cappers were eliminated from the cannery labor force. The men



*Two women sorting peaches on the line, California History Center collection.*

responsible for cooking the fruit also found their decision-making power reduced with mechanization. With the exception of warehousemen and the shipping force, by the twentieth century the cannery labor force was primarily female. Women's unskilled work was never mechanized.

All stages of work gave the appearance of mayhem. Boxes of fruit in various stages of preparation were everywhere. Peelings and fruit juice dripped onto the floor and all over the women. They often stood in fruit juice all day and had to struggle not to slip on the slick floors as they carried their buckets to the checkers. Impish boys flung tubs of fruit on the table, "so that the fluid, passing through big cracks . . . would drench their (the women's) clothes and feet." (cont. page 9)

# ANNUAL REPORT

1987-1988

## Introduction

A major focus for the California History Center Foundation during 1987-88 was a goals and planning retreat held in March. Part of this effort included sending a survey to all current members asking for their reactions to our program areas. During January and February the CHC staff, utilizing the survey results, evaluated each program area in preparation for more in-depth discussion at the retreat.

On Wednesday afternoon March 16 and all-day Saturday, March 19, the Board of Trustees, staff, college and volunteer representatives met to begin the process of setting short and long term goals for the California History Center Foundation.

The following statement of purpose was used as a reference point throughout the retreat:

*The purpose of the California History Center and Foundation is to develop, document, interpret, preserve,*

*disseminate and promote local, regional, and California history; and to provide the facility, environment, funding and expertise to engage the community in the activities and achievements of the Foundation.*

*The purpose is accomplished through several program areas: 1) an academic history program for De Anza College students and residents of the Santa Clara Valley; 2) a research library and archive; 3) publications in California history; 4) a history exhibition program; 5) heritage tours and special events; 6) a volunteer program; 7) projects such as oral and video histories; 8) public relations and outreach; 9) fund raising and membership.*

This annual report will focus primarily on the work begun as a result of the retreat.

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## Reflections From The President of the Board

Stone age people built huts alongside a river. Local wars are fought among villages and neighboring tribes. These warring natives fall victim to foreign invaders from a distant land with superior, iron technology. This culture in turn is overcome. After a long period, an agrarian culture is displaced by a society based on new, emerging technology.

San Jose? Silicon Valley? No. Paris! France. I was given the assignment to review my first year as President of the California History Center Foundation as I was leaving for this city on the banks of the river Seine. The 2000 years of history at my feet has given me reason to think of what "history" is and what purpose a local historical society fills.

I came to the job of president without knowing what was expected of me. This was one reason I requested a retreat, a summit so to speak. Board members, staff, volunteers and college representatives came together to assess the past, to discuss and plan for the California History Center future, to make clear our purpose and our common goals. How can we best serve local history? Who is our audience? What is our purpose? And above all, why do we care?

For me the highlight of the year was the process of assessing

ourselves in the March retreat, identifying problems and searching for solutions. A questionnaire sent out to members had close to a 25% return with a decidedly positive evaluation of our various programs, indicating that our members believe we are doing our job. But what is that job?

As I tour Paris I am reminded of the various ways a community records its history: great monuments remember events and people, plaques are inscribed on buildings and sculpture, museums display art and artifacts, libraries contain written words considered valued treasures. The stones from the Bastille are used to build a new bridge over the river Seine. Paris heaves and sighs its history.

Even houses are kept as monuments. Take the Trianons in the garden of the Versailles palace. There are two Trianons: a grand and a petite. While the architecture of the grand Trianon was used by Willis Polk to model our own petite, the spirit of the smaller structure informs our De Anza campus model in Cupertino.

In it a bust of Marie Antoinette stands on a mantel. She once lived in this gracious palace and created much of its elegance. During the French revolution the patriots stormed the royal residence, a summer pavillion, and threw the bisque bust to the floor. She actually did lose her head, but the bust has been restored

and replaced on the mantel. Now as I look at it with its obvious cracks, I realize that while our building has been patterned on the aristocratic tradition of Europe, our purpose is informed by the ideals of the French revolution, summarized by the words "Equality, fraternity, liberty."

These ideals, shared by the American revolutionaries, have come down to us at the history center. Consider the subjects we have highlighted this year in our exhibits: working women, the Chinese immigrants of Monterey County, the hard rock gold miners of Grass Valley. Note the books in process this year: photographs and histories of the houses of Sunnyvale — a city founded with the slogan of a "poor man's paradise" — a book on Grace Carpenter Hudson's paintings of the Pomo Indians of northern California, the scow schooners of San Francisco Bay and a children's book of the 19th century.

Take note of the major exhibit for next year, *By the Sweat of Thy Brow: The Story of Labor in Santa Clara Valley*. On behalf of this project the California History Center hosted a concert by Holly Near with the Santa Clara County Central Labor Council. While we didn't make the funds we hoped, we reached an audience we have never reached before, thereby widening the circle of people we reach.

During the year we have featured lectures on labor history, Chinese plays, a Celtic harpist, a vintage fashion show. We have featured tours to Yosemite, Muir Woods, Ano Nuevo Beach and a native plant walk among others. We have won an award for our book *Japanese Legacy*.

Our local history focus has been ethnic diversity, every man, every woman, the laborer in the field, the bay, the crosscurrents of peoples who have mixed together to create the unique ambiance of Santa Clara County, the Bay Area and California. These and the land itself are our subjects, the very history of ourselves in this special place.

But the history center also performs an immediate communal purpose bringing together volunteers who meet in endless meetings to help attain our common goals. We rely on our volunteers to lead groups through our exhibits, to help with clerical work, to bring history to our community.

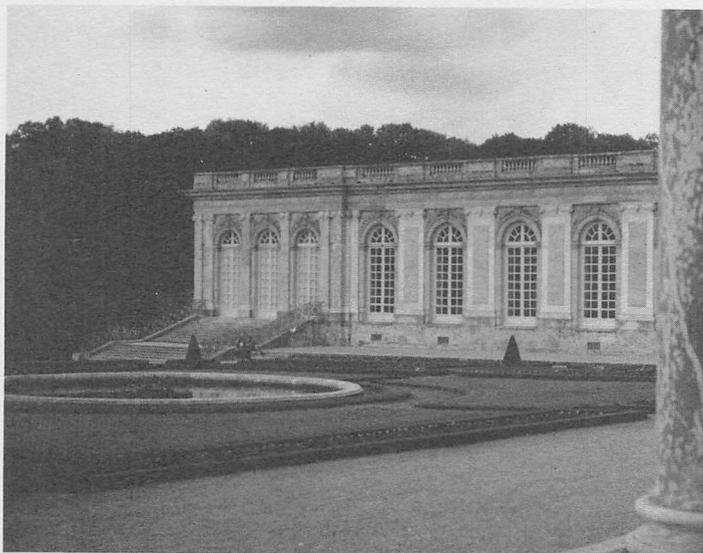
Our new librarian, Lisa Christiansen, has given our library program new impetus and a fresh overview of the library's purpose and direction.

As I have reviewed the way Paris remembers itself I have compared our own efforts at the California History Center and I find much common ground. While we work on a small scale, our methods are not so different. Do we also share the same reasons for remembering?

On a cave wall in France, hand prints from prehistoric time of human history were formed by applying ground ochre around the edges of individual hands. A similar hand print, spray painted on the wall of the Paris Metro declares "I was here," a recurring expression of the human desire to be remembered, to make a mark in the void. History is the human fling in the face of time and eternity.

So we will go on caring and trying to make our history a true reflection of what we were and how we came to be what we are. We welcome your comments, your support and your participation. In a sense we are you.

**Yvonne Jacobson, President**  
Board of Trustees



*The Grand Trianon, Paris, France, was the model used by architect Willis Polk when he designed the center's "petit Trianon." Photo courtesy Yvonne Jacobson.*

## Committee Reports

One result of the retreat was to restructure, and in some cases reactivate, CHCF Board committees to reflect the program areas vital to the purpose of the center. Six of these committees, with board, staff and volunteer representatives, met during the spring to assess the 1987-88 year and discuss possible goals for future years. Following are reports from each committee with a listing at the end, by last name, of those people who served on the committee.

### Library and Archive

The potential for equal visibility for the library program with other California History Center programs increased this year with the re-instatement in May 1988 of the Library/Archive Committee. The committee met to consider the goals deemed most urgent by the participants at the March retreat.

Goals considered were 1) establish collection policies for library and archive, 2) money for proper storage and preservation of materials, 3) assure adequate staffing, 4) make collections accessible, 5) brochure summarizing nature of library holdings, and 6) develop special funding.

Personnel and capital costs required to execute these projects were estimated and a budget proposal to cover the next several years was developed. The preservation project, involving the purchase and application of acid-free, archival quality materials to the library's rare and unique documents and photos, may require an outside source of funding. The budget proposal will go before the Board of Trustees for approval.

A library newsletter will be developed and mailed to members, a suggestion from the retreat. Notes from the library, reviews and bibliographies will be among the offerings.

Also planned for next year is a library brochure, describing the library, its holdings and services. The brochure will be used to educate the public about our library and can be used as a public relations/informational tool for soliciting outside funding.

Improved communication, cooperation and coordination with area public, academic, and private libraries were considered desirable goals by retreat participants and committee members. Methods of implementation were discussed at this meeting.

Input from CHC membership, as well as committee members and volunteers, is vital to the growth of the library as a "user-oriented" institution.

*Committee members: Anderson, Christiansen, Riisberg, Syvertson, Williams, Windham.*

### Publications and Exhibits

Publications and exhibits are two of the most visible programs offered by the California History Center Foundation. Our exhibits are visited by hundreds of community residents and local school children each year and numerous of our publications have gained state-wide recognition. This committee meets periodically to discuss the merits of manuscripts under consideration and talk about possible topics for upcoming exhibits.

Four books have been in progress this year and will be available in the fall: *Pomo Dawn of Song*, a work on the Pomo Indians containing a selection of poetry and a collection of Grace Carpenter Hudson's paintings and sketches; *Uncle John's Stories for Good California Children*, a facsimile reproduction of an 1860s children's book; *Scow Schooners of the San Francisco Bay*, a fascinating history of the boats which ferried cargo around the bay before the bridges and freeways; and *Images: Sunnyvale's Heritage Resources*, a look at this city's architectural past.

One goal the committee deemed appropriate for next year is to review the selection procedure for all incoming manuscripts and accept manuscripts for publication based partially on the impact the process will have on other CHC programs.

Another goal in the publications area is to publish occasional selections of student papers. These papers will be gathered from the research papers submitted as a requirement of the History of California course taught at the center.

A third major goal with regard to publications is to improve the marketing of our books to local book stores and at appropriate community festivals.

In the area of exhibits, the general consensus at the retreat and by this committee was that the center should make every effort to mount one original exhibit per year. However, part of this effort is to look at the possibility of hiring a part-time curator to handle the coordination of exhibits, both original and borrowed.

Borrowed exhibits will continue to round out our exhibit program and we will actively seek new sources for exhibits deemed of interest to our members.

Another area of consideration is to implement a traveling exhibit program utilizing past exhibits mounted by the center. Although the CHC has four exhibits in storage, three are in need of repair, minor to major, and need to have travelling cases made. Depending upon time and funding this project could be accomplished in the upcoming year.

Fundraising is a major component for both the publication and exhibit programs. The committee feels that the goals of these two areas can be achieved through the receipt of adequate funds. Of all objectives, fundraising is paramount. The committee recommends that over the next several years an effort be made to build an all inclusive fund rather than funds for individual projects. This would give the CHCF exhibits and publications continuity as well as a sound financial base.

*Committee members: Anderson, Peregrin, Warburton, White, Williams, Wright*



The hands on table was a real hit with the many school children who toured spring quarter's "After The Gold Rush" exhibit. Photo by Jim Cochrane.

## Tours and Volunteers

A committee was formed after the retreat to examine two program areas heretofore not specifically dealt with by the board. CHC tours and events have been planned and executed by the staff with little involvement on the part of the trustees. Likewise, the history center volunteer program has been run by staff and volunteers. Both of these program areas, it was decided, deserve attention and input by the trustees.

The committee reviewed tours and events offered by the history center in the last few years and considered the feedback of members and tour participants; it was determined that the program is essentially strong, and that few changes are needed. In response to requests by trustees and members, an increasing number of events (such as lectures, vintage fashion shows, and historical plays) will be offered at the history center. There will also be an effort to develop more local natural history tours tied in with human habitation, and to continue to add new people to an already excellent group of tour leaders.

While the quality of CHCF tours has remained high, the costs of maintaining the program have increased over the last few years. Expenses for a trip to Monterey are listed below to provide an

example of costs for a typical day tour; costs are based on a minimum of twenty participants.

Round-trip bus charter:	$\$406.00 \div 20 = \$20.30/\text{person}$
Museum or park entrance fees:	2.50
Group lunch:	9.50
Honorarium to tour leader*:	$\$100.00 \div 20 = 5.00$
Total cost per person:	\$37.30

\*(Tour leaders are responsible for preparation of the trip as well as leading the group the day of the tour.)

In addition, there are administrative costs in providing a tour program including the cost of printing and mailing the calendar of events, which each member receives. In order to cover these costs and hopefully raise some funds for the foundation, tours and events are priced slightly higher than the actual per person cost of the trip. In recent years, the price charged to participants has not increased as steadily as the cost of trips; while tour costs have been covered, the foundation has actually run a deficit in the tour program area. Therefore, the committee recommended that tour costs be increased, with less of an increase to member prices than non-member prices.

Members of this committee brought with them numerous ideas

about the volunteer program. The history center depends on volunteers for successful operation of several of its programs, notably the library and docent tours of the exhibits. In the upcoming year, we will be actively involved in improving the organization of our volunteer program and recruiting new volunteers. CHCF members who have any time to give are especially encouraged to inquire about our volunteer program, as they already meet the preliminary criterion: possessing an interest in making sure that the heritage of the Santa Clara Valley is preserved.

*Committee members: Brynjolfsson, Givens, Mayhood, Riisberg, Roberts, Williams, Wright, and tour coordinator Carol Verbeeck.*

## Public Relations

Several major ideas emanating from the Public Relations Committee were brought to fruition during this year.

One was the distribution of a CHC Speakers Bureau brochure to many organization in the community. This led to increased demand for CHC speakers — approximately 15 requests since January. Plans for a second mailing, this time including new target groups, are in progress.

A second big achievement was the issuance of a “Join Us” poster meant to convey the essence of the history center to the general public. It was posted in libraries, industries and other places of public assembly, and the return postcards attached to it have resulted in 87 requests for further information.

Third, as a result of the survey sent to members in January, we learned that our “market” is highly educated, mostly retired, centered in Cupertino and Sunnyvale with San Jose, Saratoga, Los Altos and Palo Alto next in order, and mainly California natives or residents for 15 years or so. This information will help the history center with member and student recruitment.

For the coming year, the PR committee is working on ways to network history groups with the hope of providing our community with better access to local history events and organizations.

Part of this network effort will be the preparation, by the CHC, of a directory of local heritage organizations, museums and commissions. This directory will be made available to all county historical groups and other interested parties. In addition, a get-acquainted event for history groups, to be held at the Trianon, is tentatively planned for Winter.

*Committee members: Bennett, Givens, Jacobson, Matt, Peregrin, Petersen, Tobiassen, Williams, Winslow*

## Membership and Fundraising

The strength of the California History Center Foundation is in large part measured by its membership. The Membership Committee pursued as one of its goals the task of updating statistics to include only paying members whose membership was active, and to exclude from the numbers complimentary and lapsed memberships. This provided a realistic picture of the strength of the organization in terms of numbers of paid memberships.

Results of this process are listed below; the figures represent the time period from July 1, 1987 through **June 30, 1988.**

Total number of memberships:	505
New memberships:	83
Non-renewing memberships:	75

As a result of the March retreat, the Ways and Means Committee merged with the Membership and Nominations Committees. It was felt that since membership plays a critical role in determining the funding base of an organization, the goals of each committee might best be achieved by combining the two. Trustees, staff, and volunteers determined several goals for the committee, using as a guideline surveys that were completed and returned by members earlier in the year. The committee’s first task will be to implement a major fund raising event open to the community. Yet specifically undetermined but planned in conjunction with the 20th anniversary if the CHCF, this event will be the first offered by the history center since the Saratoga Heritage Home Tours.

In addition to fundraising events and activities, the membership/fundraising committee is looking at other ways of generating funds, such as seeking grants from large local corporations and foundations that may not have been approached by the CHCF in the past, and soliciting sustaining memberships from local businesses. A major aspect of both of these is knowing and making contact with the appropriate person; members of the committee will be actively seeking these contacts in the upcoming year.

One of the most important roles of the membership/fundraising committee will be to regularly evaluate membership benefits and fees. Our members are very important to us, and foremost of the responsibilities of this committee is to assure that members of the history center realize the value of their support.

*Committee members: Brynjolfsson, Kubokawa, Lopina, Manning, Riisberg, Turkus, Ward, Williams*

## Academic Program

Many CHCF members take history center classes and while the foundation has no direct control over the academic portion of our program, it certainly has an influence on the subject matter, number and scope of the classes we offer. The center will continue in its efforts to recruit qualified, quality faculty and generally strengthen our academic program.

Due to recently mandated state requirements for all college credit courses; beginning with the 1988-89 academic year, each history center course will need to require some sort of reading and writing assignments and a determined method of evaluation.

Two other areas we hope to focus on in the coming year include, one, increasing our enrollments by expanding the visibility of CHC courses in the community and two, to begin developing special curriculum for targeted groups such as local elementary and high school teachers.

*Committee members: Peregrin, Sullivan, Williams*

## Special Projects

This particular committee did not meet during the spring quarter, however its function will be to evaluate projects proposed to the center by outside organizations for possible CHC involvement. Each year the center is approached by various individuals and/or organizations for support or sponsorship of a special project. Such projects, which do not fall under other CHC program areas, might include oral or video histories, research and documentation of the history of a local company or a special book project.

The responsibility of the Special Projects Committee will be to look at each proposal as it is submitted, evaluate the project in terms of funding potential, staff time, value of the project as it relates to the purpose of the center, and make a decision on whether or not the center should become involved.

*Committee members: Jacobson, Syvertson, Warburton, Williams, Winslow*



*Internationally known recording artist Holly Near, center, performed in concert at the Flint Center in support of the center's labor history project. She took time out after the show to meet with some of her fans. Photo by Jim Cochrane.*

## Busy Volunteer Year

Since the California History Center opened in September for the 1987-88 year, the active docents and volunteers have contributed approximately 1000 hours. In addition to assisting with exhibit openings and other events at the center, they have represented the history center at the Cupertino Bicentennial, De Anza Day and Living History Days at the San Jose Historical Museum.

Other volunteers have spent many hours on library projects, membership renewal and helping the Public Relations Committee distribute posters to area libraries, Chambers of Commerce and local businesses, in addition to serving as guest speakers for community service clubs.

In January the colorful Chinese Gold exhibit opened and was followed by After the Gold Rush. Both were very popular with adult and school groups. Busy docents conducted tours of the exhibits and the campus for several hundreds of visitors. Nell Ward handled the scheduling of docent tours during winter and spring and did an outstanding job.

Recently four regular, and always dependable, volunteers Mary Jane Givens, Betty Petersen, Helen Riisberg and Jenny Wright, were recognized by the San Jose Junior League during a special luncheon to honor volunteers. During the year Mary Jane Givens gave over 100 hours and Helen Riisberg an exemplary 200+ hours.

The following volunteers contributed at least 40 hours to the center:

Marge Carrere	Nell Ward
Lisa Christiansen	Jenny Wright
Betty Petersen	

Some volunteers will be spending time during the summer accumulating data related to the labor history exhibit scheduled to open in the fall.

To all the volunteers: thank you for your dedication and support of the California History Center, we hope you are proud of your achievements this year.

### **Mabel Mayhood**

Volunteer Coordinator

# Incredible Year for the Library

Libraries, like most institutions, prosper during periods of continuity and sustained, manageable growth. It is evidence of the soundness and strength of the California History Center Library/Archive program that in the past year of personnel change, rapid growth of the collection, and intense self-study, the library has maintained and extended its service to users.

In December, 1987, Shirley Clements the librarian who established the library program, left her position with the center. As the new librarian, I hope to continue the tradition of professionalism Shirley brought to her work.

Beginning January 4 the library increased its hours of staffing to 25 hours per week with a librarian present Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and 1-4 p.m.

During the 1987-88 academic year 262 volumes were catalogued for the collection, 240 of which were donated, bringing our total book holdings to 1187. Also added were 100 oral histories on audio tape and 20 video tapes. Student research papers continue to be processed and 700 were added to the card catalog this year.

Two very kind gifts of books were made to the library this year. Mrs. Marjorie Melone Warwick donated the rare 19th century volume *Coast Counties* by Guinn, with the intention of raising money for the library by its sale. A rare book expert and dealer, Florian Shasky of Mountain View, donated his time to appraise the volume for us. The second donation was a fine first edition 1876 Thompson and West *Historical Atlas and Map of Santa Clara County*, from Mrs. Mildred Worswick.

Participants in the March retreat stated clearly their support for the Library/Archive Program and their ideas for its further development. Recommendations from the retreat were brought before the Library/Archive Committee in May, with a trustee in attendance for the first time.

The task of coordinating a busy, growing library is made possible by the eager, able and dependable participation of volunteers, interns, Foothill/De Anza District early retirees, De Anza's cataloging department, students earning extra credit and the staff of the California History Center.

To recite the activities of our volunteers and interns is to tell much of the story of how our library functions. Volunteer Cecilia Anderson processes book acquisitions; Helen Riisberg clips and labels items from the pamphlet file; Marge Carrere and Betty Petersen file the clippings. Harriet Duzet, a new volunteer this year, types catalog cards and labels for audio-visual materials and our brand new volunteer Nancy Bratman has embarked on the identification of our slide collections.

Larry Littell and Janet Ilacqua, interns from Foothill's library program contributed immeasurably to our progress. And finally two district retirees, Dave Ward and Helen Windham, provided 220 hours of work in their respective specialties of audio visual cataloging and photo-archives department.

The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of our effort is patron appeal and satisfaction. We have assisted hundreds of students and researchers this year.

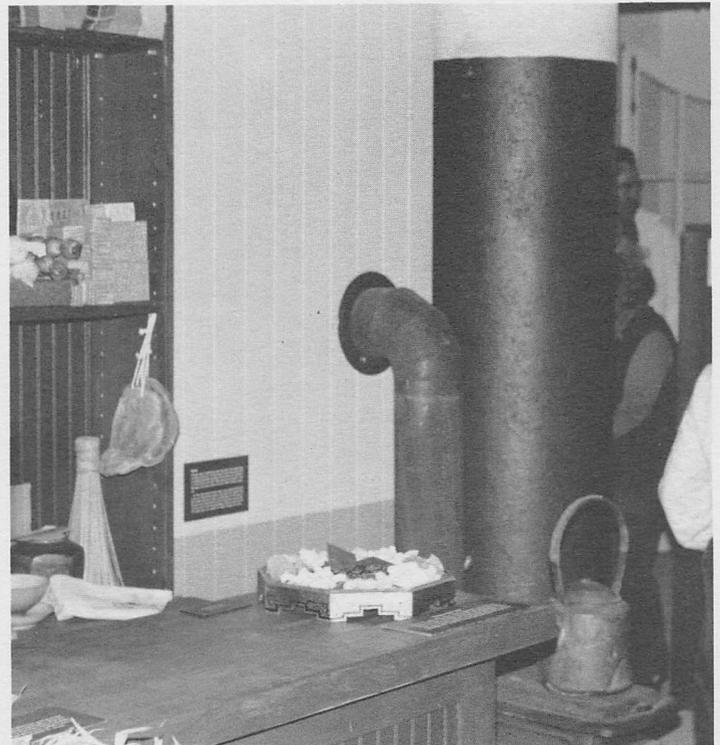
Non-profit and commercial video programs have been completed using our materials. As the public becomes more aware of the history center library as a source for information and materials, our usage will increase. We are working to increase our efficiency, accessibility and subject coverage to meet tomorrow's demands.

**Lisa Christiansen**  
Librarian

## We Appreciate You

We would like to thank the following people for volunteering time to the CHC during 1987-88:

Jewel Altman	Mabel Mayhood
Cecilia Anderson	Betty Petersen
Roy Anderson	Helen Riisberg
Dorothy Bivens	Eloise Rosenberg
Nancy Bratman	Lorene Speth
Sally Buel	Frank Speth
Roger Buel	Genevieve Tobiassen
Marge Carrere	Evelyn Turkus
Lisa Christiansen	Peggy Turner
Jim Cochrane	Nell Ward
Harriet Duzet	Beverly Weintraub
Helen Ewbank	Helen Windham
Mary Jane Givens	Jenny Wright
Elsie Matt	



*A Chinese store reminiscent of the early days in Monterey County added to the wonderful ambiance of the Chinese Gold exhibit on display January through March. Photo by John Rickman.*

# Financial Summary

## Revenue Category Definitions

- Membership – new and renewing memberships
- Donations – general donations; Project Immortality
- Programs & Events – heritage tours; exhibit openings
- Publications – books/resale; sale/CHC books; restricted publications
- Exhibits – exhibits; restricted exhibit funds
- Interest – interest income
- Miscellaneous – subscriptions; library/photo fees; library endowments

## Expenditure Category Definitions

- Exhibits – restricted exhibit projects; docents
- Programs & Events – events; public relations/advertising; special projects/entertainment; awards & recognition; Project Immortality
- Publications – cost of goods sold; Californian; 80% printing; restricted publications
- Administration – 20% printing; bank charges; postage; telephone
- Salaries – contracted services - library, docent/volunteer, instruc/media
- Miscellaneous – equipment repair; library supplies; books & photos; periodicals
- \*restricted funds – money donated to CHC to fund a specific project, i.e. exhibit, book, or library endowment.

## 1987-1988 BALANCE SHEET

Insured Cash Fund*	\$ 85,066
Inventory	6,010
Endowment Fund	20,116
Fixed Assets	5,169
Other	10,239

TOTAL ASSETS \$126,600

\*Includes revenue for projects in progress.

## 1987-1988 REVENUE

Memberships	\$17,842
Donations	9,445
Programs & Events	20,370
Publications	27,410
Interest	4,267
Miscellaneous	1,882
Exhibits	14,609

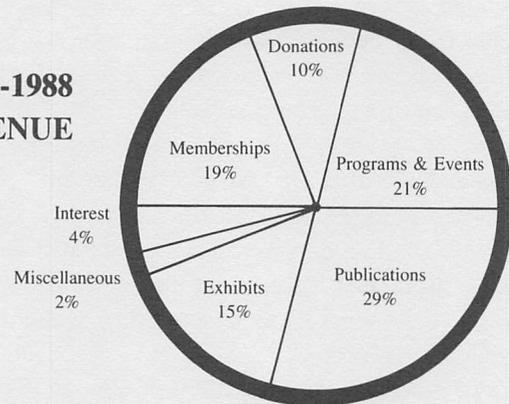
TOTAL \$95,825

## 1987-1988 EXPENDITURES

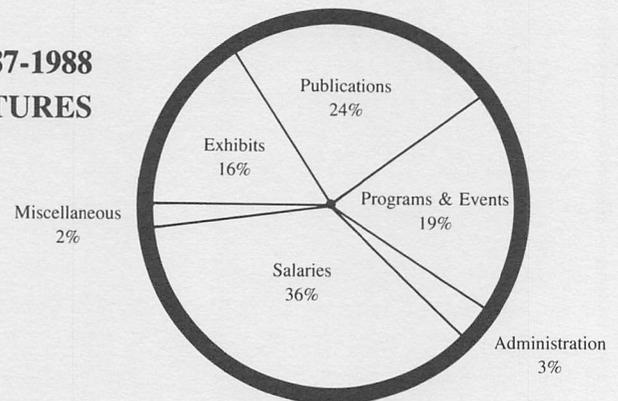
Exhibits	\$ 18,182
Programs & Events	21,103
Publications	27,857
Administration	3,518
Salaries	41,533
Miscellaneous	2,426

TOTAL \$114,619

## 1987-1988 REVENUE



## 1987-1988 EXPENDITURES



Women were generally paid by the amount of fruit they cut, piece rates, so they worked at a fast pace. The knives were sharp and the pace produced disastrous results. Cutters could be recognized by their characteristic bandaged hands. Women and girls went to and from carrying heavy forty pound boxes of fruit. They had to carry the boxes to the work tables themselves. It was not until the twentieth century, and then only in some canneries that conveyors and pulleys were introduced to move the fruit from one stage of the process to the next. In some canneries boys were hired to bring the fruit to the women.

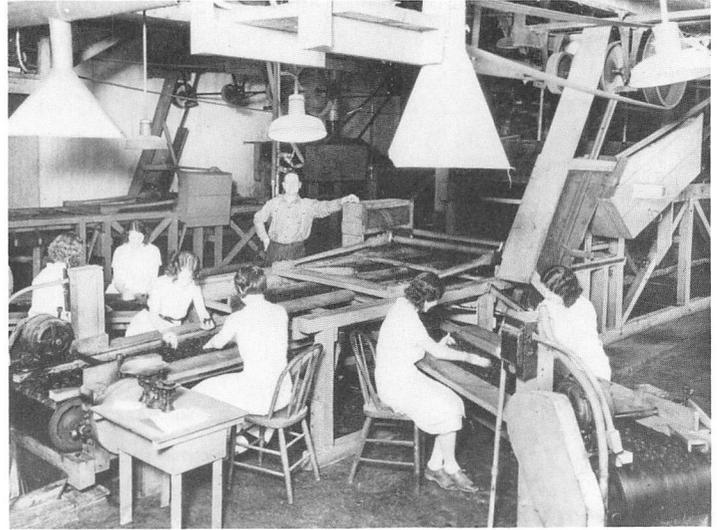
Women were competitive over which loads of fruit they got to work on. Fruit was not of uniform quality and larger smoother fruit was easier to manipulate than small irregular fruit. They wanted to be able to process a batch quickly so that they could then bring their finished buckets of fruit to the checker and get on to another lot. Sometimes women fought over loads of fruit or complained when the young men delivering fruit gave preferential treatment to their girlfriends.

The range of interpersonal relationships among the members of the cannery labor force was wide, from competition among some women, parental discipline when children were working, to friendship and solidarity at other times. The spirit of cooperation was manifest when, periodically, women acted together to protest poor labor conditions. The women were not unionized. The seasonal nature of the work made it difficult to organize cannery workers. In general, unions found it difficult to keep in touch with workers who came together only part of the year and then scattered in the winter. And unions at that time did not exert much effort to organize women workers.

Cannery workers grew accustomed to managing harsh working conditions in their own way. One response was simply to quit work when the pace and hours grew too exhausting. The labor turnover among cannery workers was extremely high in the early twentieth century, with only a minority of women working through the entire season. Because their product was so perishable cannery officials were very concerned about this form of protest.

Protest also took the form of spontaneous walk-outs. When conditions deteriorated women would talk among themselves and then decide to stop working until the conditions were improved. Those short strikes were largely successful because owners feared their fruit would rot if the employees ceased work.

Certain complaints recurred among the women workers. They found it unfair when the boxes of fruit they prepared were heaped up with extra fruit that they were not paid for. Boxes supposed



*Women packing house workers sorting dried prunes to determine number of prunes per pound at the Sunsweet packing plant, California History Center collection.*

to weigh forty pounds actually weighed fifty pounds so women actually did additional work without compensation. Women also complained when the management did not sufficiently respect their dignity. Women walked out more than once when one particular foreman cursed at them.

Last, women also protested to support the working men in their families and in their ethnic communities. In 1917 cannery workers in the Santa Clara Valley went on strike and were able to get women in San Francisco and Oakland to join them in order to support an organization of male agricultural workers. The women brought the industry to a halt in northern California and achieved short term gains for their husbands and fathers as well as for themselves.

In their unorthodox methods of protest as well as their unique working conditions women workers had different methods and goals than men. They were an important part of the labor force and understanding them helps give us a fuller picture of Santa Clara Valley labor industry.

*Greenberg, recipient of a Carey McWilliams Fellowship in 1984, completed her Ph.D. at UCLA in 1985. The topic of her dissertation was "Industry in the Garden: A Social History of the Canning Industry and Cannery Workers in the Santa Clara Valley, California, 1870-1920." She is currently an instructor of history at UCLA.*

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## PIONEER PROFILE

### Ignatius “Slugger” Ficarrota: Pioneer Labor Leader

by James C. Williams

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At the beginning of this century millions of European immigrants flooded the United States — “huddled masses” from Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Hungary, and scores of other nations. Largely working class and farming people, many of them played an important role in the story of the American labor movement, as they traveled from overflowing east coast cities to the midwest and Pacific coast. The Ficarrota family was among those coming to California, drawn to San Jose by people who said it was “like little Sicily.”

In 1914, not long after arriving here, Mrs. Ficarrota gave birth to a son, Ignatius. The boy grew up in a tightly knit immigrant community and earned the nickname “Slugger” when he hit a bases loaded home run in a high school ball game. Later he recalled that the 90% Italian ethnic enclave, located below today’s Highway 280 in the area of Almaden Avenue and First Street, was called “Goosetown.” It was, he thought, “probably one of the best neighborhoods around.” The people were “mostly all cannery workers, [and] the school was mostly Italian boys and girls . . .”

As a young boy Slugger worked with his brothers and sisters “during the summers . . . just picking fruit and cutting fruit . . .” Soon he joined other boys in trying to get a job at the canneries by facing “the shape-up system,” which meant standing “out in front for hours and days trying to get on . . . Course we all lied about our age. We all said we were 18, but we were about 14 or 15.” In 1928 he got a seasonal job at Bisceglia Brothers cannery and later passed up a chance to study at San Jose State College in order to help support his family.

Slugger got his first experience with working class struggles in a 1931 wildcat strike. When he got off work one afternoon at Bisceglia’s, people were picketing. That night at dinner his father told him: “You shouldn’t cross the picket line ’cause the people are out there trying to better their working conditions.” So he honored the picket line, returning to see his foreman and go back to work only after the strike was over. What he was told made him an instant supporter of unions: “Oh, no . . . You walked out on strike. You won’t never work here again.”

Slugger found another job at Richmond Chase and around 1934 became interested in the effort to unionize cannery workers. He was elected shop steward in the local worker union, which turned out to be very hard work: “Young talent made the cannery union go,” he recalled in 1975. “Only young people could have put in the hours we did. Why, an eighteen-hour day was nothing to me

— that was the only way to keep my job at the cannery and go to all the house meetings, too . . .”

In 1937 management of the canneries stepped around “radical” organizers like Slugger and accepted another cannery local organized by the craft-oriented State Federation of Labor (AFL). Slugger and other shop stewards felt betrayed. “We had done all the preliminary [organizing] work for years,” said Don Sanfilippo, “and then all of a sudden there’s a back door deal and a company union . . . Slugger and I and our group decided to go along for the time being, and then try to take control of it.” Skirmishing with the elected union leaders, even picketing their own labor temple, they finally gained control at a monthly meeting in 1939. Slugger was selected business manager, and two years later they won workers a 25% pay increase in a dramatic industry-wide strike.

During World War Two, Slugger served in the army, returning to his union job in January 1946. For almost 30 more years, he continued to be an important leader of the valley’s cannery workers. With over 20,000 union members during the postwar years, he supervised as many as 10 business agents at a time, served several years on the county grand jury, and earned an important place in the valley as a pioneer labor leader.

*For this article, CHC Director Williams, drew extensively from the 1986 taped oral history interview done with Slugger for the center’s Santa Clara Valley Labor History Project. It is one of over 30 labor history interviews completed during the past two years.*



*The Ficarrota children, with Slugger on the left, take a break from picking fruit in the 1920s. Photo courtesy Ficarrota family.*

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## State and Regional History

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As a benefit of membership in the California History Center Foundation, the center provides registration assistance to members who are taking history center classes only. All other students wishing to take history center classes, or members taking classes in other departments, must register through De Anza College. The center will register members M-F, 8 a.m. -noon and 1-4 p.m., beginning Tuesday, September 6. For more complete details see the De Anza College fall quarter Schedule of Classes.

### **Yugoslavs of California:** *Elsie Matt*

Yugoslavs of California explores the unique and fascinating history of Yugoslav-Americans through lectures, films, research and field trips to historical points of interest in the Bay Area and Gold Country. The experience provides the student with an insight into the culture, traditions and contributions of the Yugoslavs to the development of California and the Santa Clara Valley. Two Saturday field trips to Watsonville, Jackson and Angels Camp.

### **Big Basin/Ano Nuevo and Monterey:** *Lee Van Fossen*

Big Basin, Ano Nuevo and Monterey is designed to explore the natural history and historical areas in the vicinity of the central Santa Cruz Mtns. and along the coast from Monterey to Big Sur. Students will visit the first state park in California and the nearby lumber producing areas. Ecological interactions of the plants and animals of the redwood forest will be discussed. Agriculture, grazing, recreational and petroleum uses and resources will be the focus of the Ano Nuevo trip, as well as the natural history of marine birds, mammals and tidepool life. The final field trip takes students to the Monterey Coast where they will visit ancient Indian fishing and hunting grounds, view resources used by early settlers and examine tidepool life, marine wildlife, flowers and trees.

### **Santa Cruz Mtns. Natural History:** *Tom Taber*

Parks and Trails of the Santa Cruz Mtns. provides an opportunity for the first-hand study of California's natural history. Taught by the author of the "Santa Cruz Mtns. Trailbook" and "Where to See Wildlife in California," the class will focus on the general topography, climate, plants and animals of the Santa Cruz Mtns. area. Saturday walking tours to Uvas Canyon, Castle Rock and Ano Nuevo.

### **Golden Gate Bridge/Pacific Heights:** *Betty Hirsch*

Golden Gate Bridge and Pacific Heights explores the drama, heroism and high adventure in the building of this historical bridge, which celebrated its 50th birthday last year. The history of Pacific Heights will also be discussed, covering the lives of some of its most prominent residents including the Spreckles family - the sugar king; the Leibs family of the Leibs Department Store; Ernest Coxhead, landmark architect; the Bourn family, builders of Filoli; and the Haas-Lilienthal families. A walk across the Golden Gate Bridge and a walking tour of Pacific Heights will be led by the San Francisco City Guides.

### **The Grand Mansions:** *Betty Hirsch*

The Grand Mansions provides a glimpse into the history and architecture of a myriad of mansions found in the San Francisco Bay Area. Ranging in style from Victorian to Spanish Villa to Georgian, sites to be visited include Villa Montalvo, Saratoga; Kohl Mansion, Burlingame; Lathrop House, Redwood City; McConaghy House, Hayward; Shadelands House, Walnut Creek; and Tao House, Danville. Other mansions, their histories, architects and architectural styles will be highlighted.

### **Bay Area Museums:** *Chatham Forbes*

Bay Area Museums presents the history, development, collections, community roles and relationships of representative Bay Area Museums in selected cities and towns. Historical, natural history and art institutions will be studied on site and in the classroom. Museums to be visited include Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Triton Museum, Santa Clara; Stanford Museum and San Jose Historical Museum, among others. Four field trips included.

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**Grass Valley/Nevada City:** *Bill Palmer*

Grass Valley/Nevada City and the Northern Mines explores gold mining in California through the colorful history of the northern mines area, which centered around communities such as Grass Valley, Nevada City, Downeyville and Sierra City. North of Auburn on Highway 49, these towns, by the turn-of-the-century, had grown to be among the state's major gold producers. More important, they had become world leaders in development of mining technology; so great were their reputations that the region was known as the "Mecca of the Mining World." Since that time, the years and depletion of the mines have taken their toll, but there remains a rich cultural heritage and many reminders of this historic past. Weekend field trip included.

**James Lick and His Observatory:** *Jerry Ifft*

James Lick and His Observatory focuses on this eccentric millionaire and California philanthropist who built an observatory on Mt. Hamilton 100 years ago. Lick grew up in Pennsylvania, spent years as a piano maker in South America and made a fortune in San Francisco real estate. He used some of his money to build Lick House, the largest hotel in the West. But it was Lick's last will and testament that brought him lasting fame. He bequeathed money for an observatory on Mt. Hamilton, east of San Jose. The telescope was the largest of its time and 1988 marks the 100th anniversary of the observatory's completion. Saturday field trip included.

**California and the Civil War:** *Jerry Ifft*

California and the Civil War examines the history of California during the Civil War years. Some 16,000 Californians served the Union in such units as the California Column and the California Battalion. The state supplied gold to the northern cause and was a major contributor to the Sanitary Commission, today's Red Cross. The course will cover such major figures as Governor Leland Stanford, Generals Alfred Sidney Johnston and George Wright, Colonel Edward Baker, Thomas Starr King, Dan Showalter and Asbury Harpending.

**Historic Buildings of Sunnyvale:** *Kent Seavey*

Historic Buildings of Sunnyvale will explore the meaning and methods used in preserving America's cultural heritage. Seavey, former historical coordinator for Monterey County, has directed preservation surveys in Monterey and San Juan Bautista, and authored the just released preservation study of Sunnyvale, *Images, Sunnyvale's Heritage Resources*. He will focus on historic preservation as an interdisciplinary field which emphasizes conserving the buildings and other human-created features which represent human culture. Historic site visits will be made and Sunnyvale's historic preservation experience will be a focus of the course.



*Our illustrious CHC instructor Bill Palmer was the keynote speaker for the opening of the gold rush exhibit on April 16. Photo courtesy Audrey Butcher.*

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# FOUNDATION NOTES

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## Volunteer Profile

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There is a saying that goes “if you want to make sure something gets done, ask a busy person.” This certainly applies to CHC docent and volunteer Betty Petersen. Since she retired from the Cupertino School District in 1984 Betty has been affiliated not only with the CHC, but also with the Environmental Volunteers, Sunnyvale History Docents, Saratoga’s Hakone Gardens docent program, and was just installed as the president of her chapter of the California Retired Teacher’s Association. And all of this is in addition to her music.

Betty was born in Washington, D.C. and at the age of two and a half her family moved to Ohio. Her parents encouraged an early interest in music by buying her a violin and music was the direction she pursued at Oxford Ohio’s Miami University. She earned a bachelor’s degree in violin and did a fifth year in music education.

After college Betty decided to pursue something a little different and more exciting. She went to work for the Aeronca Aircraft Co. covering the wings of airplanes with fabric, eventually moving into the office of the company.

Volunteerism was a part of Betty’s life even at this age. She joined the Civil Air Patrol and was trained as an aircraft instrument technician. It was this training which led her to a job on the flight line at Patterson Field in Dayton, checking and repairing instruments on B-17s, B-24s and B-29s.

Betty met her husband Ragnar (better known as Rags), who was in the Air Force at the time, at the Purple Cow hamburger place. After a two and a half year courtship, mostly by mail, they were married in 1944 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

The three Petersen children were born in Los Angeles, where the family lived from 1946 to 1959. Betty said the only things she left in Michigan when they moved was her propeller and her gun (a rifle she bought for target practice)! They moved to Sunnyvale in 1959.

Betty taught music in the Cupertino District for 23 years, all the while playing with the San Jose Symphony and getting together with other musicians to play chamber music for small gatherings. “Every place I have lived I have played in a community orchestra. It keeps me in practice besides giving me great pleasure.”

The CHC is fortunate to have Betty as a volunteer. She has given innumerable docent tours, works in the library and serves on both the exhibits/publications and public relations committees. Thanks Betty for sharing some of your time with us.



*Musician, retired teacher and committed CHC volunteer Betty Petersen. Photo by Rags Petersen.*

## Center’s Program Receives Recognition

Word was received this spring that the programs offered by the California History Center have been recognized by the League for Innovation in the Community College. The league is a national organization of leading community colleges committed to innovation and experimentation.

Individual colleges nominated in-house programs that they felt “contributed to the improvement of student learning, staff performance, institutional management, or service in public, two-year colleges.”

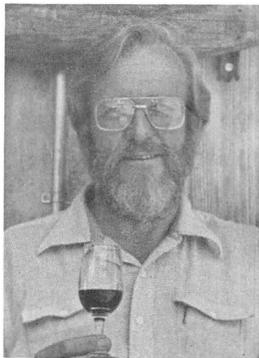
The history center was nominated in the Innovations in Instruction area and cited for providing an innovative learning environment. However, not only the instructional program was noted, but all of the programs which make up the California History Center and Foundation: exhibits, books, library and the building itself.

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## People News

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Trustee Mort Levine resigned from the Board of Trustees in February after serving close to nine years. A longtime supporter of history and historical organizations, Mort and his wife Elaine were the prime movers in saving and restoring the Fremont Older Estate in the Cupertino foothills. It presently serves as their residence and is open occasionally for public tours. We wish him well as a busy community newspaper publisher.



*CHC Trustee David Bennion.*

Board and staff were greatly saddened by the death in March of five-year Trustee David Bennion. David, founder of Ridge Vineyards in Cupertino, died as a result of injuries suffered in an automobile accident. Many of us felt fortunate to have shared a dinner table and a bottle of David's home made Pinot Noir at the CHC retreat held just the week before he died. His family graciously designated the CHC as a receiver of gifts in his memory. We will miss him greatly.

Librarian Shirley Clements resigned her position in December to devote more time to grandchildren (in addition to the three days a week she works at the Sunnyvale Public Library). We do however see her occasionally at volunteer meetings and she has promised to continue her interest in the CHC. Shirley's position has been ably taken over by Lisa Christiansen, who has been a wonderful, enthusiastic addition to the staff. An introduction to Lisa is included in this section.

Mabel Mayhood completed a year at the helm of the volunteer program. We are grateful to Mabel for taking on the job last year even though she had only been in the program a few months herself. Nell Ward helped out by scheduling the school tours this spring.

Mary Jane Givens will be taking over coordination of the volunteer program in the fall. Mary Jane was the center's very first volunteer coordinator, serving for five years. We are looking forward once again to having Mary Jane's enthusiasm and laughter as part of the center.

## CHC Welcomes New Librarian

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*New librarian Lisa Christiansen.*

It is appropriate that the new librarian for the California History Center is not only a California native but a "local girl" as well. Lisa Christiansen was born at the old Stanford Hospital and after living in Palo Alto for six years moved with her family to San Jose. "I remember having the entire landscape as our playground." But the 1950s was a time of tremendous growth for San Jose and Lisa watched as the orchards came down and everything began to change.

After graduating from Prospect High School Lisa headed north to Stanford, where she graduated in 1975 with a degree in German Studies. Two years later she obtained her Masters of Library Science (MLS) from San Jose State University. The receipt of her MLS started her on the path to the California History Center.

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Five years with the county library system, including stints at Saratoga, Campbell and Cupertino libraries, and another four and a half years as a librarian at Heald College, led Lisa to our doorstep.

"Everything I love is dealt with at some level in the history center library — the environmental, historical issues, social issues, the books themselves and the academic environment. The setting offers everything," according to Lisa.

The history center is lucky to have someone with such well-rounded interests. Lisa and husband John share a love of the outdoors which includes gardening, hiking and backpacking, in particular in the eastern Sierra. In addition Lisa enjoys the study of wildflowers and birds, reading, involvement in local politics, and describes herself as a "music appreciator."

The library has made tremendous strides this winter and spring thanks to Lisa. We hope members will take the opportunity to stop by the library, take a few moments to browse and say welcome to Lisa.

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## New Members

### Supporter

Roberta Brubaker

### Family

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### Individual

Eugenie Bell, Anne Boboricken, John Doll, Virginia English, Diane Etten, Laurie Farran, Joel Franks, John Herr, Rita Leitner, Wayne Lindahl, Mary Magill, Leslie Masunaga, Mary Mogerly, Lane Olson, Barbara Redstrom, Elizabeth Rhoades, Joseph Sweeney, Elwynne Trepel, Wanda Wade

## 20th Celebration Planned

Spring, 1989 marks the 20th anniversary of the formation of the California History Center. We are in the preliminary stages of planning a wonderful gala to be held in late April or early May of next year. We hope to invite many people who have been a part of the history center family over the years to help us celebrate 20 years with this unique organization. Watch for the date and more details in the December issue of The Californian. We will be sending invitations to members as well.



## Renewing Members

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*Ninety-six-year-old Leo Holub, left, and his assistant Ric Morehouse demonstrated the art of blacksmithing for the gold rush opening. Photo courtesy Bill Palmer.*

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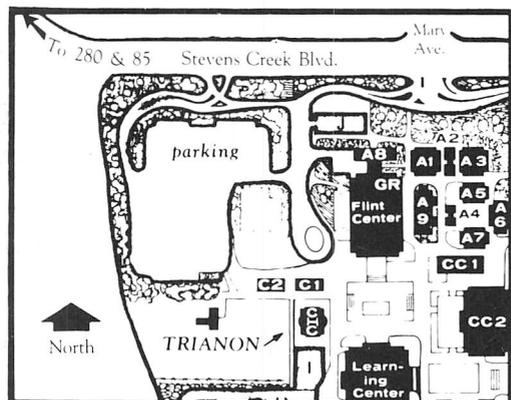
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**Exhibit Hours:**

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Docent Tours may be scheduled  
by calling 996-4712.  
Call for Saturday hours.



# CALIFORNIAN

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