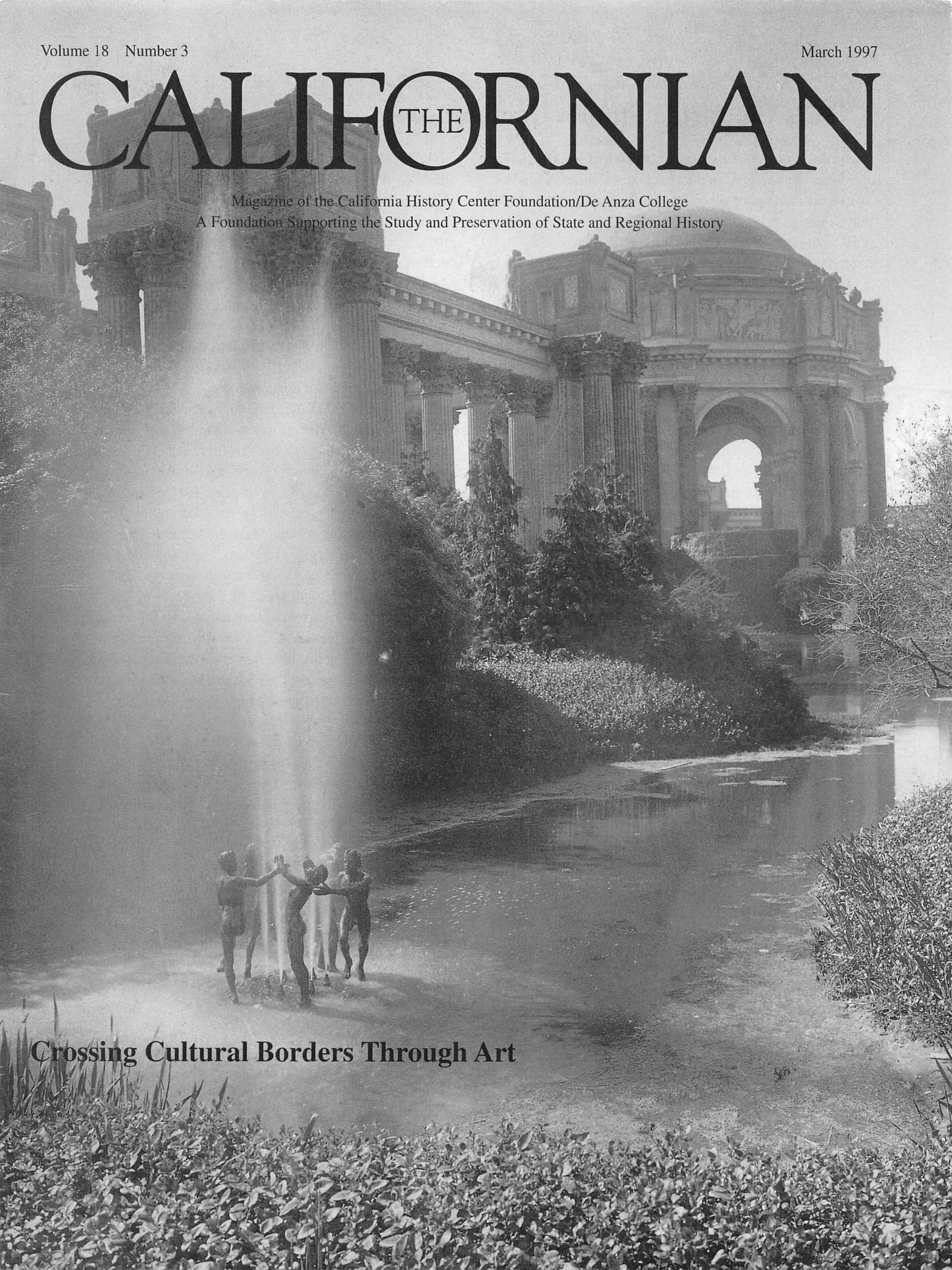


Volume 18 Number 3

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CALIFORNIA THE ORNIAN

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



Crossing Cultural Borders Through Art

CHC's California Studies Conference

Spring is going to be extremely busy for the CHC staff as we focus our energies on our first major California Studies event, the conference scheduled for Wednesday, May 14. We have campus-wide support and involvement and hope that CHC members will join us for what promises to be an interesting, thought provoking day.

I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little about the people who will be participating in the program, which has tentatively been retitled "Making California Work by Crossing Cultural Borders." A schedule of the day's activities is listed in the Foundation Notes section on page 14.

Artist Flo Wong is a resident of Sunnyvale. After a career in arts education in schools and the community, she began her evolution into the ranks of professional artist in the Creative Arts division of De Anza College. Over the past ten+ years she has had 12 solo exhibitions from Los Gatos to Palo Alto to Nebraska, Texas and Michigan, and too numerous to count group exhibitions. Her latest work is the Asian Rice Sack series, a collection developed over a period of years, which uses rice sacks and a variety of other media, to "create an amazing body of work about family, history, culture, memory, commemoration and celebration (see a profile on Flo Wong on page 12).

James Houston, a San Francisco native, has written extensively about California in both fiction and nonfiction formats. He is the author of 15 works including the novels *Gig* and *Continental Drift*, and the award-winning *Californians: Search for the Golden State*. With his wife Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, he co-authored the book and NBC teleplay, *Farewell to Manzanar*, the story of her family's internment experience during World War II. His latest work of non-fiction *In the Ring of Fire: A Pacific Basin Journey*, published by Mercury House, San Francisco, will be released in Spring, 1997.



Elisa Gonzalez is a founding member and artistic director of Teatro Vision of San Jose. She began working in Teatro Chicano in 1973 with Teatro de la Gente as a full-time member of the creative ensemble which developed and performed original plays. In 1977, along with other Chicano performers, she developed a performance group that focused on addressing issues faced by the Chicano people in San Jose. Elisa has taught courses in Chicano theater at San Francisco and San Jose State Universities, is an Aztec dancer and member of the South Bay Indigenous Council. She works voluntarily and professionally in San Jose Chicano community and social welfare organizations.

California-based ethnomusicologist and folklorist Willie Collins has taught African-American music and other subjects at UC Santa Barbara, Tuskegee Institute and UCLA, is a performer of Latin jazz and gospel music and has served as folklorist for the cities of Los Angeles and Oakland. Collins has published articles on African-American religious music in publications such as *African Musicology* and *In the Spirit: Alabama's Sacred Music Traditions*. His most recent article, *Selected California Rhythm & Blues Recordings, 1942-1972: A Diversity of Styles* will appear in a forthcoming anthology on California's African-American musicians. He was instrumental in presenting the "California Rhythm and Blues" symposium, during the 1995 San Francisco Jazz Festival.

Our afternoon speaker Dale Maharidge, author of the recently released book *The Coming White Minority: California's Eruptions and the Nation's Future*, is a teacher of journalism at Stanford University. From 1980 through 1991, he was a reporter at the *Sacramento Bee*. His second book, *And Their Children After Them*, with photographer Michael Williamson, won the 1990 Pulitzer Prize in non-fiction. His first book, *Journey to Nowhere: The Saga of the New Underclass*, also with Mr. Williamson, inspired two songs on Bruce Springsteen's 1995 album, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

As you can see we have an exciting roster of presenters for the day, so plan to join us on May 14th for our first, in what we hope will be annual, California Studies Conference.

Kathleen Peregrin
Director

COVER:

Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco, California, constructed for the Panama Pacific International Exposition in 1915. Courtesy Stockmeir Library and Archive.

Volunteer recognition event held in November, 1996. CHC Instructors Betty Hirsch (center) and Chatham Forbes (right) receive award from CHC Director Kathi Peregrin (left).

CALENDAR

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| <p>3/10 Women's History Month presentation: Jackie Reza 12:30–1:30 at the CHC.</p> <p>3/11 Women's History Month presentation: Shirley Kawazoe 12:30–1:30 at the CHC.</p> <p>3/12 Women's History Month presentation: Jean Miller 12:30–1:30 at the CHC.</p> <p>3/13 Women's History Month presentation: Narma Mayfield 12:30–1:30 at the CHC.</p> <p>3/28 Winter Quarter ends.</p> <p>4/7 Spring Quarter begins.</p> <p>5/3 Field Trip: Robert Louis Stevenson class. *</p> <p>5/10 Local History Day at Heintzelman's Book Store Los Altos.</p> <p>5/10 Field Trip: Oakland/Alameda. *</p> <p>5/14 California Studies Conference at the CHC. See Director's Report p. 2 and p. 14.</p> | <p>5/17 Field Trip: Drake class. *</p> <p>5/24 Field Trip: Robert Louis Stevenson class. *</p> <p>5/26 Memorial Day holiday observed—CHC closed.</p> <p>5/20-6/10 Exhibit at CHC "Cupertino School District Multicultural Art Project."</p> <p>6/7 Field Trip: Threatened California class. *</p> <p>6/7 Field Trip: San Francisco Bay. *</p> <p>6/14 Field Trip: Post War California class. *</p> <p>6/21 Field Trip: Post War California class. *</p> <p>6/26 CHC closes for summer break.</p> <p>6/27 Spring Quarter ends.</p> |
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*For detailed information on field trips, see Education pages 4–5.



A portion of "The California Missions" exhibit at the CHC. Twenty-one watercolors by Catalán artist Antonio Mire are on display, and the exhibition has been extended until April 18, 1997.

EDUCATION

State and Regional History

The following courses will be offered spring quarter through the California History Center. Please see the California History Center class listings section of the De Anza College Schedule of Classes for detailed information (i.e., course ID #, call #, and units.) For additional course information, call the center at (408) 864-8712.

And don't forget, as a benefit of being a history center member you can register for history center classes (CHC classes only, not other De Anza classes) at the Trianon building. The cost per unit is \$9. Each of these classes is held in the evening.

Robert Louis Stevenson in California: *Chatham Forbes*

In 1879 a young writer from a staid Scottish family rode the transcontinental to California in pursuit of Mrs. Fannie Osbourne. The lovers were reunited in Monterey, married in San Francisco, and honeymooned on Mount St. Helena. In 1888 they sailed out of the Golden Gate to the South Seas, never to return. Robert Louis Stevenson's writings about California during this brief time are an invaluable first-hand account of early rail travel, and of the people, landscape and communities of the Monterey peninsula and the greater Bay Area in the late 19th century.

Lectures: Wed. April 23, 30. Field trips: Sat. May 24, May 3.

Drake in California: *Hugh Thomas*

Drake in California traces the general background of European exploration and expansion in the 16th century; the development and growth of England during the Tudor period; antagonism between England and Spain; and the English privateers and personal career of Drake, who circumnavigated the world, landing in California.

Lectures: Wed. May 7, 14, 21. Field trip: Sat. May 17.

Growth & Change in Post War California: *Chatham Forbes*

One of the major phenomena of 20th-century America has been the post war migration of people and industry from Rust Belt to Sun Belt, including California. Nowhere has the movement been more spectacular than in the south Bay Area. The initial impetus came during the war itself, but in peacetime the influx continued, and became systematized and regionally competitive. Students will study this process and methodology, and the resulting transforming changes in California over the last half-century.

Lectures: Thurs. June 5, 12. Field trips: Sat. June 14, 21.

Historic Ports, Oakland & Alameda: *Betty Hirsch*

The Oakland waterfront was held captive for fifty years, first by Nefarious Horace Carpentier, and then by the Southern Pacific Railroad. Finally, Mayor Frank Mott negotiated a settlement so that Oakland could at last gain access to its own waterfront, opening its harbor to ferries, Alaska Packers Fleets, a myriad of commercial and passenger ships and shipbuilding and related activities. Alameda, originally a peninsula, became an island in 1902, when a deep water channel was cut through to join San Leandro Bay with the Oakland Estuary. Alameda is known for its underwater tunnels, drawbridges, former shipbuilding activities, military bases, beautiful homes on the Gold Coast, and Neptune Beach, the Coney Island of the West. This class will focus on the dramatic waterfront development of both cities, tracing the changes that time and events have brought about. The field trip will include a tour of the Port of Oakland and various waterfront sites in Alameda.

Lecture: Thurs. May 1. Field trip: Sat. May 10.

Threatened California: *Julie Phillips*

Join De Anza Environmental Studies faculty member Julie Phillips as she explores the wonders of the beautiful state of California. Students will visit and study a variety of California's ecosystems including the coastal redwood forest, marshlands, Pacific tide pools and the rugged and spectacular mountain regions of the Diablo range. Students will discuss the many environmental factors that threaten California's flora and fauna including global warming, overpopulation, pollution, ozone depletion, deforestation and the biodiversity crisis. A major focus of the class will be sustainable use of California's varied resources.

Lectures: Wed. May 28, June 4. Field trip: Sat. June 7.

Historic San Francisco Bay: Betty Hirsch

San Francisco Bay has been variously called “the Eighth Wonder of the World,” “the Bay Where Magic Islands Float,” and “the Western Gate,” among other names. The bay contains two trillion gallons of salt water covering four hundred square miles. It contains subsidiary bays, including Richardson, San Pablo and Suisun. It encloses ten islands and is spanned by the world’s greatest bridges and is one of the world’s greatest natural harbors. Join us for this historical exploration of one of San Francisco’s greatest treasures. The field trip will view the bay and surrounding areas from various angles, altitudes and vistas.

Lecture: Thurs. May 29. Field trip: Sat. June 7.

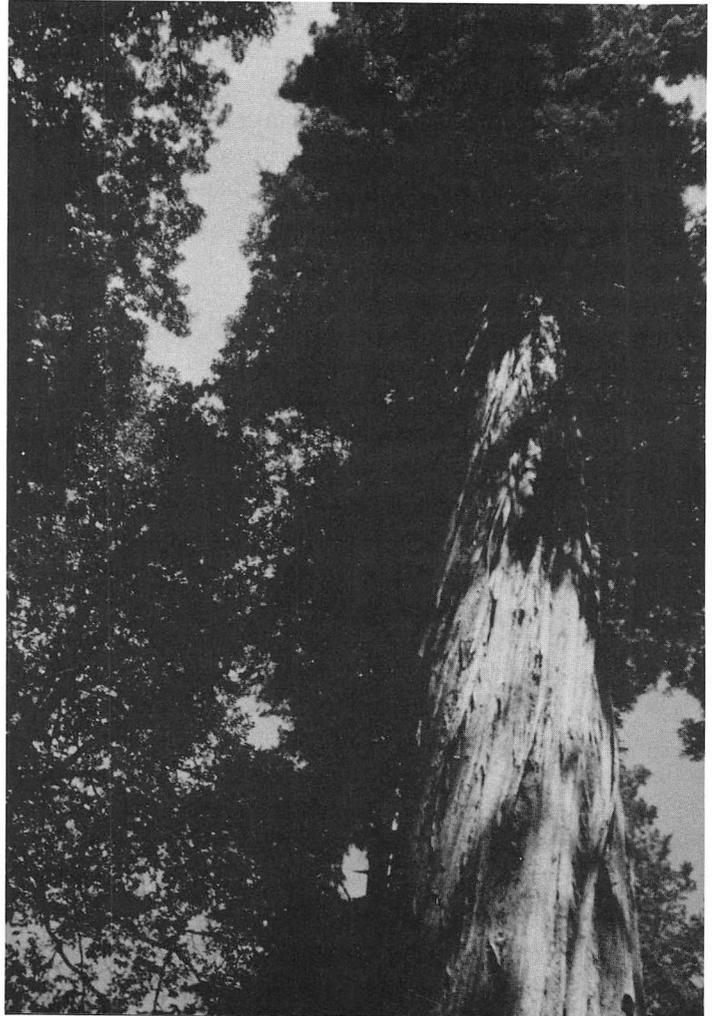
Place & Myth in Popular Music of California: Willie Collins

Join ethnomusicologist Willie Collins as he traces the ways in which various genres of popular music such as blues, country, rock, popular and rap, and the cultures from which they have risen, address California as place and myth through their songtexts as well as their cultural contexts. Songtexts are an integral part of music, affording interesting information about subjects. California, with its diverse musical traditions, is a remarkable place to frame the study of popular music. The course will pay particular attention to the influences of community-based regional and ethnic traditions on music-making. Students will experience music through attendance at live performances.

Lectures: Tues. April 22, 29, May 6, 13, 20. Field trips: TBA

Welcome Willie Collins!

The CHC welcomes Willie Collins, Ph.D. to its cast of instructors. Collins is an ethnomusicologist and folklorist who has taught at UC Santa Barbara, Tuskegee Institute and UCLA. He is a performer of Latin jazz and gospel music and has published articles on African-American religious music. His most recent article, *Selected California Rhythm & Blues Recordings, 1942-1972: A Diversity of Styles* will appear in a forthcoming anthology on California’s African-American musicians.



The “Neck Breaker” at Cowell State Park in Santa Cruz County, California. Courtesy Stockmeir Library and Archive, Giffen family slide collection.

Crossing Cultural Borders in the Arts and Humanities

by David Trend

David Trend, Dean of Creative Arts at De Anza College, has written extensively about the politics of culture and education. His books include Cultural Pedagogy: Art/Education/Politics (1992), The Crisis of Meaning in Culture and Education (1995), Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship, and the State (1996) and Cultural Democracy: Identity, Politics, New Media (1997). He wrote this article for The Californian.

Pick up any newspaper and it's clear that California is facing a cultural crisis. Conventional definitions of community and citizenship have been thrown into question by changing political attitudes, shifting racial demographics, and new attitudes toward work and the family. Within California a once dominant white majority is quickly being diminished by communities of color, as citizens of all backgrounds search for a way to explain why the quality of life in the United States is declining for all but a few.

Although the so-called "culture wars" over media, education, and the arts have done much to expand the national conversation about issues of pluralism and artistic freedom, they have also introduced heightened levels of antagonism and division. The result has been a general weakening of the social fabric that once held us together as a people. *Time* magazine critic Robert Hughes dubbed this phenomenon the "fraying of America," in reference to the splintering and factionalizing of the population in a myriad of intolerant interests groups.

These shifts have produced considerable public tension, along with a disturbing tendency to seek people to blame for our problems. Lacking the threat of the Red Menace, liberals and conservatives find common ground in assaulting the very underclass that dominant culture exploits most. Rather than identifying the poor as victims of discrimination and inequality, the disadvantaged are cast as the source of a decaying national infrastructure. Within this logic, the people who always were to blame for social problems—the newcomers, the poor, and the otherwise "different"—have been rewarded rather than punished. Instead of asking immigrants to learn English or AFDC recipients to work, so the argument goes, we have coddled these social others by encouraging the very term of their otherness. By not insisting on their assimilation into the great *all-American* project,

we have encouraged a disruptive cultural difference, a loss of common purpose, and a decline of mutual respect.

Besides its obvious deployment to discredit genuine hardship, this anti-poor, anti-immigrant backlash is being used to explain—and often rationalize—a growing reactionary movement among the status quo to strike back. This is the reasoning behind the increasingly mean-spirited rhetoric of media personalities and politicians from Bob Grant to Pat Buchanan—an attitude that reached its penultimate expression in the unrestrained violence of the film *Falling Down* (1992). In general terms this also is the impetus that led to the passage of California Propositions 187 and 209. Taken to the extreme, such abstract attitudes of distrust and suspicion can turn into prescriptions for *real* discrimination and hate crimes.

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This backlash is nowhere more pronounced than in the recent legislation to slash welfare. Not that such efforts to reduce public assistance are particularly new. With the transition to industrial capitalism in the early nineteenth century, scientific theories based on then-fashionable principles of eugenics provided a logic for blaming the economically oppressed for their own hardship. Popularized by thinkers like Charles Darwin, these arguments find contemporary expression in claims made by Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein in *The Bell Curve*. Poverty is seen as genetic disposition or a behavioral propensity for failure passed from parent to child. To a contemporary thinker like Edwin Banfield the poor are seen as unable to recognize future needs and defer gratification. To George Gilder the threat is promiscuous sexuality and a deteriorating family.

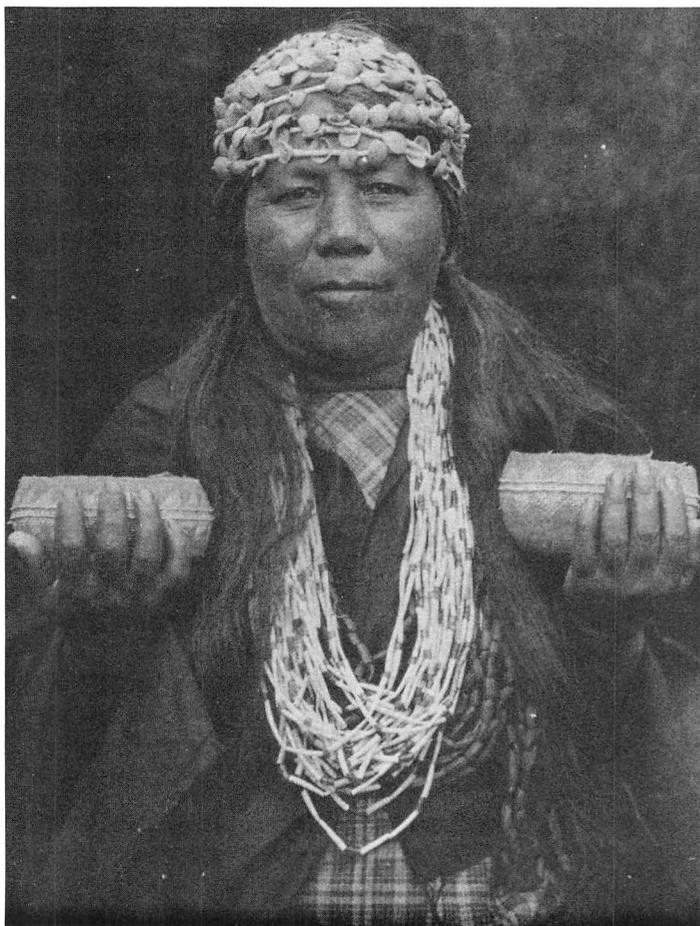
In California these attitudes take a geographical turn, as newcomers—especially those from the south—are viewed as



Villa Montalvo, Saratoga, California. The one-time home of California's Senator James D. Phelan, today the estate is a cultural center which hosts artists in residence. Courtesy Stockmeir Library and Archive.

carriers of cultural impoverishment and moral decay. Indeed, the "border" has become a powerful symbol for cultural containment and social protectionism. For U.S. citizens, it is the structure separating "us" from "them" in both real and imaginary terms. The imaginary element is important to stress, in that much of the presumed "threat" posed by border crossing populations is conveyed by opportunistic politicians and the media. Stanford University anthropologist Renato Rosaldo argues that

Official anxiety about the increasing Latino population obscures the cultural identities of the so-called invaders. "They" become anonymous brown hoards about to engulf Los Angeles and a number of other North American metropolitan centers. In official versions, the brown invaders come bearing not culture, but poverty, drugs, illiteracy, and crime.



"Hupa Female Shaman," photograph by E. Curtis, 1923. Curtis and other early 20th century photographers' subjects were exotic curiosities to the general public. Courtesy Stockmeir Library and Archive.

Perhaps not so coincidentally the metaphor of the "border" has become popular in contemporary art and scholarship as well. Witness the performances of Coco Fusco, David Avalos, and the Border Arts Workshop, the work of self-proclaimed "border artist" Guillermo Gómez-Peña, as well as numerous films, symposia, and monographs with titles like *Border Brujo*, *Border Crossings* and *Beyond Borders*.

Motivating these efforts is the belief that we can reclaim the concept of border crossing as a way of bridging differences and mending relationships. There is a growing recognition that in this atmosphere of cultural backlash, it becomes all the more impor-

tant to encourage forms of expression that honor diversity and recognize the value of new citizens. We can work against the "fraying of America" by promoting movies, works of literature, and art projects that demonstrate the positive elements of our multicultural society. This is by no means a simple task. Enabling people to "cross cultural borders" is more than a simple matter of preaching "tolerance" or exposing audiences to stories from another country. It is an effort that needs to take place on *interpersonal, institutional, and societal* levels.

On an interpersonal level, cultural border crossing assumes several forms. Within the arts and literature, it means recognizing that what counts as legitimate expression in a given society is generally determined by people with power and money. Correcting the narrowness of this view means more than simply broadening the scope of what one views or reads; it means adopting new rules of interpretation. To art critic Lucy Lippard, the first task is to rethink the seemingly natural idea of "quality." Lippard believes that concepts of universal standards in the arts serve to promote European culture and exclude people of color. As Lippard explains,

Ethnocentrism in the arts is balanced on a notion of Quality that "transcends boundaries"—and is identifiable only to those in power. According to this lofty view, racism has nothing to do with art; Quality will prevail; so-called minorities just haven't gotten it yet.

So-called "minorities" are encouraged to adopt dominant quality standards or risk being labeled "primitive." Lippard asserts that

The most pervasive and arguably insidious term artists of color must challenge is "Primitivism." It has been used historically to separate the supposedly sophisticated civilized "high" art of the West from the equally sophisticated art it has pillaged from other cultures. The term locates the latter in the past—usually the distant part—and in an early stage of "development," implying simplicity on the positive side and crudity or barbarism on the negative.



Slide depiction of Theodore Wores' "San Francisco Chinese Maiden." Until relatively recently, minority populations have been represented as characters in stories but have rarely acted as authors. Likewise, minorities have been depicted in art, but were rarely the artist. Courtesy Stockmeir Library and Archive, slide collection.

Linked to these issues of “high” culture and “primitivism” is the matter of who is doing the border crossing. In our society white people sample other cultures from a position of privilege. Engagement remains an option that can be exercised at will. By contrast, people of color are required to learn the rules of the dominant society. In this respect border crossing is a fact of everyday life, with stakes ranging from cultural assimilation to one’s very survival. The point to remember is that not everyone engages cultural border crossing from the same position or for the same stakes.

In institutional terms, cultural border crossing bears an important a historical dimension. Long before the contemporary move to multiculturalism, mainstream institutions like museums and entertainment venues were utilizing the culture of minority groups. The practice of serving up imagery of the Western US and its indigenous peoples has a venerable history dating to the mid-nineteenth century. Photographers like Alexander Gardner, William Henry Jackson, Timothy O’Sullivan, and Carleton Watkins found work by accompanying geological map-making

expeditions. The resulting “scientific” documents quickly gained currency as exotic curiosities.

Photographers and filmmakers often have little to do with the ultimate use of photographic images by later generations. Certainly this was the case with the theatrical documentaries of producers like Robert Flaherty and Basil Wright. While tacitly anti-colonialist in their intention to present native populations “untouched” by contemporary culture, Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North* (1922) and subsequent *Moana* (1926) now stand as benchmarks in the commodification and sale of otherness to

The point to remember is that not every one engages cultural border crossing from the same position or for the same stakes.

mass audiences. These photographic and cinematic projects were the forerunners to contemporary cowboy and jungle movie genres, as well as their translation into the *Star Trek* and *Deep Space Nine* forms of television science fiction.

Within the art world the visibility of “primitive” imagery has a similarly long history. Artists like Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso built their early reputations on imagery energized by “exotic” subject matter or design motifs. Art audiences became intrigued by the apparent originality conveyed in representations of indigenous peoples and their artifacts. Needless to say, this use of non-western culture rarely occurred with any explanation of originating context. Instead images of dancing natives, their shields, or masks were appropriated to convey an aura of “mystery,” “darkness,” or “innocence” to artworks. A classic example of this was the 1961 juxtaposition of a Kenneth Noland target painting with a New Guinea circular sculpture at New York’s Museum of Modern Art.

The capacity of reducing cultures to their surface appearances is the very essence of racism that flattens culture into stereotypes. Some contemporary critics have even argued that the mainstream art world needs marginalized cultures to continually rejuvenate itself with seemingly “new” material. As critic Coco Fusco ironically contends,



Flo Oy Wong pictured with a portion of her rice sack art at the Euphrat Gallery, De Anza College. Photograph by E. Chris Wisner.

It is the “true” avant-garde artist who becomes a better version of the “primitive,” a hybrid or a cultural transvestite. Mass culture caged it, so to speak—while artists swallowed it. This practice of appropriating and fetishizing the primitive and simultaneously erasing the original source continues into contemporary “avant-garde” performance.

The flip side of this cultural border crossing “from above” has been the historic exclusion of people of color from mainstream institutions. Until relatively recently, minority populations have been represented as characters in stories but have rarely acted as authors. This has changed somewhat, especially within cultural institutions, usually in one of two ways. In the first, non-white

Despite the appearance that people of color have become more visible in the arts and media, their numbers hardly correspond to their representation in the general population.

artists have been permitted into mainstream culture to the extent they have assimilated its values. The classic example of this on TV is the Cosby show’s embrace of an upwardly mobile, professional lifestyle. In the art world this is seen in the work of minority artists who eschew “ethnic” subject matter to achieve inclusion in mainstream exhibitions. In the second instance, artists of color frequently are confined to culturally specific institutions or programs like the Bay Area’s Asian Museum, Mexican Museum, and African American Cultural Center. The good news is that in recent years within California this rigid assimilationist/separatist divide has softened somewhat, with artists of color developing non-profit organizations, as well as larger multicultural institutions like San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Cultural border crossing in societal terms refers to population demographics, economic indicators, and the political realities behind them. As with interpersonal and institutional approaches, one’s perspective on societal border crossing is everything. A recent Gallup poll asked people if they thought that social inequities were increasing between whites and people of color. Of white respondents, 25 percent said yes; among people of color, the number was 51 percent. It is not surprising that among white voters (who disproportionately outnumber all other groups) there is a growing belief that economic differences among racial and ethnic groups have already been overcome. This is the major



Post card depiction of Pablo Picasso's *The Emblem*. Artists like Paul Gauguin and Picasso built their early reputations on imagery energized by "exotic" subject matter.

impetus behind the rollback of affirmative action programs enacted through the "California Civil Rights Initiative," adopted in the 1996 election by a majority of California voters.

Perceptual differences carry over into the cultural realm as well. Despite the *appearance* that people of color have become more visible in the arts and media, their numbers hardly correspond to their representation in the general population. The same can be said of women. Although some small (and hard fought) advances have been made, the same groups that suffer discrimination and economic violence in society at large are victimized in the media and cultural realms. Mable Haddock and Chiquita

Mullins of the National Black Programming Consortium explain that "the rumor of institutionalized privilege for people of color is propelled by those outside communities of color," adding that "white producers who get no money or less than they want propagate this myth most fiercely." Similarly, a quick look at almost any art history text will indicate the continuing absence of diverse viewpoints.

If we want to use cultural border crossing to overcome the fraying of America, we will need to find ways to begin an inclusive conversation. We will need to promote an understanding of the differing contexts in which borders are crossed. One approach is by structuring the discussion in a manner that avoids such dichotomous categories as "high" or "primitive" art and assimilationist versus separatist culture. As Lippard states, everyone benefits from such an exercise: "thinking about crossing cultures makes us look more closely at our own environments. Most of us cross cultural borders every day, usually unconsciously." The important issue to keep in mind is that we do our border crossing from different points along the divide.

FOR FURTHER INQUIRY

"For Further Inquiry" suggests additional reading on the subject of the feature article.

Coco Fusco, *English in Broken Here: Notes on Cultural Fusion in the Americas*. New York, Routledge, 1995.

Henry A. Giroux and Peter McLaren, eds. *Beyond Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*. New York, Pantheon, 1990.

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*. New York, Routledge, 1994.

Local Artist Crosses Cultural Borders

Flo Oy Wong, a contemporary American mixed media artist, launched her art career from classes she took at De Anza College and Foothill College which she began at age 40. Although her basic training was in “Euro-centered ways,” she explained, she “heard an inner voice pushing me toward gender and racial art.”

When she first experimented with what has become her trademark rice sack art, she sewed row after row of colored thread on the sacks, symbolizing the many paths that Chinese immigrants have taken in the United States since the gold rush days. Later she added ornamentation. Her piece was rejected for exhibition for being “not as well thought out as it should be.” An instructor suggested that if her art had appeared more traditional and had been on paper, it probably would have been accepted into the exhibit.

Thus began the *Asian Rice Sack Series* where additional sacks were added, becoming literally, a work in progress. Today the *Series* measures 14.5 feet tall and 25 feet wide, comprising over 40 sacks. It can be exhibited in portions, and currently a group of eight of the sacks are on display at the Euphrat Gallery at De Anza College (see photo on page 10.).

Another time while studying at De Anza, Wong created a silkscreen print with images symbolizing an old Cantonese saying meaning “don’t worry” and is translated literally to mean “don’t hang your heart.” This piece was also rejected as being “too simplistic.”

Although her early attempts at integrating her Chinese heritage and her art were criticized, Wong persevered and has achieved notoriety. She strives to address personal, collective and cultural issues through a variety of mediums including drawing, painting and sewing. She has had twelve solo exhibitions and dozens of group exhibitions. In 1995 she was a recipient of the Women’s Caucus for Art (WCA) President’s Award. She has also been an artist in residence at Headlands Center for the Arts (1993), Villa Montalvo (1994) and Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (1996). Recently a piece of her work has been put on display in the American Embassy in Zambia, Africa.

Some of Wong’s inspiration comes from family photographs. In 1983 she began examining photographs of her upbringing in Oakland’s Chinatown. Flo describes herself as becoming obsessed with them, and ultimately by 1991, she had 35 photo-realistic drawings called the *Oakland Chinatown Series*. Three of these drawings are illustrations in a Holt Rinehart & Winston publication of Amy Tan’s *The Joy Luck Club*.



Flo Oy Wong. Photograph by E. Chris Wisner.

A few years ago, she became fascinated by photos from her Chinese husband’s childhood in an African-American neighborhood of Augusta, Georgia. The result of this fascination is the *Baby Jack Rice Story* which depicts the two cultures coming together. Wong along with her husband Ed Wong and their son, have collaborated to create a videotape of interviews to accompany the *Baby Jack Rice Story*.

Flo Wong sees herself as one who has crossed cultural borders and continues to do so through her work. She explained, “I seek to tell the extraordinary stories of ordinary people.”

FOUNDATION NOTES

Programs and Events

Women's History Month

Women's History Month will be celebrated with a series of presentations at the CHC the week of March 10, 1997. In keeping with our 1996-97 theme of "Crossing Cultural Borders," the programs will focus on "What does feminism look like in different cultures: Personal perspectives from four California women." Each presenter will define what feminism means to them, and how they see women's issues within their ethnic culture relating to work, family, media, and other areas.

Monday, March 10: Jackie Reza

Tuesday, March 11: Shirley Kawazoe

Wednesday, March 12: Jean Miller

Thursday, March 13: Narma Mayfield

Each presentation will be held from 12:30-1:30 at the California History Center.

Local History Day

at Heintzelman's Bookstore in Los Altos

CHC supporting member Conrad Heintzelman has agreed to host a local history day at Heintzelman's Bookstore in Los Altos on Saturday, May 10 from 1 until 3 p.m. California History Center publications will be featured, and of course whenever you purchase a CHC publication it benefits the center. Local History Day will feature:

Ward Winslow (editor of *The Making of Silicon Valley: A One Hundred Year Renaissance*, and *Palo Alto A Centennial History* and author of *A Palo Alto Editor's Scrapbook*).

Mary Jo Ignoffo (Editor of *Santa Clara Sagas* by Austen Warburton and author of *Sunnyvale From the City of Destiny to the Heart of Silicon Valley*).

The third local history author has yet to be confirmed.

Other CHC publications will also be available for sale. Please support the California History Center by encouraging the sale of its publications. The Local History Series, which numbers 36 publications, has been a contribution to local communities attempting to preserve their history. Our publishing services set us apart from other historical groups. Currently a CHC publications list is being updated and efforts are being made to make CHC books available to purchase at more book stores and on the internet.

HELP!

Upholsterer Wanted.

Can anyone offer their expertise as an upholsterer? Many CHC furnishings date from the restoration of the Trianon building over 25 years ago. Our chairs, numbering 16, are in desperate need of new seat covers. CHC will provide materials, but we need someone to do the upholstery work. If you can help, call the CHC at (408) 864-8712.

Web Page: Under Construction

The CHC invites you to visit our WEB page at:

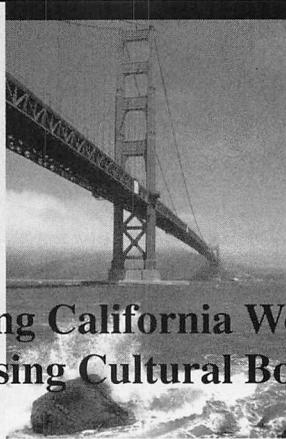
www.deanza.fhda.edu/califhistory/califhistory.html

As you will see, we need help expanding the site. We are open to changes in design and we would like to get our publications listed. If you have the expertise to help with the expansion of our Web page, please call the history center at (408) 864-8712.



CHC holiday gathering at Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park, December 1996. (Left to right) Ward Winslow, Mary Jo Ignoffo, Janet Hoffman, Dee Liotta, Trudy Frank and Nancy Bratman.

California Studies Conference



Making California Work by Crossing Cultural Borders

California is a unique, diverse state, geographically and ethnically, where we cross, share and blend cultures in our everyday lives simply by the fact that we live here.

Date: Wednesday, May 14, 1997, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Presenters:

Art: Flo Wong—artist/painter

Literature: Jim Houston—author *Searching for the Golden State*

Theater: Elisa Gonzalez—director Teatro Vision de San Jose

Music: Willie Collins—musician “Myth and Place in California Popular Music”

Morning:

8:45–9:15: Registration, coffee, muffins

9:15–9:30: Welcome and Introductions

9:30–10:30: Each of the four presenters discusses what they do and how it relates to the theme of the day.

10:45–11:45: Facilitated discussion between presenters and audience “Can art, literature, theater and music play more of a role in teaching, learning, accepting diversity?”

Lunch:

Noon–1:00 Lunch on CHC patio

Afternoon:

1:15–2:15: Presentation and facilitated discussion with Stanford Journalism faculty member Dale Maharidge, 1990 Pulitzer Prize winner in nonfiction and author of recently released *The Coming White Minority: California’s Eruptions and the Nation’s Future?*

2:30–4:00: Small group discussion facilitated by De Anza faculty and morning presenters, sharing ideas and resources, discussing the future possibilities and directions for California Studies and interdisciplinary curriculum development.

New Board Members

The CHC welcomes two new members to its Board of Trustees: Bill Ralston and Jennifer Cain Bohrstedt. The two are briefly introduced here although a more extensive profile of new board members will appear in the next issue of *The Californian*.

Bill Ralston is Director of Technology and Innovation Management in SRI Consulting. In his position he facilitates strategic planning for corporations in new management approaches, products and services and in creating new markets. Ralston holds a BS in civil engineering from Stanford University and an MBA from Harvard University.

Jennifer Cain Bohrstedt is a management consultant who has developed and administered an archives and was the Director of The Health Library at Stanford University Hospital. Formerly she was the Higher Education Programs Manager for the Hewlett Packard Company. Bohrstedt holds a BA in Spanish and history and an MA in Human Services Administration from Indiana University.

Both Ralston and Bohrstedt bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the CHC, along with an interest in California history. The Foundation is pleased to introduce these two talented people as the newest members of its board of Trustees.

Renewing Members

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Hazel B. Lester.

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Joseph and Doris Adamo, Joyce Bartlett, Ernest and Marion Card, Mr. & Mrs. George Cilker, Rena Frabony-DeHart, Mary Jo Ignoffo, Martha Kanter, Burrel Leonard, Deanna and Joe Liotta, Dolly D. Stowell, Ward and Holly Winslow, Margaret Wozniak.

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Donors of Special Gifts:

William Lester III



Over ninety people attended the celebration for the publication of Santa Clara Sagas by Austen Warburton held at Santa Clara Public Library, December 2, 1996.



CHC holiday gathering Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park, December 1996. (Left to right) Tom Izu, Janet Ilacqua, Elizabeth Archambeault, Holly Winslow, Ward Winslow, Nancy Bratman and Lisa Christiansen.

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Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The value of goods received as a benefit of membership must be deducted from the amount of all contributions claimed as a deduction. CHCF members receive tri-annual issues of "The Californian" magazine and members who contribute at the \$50 level and above also receive a yearly Local History Studies publication.

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